MOBILITY OF YOUNG VOLUNTEERS ACROSS EUROPE
Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. V
LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................................ V
ABBREVIATIONS ................................................................................................................ VII
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..................................................................................................... IX
INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................................................... 1
1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ................................................................. 3

   1. 1. SCOPE OF ANALYSIS: MAIN TERMS ................................................................. 3
   1. 2. SCOPE OF ANALYSIS: DIMENSIONS OF CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERING ......... 7
   1. 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ......................... 15
   1. 4. RESEARCH METHODS ......................................................................................... 19

2. EUROPEAN CONTEXT OF CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERING ............................... 21

   2. 1. REVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN POLICY FRAMEWORK ........................................ 21
       2. 1. 1. Volunteering in the EU youth policy ............................................................ 21
            EU youth policy structure ..................................................................................... 21
            Development of the European Voluntary Service ............................................... 25
            Volunteering in the EU youth policy .................................................................... 26
       2. 1. 2. Cross-border volunteering in the EU education policy .................................. 31
       2. 1. 3. European Year of Volunteering and stakeholders’ expectations ...................... 33

   2. 2. EU VALUE ADDED IN FACILITATING CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERING ........... 35

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS QUO IN EUROPEAN CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERING ................................................................................................. 41

   3. 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND MOTIVATIONS OF YOUNG CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERS .............................................................. 41
       3. 1. 1. Socio-economic profile of European cross-border volunteers ......................... 43
       3. 1. 2. Motivations of young Europeans for volunteering abroad ............................ 45
       3. 2. NEEDS OF YOUNG CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERS ........................................ 49

   3. 3. BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING ........................................................................... 56
       3. 3. 1. Benefits for the young volunteers ................................................................. 57
       3. 3. 2. Benefits for the sending and hosting societies ............................................... 59
       3. 4. CHALLENGES TO TRANS-EUROPEAN VOLUNTEERING .................................. 62
       3. 4. 1. Legal and administrative obstacles .............................................................. 62
            Legal status of volunteers ..................................................................................... 63
            Accreditation of organisations ............................................................................. 65
            Recognition of volunteering .................................................................................. 66
            Clearance ............................................................................................................. 69
       3. 4. 2. Socio-economic and financial obstacles ...................................................... 70
       3. 4. 3. Lack of information ...................................................................................... 73
       3. 4. 4. Social and cultural issues .............................................................................. 75
       3. 4. 5. Personal obstacles ....................................................................................... 77

   3. 5. NATIONAL SCHEMES OF VOLUNTEER EXCHANGES ......................................... 78

CONCLUSIONS ...................................................................................................................... 85
RECOMMENDATIONS ......................................................................................................... 90
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF SOURCES</th>
<th>103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF INTERVIEWS</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF LEGAL AND POLICY DOCUMENTS</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF WEBSITES</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNEX 1 - EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNEX 2 - CASE STUDY: ITALY</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNEX 3 - CASE STUDY: GERMANY</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNEX 4 - CASE STUDY: UK</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNEX 5 - CASE STUDY: LITHUANIA</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNEX 6 - CASE STUDY: HUNGARY</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNEX 7 - CASE STUDY: SWEDEN</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

TABLE 1. SOME YOUTH CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMMES OPERATING IN EUROPE ................................................... 11
TABLE 2. GRID OF STATEMENTS FOR THE STUDY ON CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERING ................................................... 16
TABLE 3. APPLICABILITY OF LAWS TO CROSS-BORDER VOLUNTEERING IN EUROPE ................................................... 63
TABLE 4. NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY SCHEMES ................................................... 119
TABLE 5. NUMBER OF EVS VOLUNTEERS IN ITALY 2007-2009 ................................................... 149
TABLE 6. NUMBER OF GERMAN PARTICIPANTS IN INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICES IN 2008 ................................................... 175
TABLE 7. NUMBER OF GERMAN AND FOREIGN PARTICIPANTS IN FSJ AND FÖJ IN 2008 ................................................... 175
TABLE 8. PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES AMONG GERMAN EVS PARTICIPANTS, 2000-2006 ................................................... 179
TABLE 9. UK STATISTICS OF EVS VOLUNTEERS (2009) ................................................... 203
TABLE 10. NUMBER OF EVS VOLUNTEERS IN HUNGARY 2007-2009 (SENT TO AND HOSTED FROM EU COUNTRIES ONLY) ................................................... 254

List of Figures

FIGURE 1. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN EU POLICY CONCERNING VOLUNTEERING (1992-2009) ................................................... 1
FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE DOING VOLUNTARY WORK IN EU MEMBER AND CANDIDATE STATES ................................................... 78
FIGURE 3. THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK, LEISURE AND HELPING OTHERS/VOLUNTARY WORK IN THE LIVES OF EUROPEANS ................................................... 79
FIGURE 4. PARTICIPATING IN EVS ................................................... 1
FIGURE 5. NUMBER OF EVS VOLUNTEERS SENT AND HOSTED BY EU MEMBER STATES IN 2009 (WITHIN THE EU ONLY) ................................................... 128
FIGURE 6. NUMBER OF OUTGOING ITALIAN EVS VOLUNTEERS BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION IN THE EU (2009) ................................................... 150
FIGURE 7. NUMBER OF INCOMING EVS VOLUNTEERS TO ITALY BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN THE EU (2009) ................................................... 151
FIGURE 8. FIELDS OF ACTIVITY OF ITALIAN CIVIC SERVICE ABROAD VOLUNTEERS IN 2006-2008, % ................................................... 152
FIGURE 9. OUTGOING ITALIAN EVS VOLUNTEERS BY GENDER, % (2007-2009) ................................................... 153
FIGURE 10. INCOMING EVS VOLUNTEERS TO ITALY BY GENDER, % (2007-2009) ................................................... 153
FIGURE 11. CIVIC SERVICE ABROAD VOLUNTEERS BY AGE GROUP, % (2008) ................................................... 154
FIGURE 12. ITALY’S OUTGOING EVS VOLUNTEERS BY AGE GROUP, % (2007-2009) ................................................... 154
FIGURE 13. CIVIC SERVICE ABROAD VOLUNTEERS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (2008) ................................................... 154
FIGURE 14. DISADVANTAGED PARTICIPANTS AMONG OUTGOING ITALIAN EVS VOLUNTEERS, % (2007-2009) ................................................... 155
FIGURE 15. DISADVANTAGED PARTICIPANTS AMONG INCOMING EVS VOLUNTEERS TO ITALY, % (2007-2009) ................................................... 156
FIGURE 16. NUMBER OF INCOMING EVS VOLUNTEERS TO GERMANY BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN THE EU (2009) ................................................... 176
FIGURE 17. NUMBER OF OUTGOING GERMAN EVS VOLUNTEERS BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION IN THE EU (2009) ................................................... 177
FIGURE 18. MAIN REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION OF GERMAN EVS VOLUNTEERS IN 1999, % ................................................... 181
FIGURE 19. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCES GAINED BY GERMAN EVS VOLUNTEERS IN 1999, % ................................................................. 183
FIGURE 20. NUMBER OF OUTGOING UK EVS VOLUNTEERS BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION (2009) .................................................. 204
FIGURE 21. NUMBER OF INCOMING EVS VOLUNTEERS TO THE UK BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (2009) .................................................. 204
FIGURE 22. NUMBER OF YOUNG EU VOLUNTEERS AT ‘VITALISE’ BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (2009) .................................................. 205
FIGURE 23. NUMBER OF EVS PARTICIPANTS IN LITHUANIA (2004-2009) ............................................. 231
FIGURE 24. NUMBER OF INCOMING AND OUTGOING EVS VOLUNTEERS FOR LITHUANIA IN 2009 (EU only) ................................................................. 232
FIGURE 25. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN LITHUANIA IN 2004-2009 (%) ............................................. 236
FIGURE 26. NUMBER OF OUTGOING HUNGARIAN EVS VOLUNTEERS BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION IN 2009 (EU only) .................................................. 255
FIGURE 27. NUMBER OF INCOMING EVS VOLUNTEERS TO HUNGARY BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN 2009 (EU only) ................................................................. 255
FIGURE 28. MOTIVATION OF INCOMING AND OUTGOING EVS VOLUNTEERS FOR HUNGARY IN 2006 (%) ................................................................. 258
FIGURE 29. NUMBER OF INCOMING AND OUTGOING EVS VOLUNTEERS FOR SWEDEN IN 2009 (EU only) ................................................................. 274
Abbreviations

AUI – Action d’Urgence Internationale
CCIVS – Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service
CEV – European Volunteer Centre
CoR – Committee of the Regions
CV – Curriculum Vitae
EC – European Commission
EU – European Union
EU 10+2 (EU-12) – The new EU Member States which acceded in 2004 (10) and 2007 (2)
EU-15 – The 15 EU Member States prior to May 2004
EU-27 – all present EU Member States
EVS – European Voluntary Service
FSJ – Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr
FÖJ – Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr
IVS – International Voluntary Service
MS – Member State
NA – National Agency
NGO – Non-governmental Organisation
OMC – Open Method of Co-ordination
SCI – Service Civil International
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations
UNV – United Nations Volunteers
US – United States
VSO – Voluntary Service Overseas
YAP – Youth Action for Peace
Executive summary

The main aim of the study ‘Mobility of Young Volunteers across Europe’ was to review the conceptual and practical issues hindering the mobility of young volunteers across Europe. The study was initiated as a result of the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions concerning the proposal for a Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across Europe\(^1\). The Committee highlighted that there was a lack of thorough research on volunteering that could supply the information needed to generate a new policy that would fit in well with the reality of youth volunteering in Europe. Such research would have to examine the different systems and laws and regulations which exist in various Member States with regard to volunteering, the wishes of (potential) young volunteers and the obstacles they encounter, and the benefit of volunteering for the young volunteers as well as the region of origin and the host region. We have covered all of these themes in the study.

Volunteering is a relatively under-researched topic, although interest in this area has grown in the last decades. Cross-border mobility of volunteers is especially difficult to analyse because of the lack of suitable data. The existing data is difficult to compare as the methods of defining voluntary activities and techniques used for collecting data on them differ greatly across the countries. This study is one of the few attempts to tackle this challenge.

Structure
The main text of the report comprises three chapters. The first chapter discusses the main terms used, the research design, and the methods applied. The second chapter provides a review of the EU policy framework for cross-border volunteering. The third chapter presents the main findings of the research which are structured so as to describe five aspects of youth cross-border volunteering in Europe:

- Characteristics and motivations of young European cross-border volunteers;
- Volunteer needs;
- Benefits to volunteers and to the hosting and sending societies;
- Challenges facing young volunteers;
- National schemes/ frameworks for the activities existing in the Member States.

Methods
Many of the original findings come from seven case studies. The first study analyses the operation of the EU-funded youth cross-border volunteering programme European Voluntary Service (EVS) that provides the only available source of comparable statistics on volunteer mobility across Europe. The other studies present an in-depth analysis of the national cross-border volunteering frameworks in six Member States: Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden and the UK. These case studies provide a good representation of the diversity found within the EU regarding youth cross-border volunteering.

We collected information for the case studies through an analysis of laws, regulations and policies concerning youth volunteering and using face-to-face, phone/ Skype and e-mail interviews (almost 100 interviews in total). We analysed statistical data on EVS volunteers, their countries of origin and destination within the EU. The review of literature on volunteering and analysis of the EU policy documents were also important sources of data and evidence.

Scope of the study
For the purposes of this study, we define volunteering abroad (international volunteering, cross-border volunteering and transnational volunteer exchanges – all used synonymously here) as unremunerated (except for volunteer allowances and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses) work of one’s free will in a host organisation outside the volunteer country of residence for the benefit of a third party. Young volunteers are defined as those within the 18-30 age range and the geographical scope of the study coincides with the borders of the EU (although many young European volunteers also choose to go outside the EU, especially to developing countries).

There are many forms of voluntary engagement abroad: work camps or short-term volunteering (up to 1 month), medium- (1-3 months) and long-term engagement (over 3 months). Given the well-defined time frame of the stay abroad, international volunteering is usually more structured than in-country volunteering (which can also be part-time or ad hoc) and in many cases can be called voluntary service (performed on a full-time basis). International volunteering is often run by NGOs, but programmes of civic service, that is, state-funded voluntary service, also fall within the scope of the study to the extent that they offer placements abroad (as is the case in Germany and Italy). However, civilian service undertaken instead of compulsory military service is not considered as volunteering because of the absence of the free will element.

International work camps had been an earlier form of youth cross-border volunteering, dating back to the interwar period when they were used to
encourage peace and reconciliation among European nations, whereas **voluntary service abroad of a longer duration** has been practised in Europe since the 1970s. No specific type of voluntary activities abroad is excluded in the study. However, although motivations for joining, benefits and profiles of the participants are mostly similar among the three types, most of the obstacles to volunteer mobility that have been explored here apply to long-term volunteering as it requires more preparation, planning and paperwork than other types of activities. It can also be expected to have a deeper impact on the volunteer and the host society. Furthermore, most of the volunteers interviewed were doing or had previously done a long-term EVS project.

**EU policy framework**

The recent rise of awareness of volunteering has been fuelled by the efforts of international organisations such as the EU and UN as well as national governments and NGOs. The EU initiatives concerning mobility of young volunteers date back to the mid-1990s. In 2010 the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy aims to encourage transnational volunteer mobility within the EU as one of the ways to train a mobile workforce for the fast-changing knowledge economy.

The two areas of **EU policy** most closely related to youth cross-border volunteering are youth and education. Both policies consider volunteering in another Member State as a form of non-formal learning leading to the acquisition of skills that are valuable in the labour market. One of their objectives is to encourage co-operation among the Member States to reduce the obstacles for mobility of young volunteers (e.g. by recognising their learning outcomes). Since EU competence in both education and youth fields is limited, the most influential policy documents (adopted at the Council level) so far are Recommendations: in education – Recommendation on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers (2001); in youth policy – the Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union (2008).

The main contribution of **EU youth policy** in the area of cross-border volunteering has been the establishment of **EVS** in the 1990s, currently the most popular scheme for youth volunteer mobility in Europe (around 5,000 participants annually in recent years). Since 2001, the youth policy has been using the **Open Method of Co-ordination** (OMC) to encourage co-operation among the Member States. In the field of promoting youth volunteering, the co-operation was directed at the development of cross-border volunteering opportunities (programmes), promoting them among young people and making them more accessible (also to young people with fewer opportunities).
The EU education policy regards cross-border volunteering as a type of mobility for learning purposes (alongside the mobility of students, researchers, teachers and trainers). Therefore, the quality of the mobility experience is one of its primary concerns. The European Quality Charter for Mobility (2006) stipulates that in order to make the best use of voluntary service abroad (or other forms of learning mobility) it has to be planned, prepared for, structured, goal-oriented and evaluated. Quality standards are essential in order that the volunteer learning achievements are transparent and the skills and competences gained through volunteering are recognised formally. The formal recognition of skills is especially important for the disadvantaged young people who have difficulties in entering the labour market and/or pursuing formal education.

National governments play the biggest role in creating the legal and policy framework for in-country and cross-country volunteering. However, regional and local authorities also have a role to play (first and foremost by supporting the development of new host and sending organisations and promoting international volunteering locally). Meanwhile, the most important aspects of EU added value are the possibility for the Member States to have a forum to discuss the different national realities and regulations, to exchange good practices and to lay out a common framework facilitating cross-border volunteering. The EU is an important forum for communication and awareness-raising activities, a great opportunity for which is presented by the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship 2011.

Findings
Initially cross-border volunteering was more a part of the ‘counter-culture’ – an expression of defiance at the modern capitalist way of living. Since then volunteering has grown in scale and popularity and has become quite established among certain social groups, namely, the well-educated and well-to-do. The case studies show that in Germany, it has become a ‘mainstream’ practice to the extent that young people may feel obliged to do a year-long voluntary service abroad, especially given the tight labour market. In the UK, a big market exists for paid volunteering abroad (usually in the developing world), a popular option among school leavers, students or graduates taking gap years.

The overall share of European young people volunteering in European countries, however, seems very small. Transnational exchanges are much more established in the formal (tertiary) education sector: from the estimated 96 million young people (15-29 years old; Eurostat 2007) in the EU, only 3,418 took part in EVS projects in 2009 (within the EU), whereas 170,951 participated in the ‘Erasmus’ student exchange (within the EU). Out of the 14.53 million young people in Germany (Eurostat 2007), only 8,210 are known to have participated in voluntary service programmes abroad in 2008. Moreover, at least
1,230 of the participants cannot be considered volunteers as they undertook civilian service.

Few disadvantaged young people can access the cross-border opportunities or are motivated to use them. A typical European cross-border volunteer is likely to be from an upper social class background and a university graduate. Therefore, the majority of EVS volunteers fall within the 22-26 year age range as they already hold a BA or Masters degree. Furthermore, significantly more women participate in transnational volunteer exchanges than men. The most frequently cited motivations for volunteering abroad are the wish to get to know a new country, to learn or improve a language, take a break from normal life and reflect on what to do next, be challenged, gain skills or test a career in a particular field and help other people. If the costs of volunteering abroad are covered, this can also work as a temporary solution for unemployed young people.

For a successful volunteering experience, young volunteers need adequate information (about the opportunities available, the placement of their choice, costs involved, insurance, commitments etc.), language and intercultural training, support from both the sending and host organisation and mentoring. They need help to overcome the financial obstacles (e.g. some programmes cover only travel or accommodation costs). The quality of voluntary work is also important: volunteers cannot be used to substitute for paid staff, yet they have to do work that is valued and provides opportunities to learn. Ideally, the young volunteers also have to be encouraged to establish contacts with the local youth and to integrate better into the host community.

Interviews with stakeholders have confirmed that cross-border volunteering is beneficial both to volunteers themselves as well as to the organisations, communities and societies involved. International volunteering has great integration, cultural learning and empowerment (for civic participation, among other things) potential and, when organised within the borders of the EU, it helps with the development of the European identity. The volunteers gain competences needed for mobility (either for learning or work purposes) and return home more mature, more self-confident and potentially more active citizens. Meanwhile, the host organisations and societies not only benefit directly from the work of volunteers, but are also enriched by the intercultural dialogue and sharing. The employers of former volunteers profit from a more experienced workforce.

However, there are still many obstacles to cross-border volunteering within the EU: legal, administrative and organisational, socio-economic and financial, social and cultural. They have been repeatedly identified in various EU policy documents, but the development and implementation of relevant policy actions
(especially at the Member State level) has been rather slow. In many Member States, volunteering is not recognised by law as a status which gives the right to long-term residence in the country. Volunteers may be treated as regular employees and therefore their allowances may be subject to income taxes and minimum salary regulation. From the financial perspective, many volunteering abroad programmes are costly for the volunteers. Even when they are not, the unemployed young people who could potentially be interested in enrolling in a volunteer project abroad are discouraged from this because they are likely to lose their unemployment benefits. There is a lack of clarity with regard to recognition of the skills and competences gained through volunteering so many potential participants do not think that volunteering would strengthen their position in the labour market.

The Member States pursue various approaches with regard to volunteering and in most cases cross-border volunteering receives much less attention than in-country activities. Nevertheless, most of the barriers to cross-border volunteering could be eased by improving the conditions for full-time volunteering in general. First and foremost, clarifying the legal status of volunteers (including those who arrive from other countries for a full-time placement) would help to address several key issues, such as: immigration and residence in the host country, taxation and social security status of full-time volunteers.
### Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main fields of improvement</th>
<th>Specific issues</th>
<th>Recommended actions</th>
<th>Levels of action</th>
<th>Suggestions and examples of actions at different levels (based on the main report and case studies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Legal framework            | Legal status    | 1. Define the legal status of volunteers, inclusive of cross-border volunteers, i.e.:  
|                            |                 | o *In order to avoid situations where volunteers have to pay their own health or liability insurance, clarify the part-time and full-time volunteer insurance regime, specifying the responsibilities of sending and host organisations, volunteers and the state;*  
|                            |                 |                     | EU | M | S | Regional/local |
|                            |                 | o *Include volunteering as a legal ground for residence in the country;*  
|                            |                 |                     | X |   |   | MS: Special German law regulates the national full-time volunteering programmes FSJ and FÖJ (both in-country and abroad) and lists all the legal rules defining their insurance situation.  
|                            |                 |                     | X |   |   | MS: Lithuania specifically exempts participants of volunteering programmes |
- Italy has introduced a special *missione/V* visa whereby volunteering is established as a sufficient legal ground for European Voluntary Service (Action 2 of EC’s ‘Youth in Action’ programme) volunteers from non-EU countries to come and stay in Italy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X</th>
<th>MS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The UK abolished the previous time restrictions (max. 16 hours a week) for the unemployed to undertake volunteering. However, this only helps promote full-time volunteering within the country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In Hungary, Volunteer Centre Foundation has been implementing the ‘ÖTLET’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Define the relationship between unemployment and volunteering, preferably designating placements abroad as periods of training;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme enabling jobseekers to volunteer for 10 months in order to sustain their motivation, help them gain work experience and remain competent for the labour market. Again, the programme concerns in-country volunteering only.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In Sweden, EVS was recognised as a period of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of skills and competences gained through volunteering (abroad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Enable optional recognition (within the formal education and training system) of non-formal learning qualifications gained through volunteering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to achieve complementarity between systems in various Member States. Where national frameworks of qualifications exist, cross-reference them to the EQF.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5. Develop transparent tools (based on self-assessment guided by mentor) for the evaluation of skills and competences through volunteering and raise stakeholder awareness of them. | X | X | **MS:** Swedish NGO Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange has developed a non-formal education recognition tool ELD (*Experience, Learning, Description*) for use in cross-border volunteering projects.  
**Regional/local:** Spread awareness of non-formal education recognition tools through regional/local partnerships. For example, take advantage of ‘Youthpass’ for EVS volunteers and raise stakeholder awareness of it. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Discuss the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes with NGOs and employers’ organisations in order to encourage consideration of volunteer skills and competences in the recruitment process.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Capacity-building of coordinating, sending and</strong></td>
<td>7. Encourage the development of organisations capable of participating in transnational volunteer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Region/ Local | X | X | Regional/ Local: Consider hosting foreign volunteers in public institutions to contribute to delivery of services. For example, Swedish and Italian municipalities are active as accredited EVS organisations. However, in no way can volunteers be used to replace paid labour and their responsibilities should provide opportunities to learn.  

- Volunteering England or Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) are examples of organisations spreading the good practice of volunteer management in the UK.  
- In Lithuania, EVS coordinating organisations |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>host organisations</td>
<td>exchanges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Support existing organisations in developing cross-border volunteer exchanges and their infrastructure.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Support training and exchange of good practice on the management of cross-border volunteers among NGOs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The table above outlines strategies for supporting existing organisations in developing cross-border volunteer exchanges and their infrastructure. For regional/local initiatives, it suggests considering hosting foreign volunteers in public institutions and initiating seminars for regional/local NGOs. Examples include Volunteering England or Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) in the UK and EVS coordinating organisations in Lithuania. However, volunteers should not be used to replace paid labour, and their responsibilities should provide opportunities to learn.
| Networks | 10. Encourage the development of international networks and partnerships among organisations which use voluntary work. | X | X | X | ‘Actio Catholica Patria’ and ‘Youth Exchange Agency’ have organised training sessions in order to strengthen NGOs in the countryside. **EU**: EC’s ‘Youth in Action’ programme provides opportunities for partnership building and networking in the field of youth work. **Regional/local**: Encourage partnerships among local NGOs for participation in cross-border volunteer exchange, for instance, by organising networking events. |
| Networks | 11. Consider introducing a volunteer exchange aspect in existing transnational cooperation schemes at various levels. | X | X | MS: German-French and German-Czech bilateral partnerships include small-scale volunteer exchange schemes. **Regional/local**: Begin volunteer exchange within the partnerships of twin towns and sister cities. For example, the municipalities of the Lithuanian Telšiai town and its partner town Steinfurt in Germany have |
| Information | Informing the potential volunteers | 12. Facilitate access to full and adequate information on youth volunteering abroad (including costs and conditions, social security status, rights and responsibilities). | X | X | MS: In Germany, the EuroPeers network of former participants in ‘Youth in Action’ activities promotes this EU programme (including the EVS) and other mobility opportunities among young Germans in schools and clubs. **Regional/local:** Consider presentations at schools and youth centres, through youth workers. Involve (former) cross-border volunteers so that they can present their experience, as is already being done in Lithuania where EVS volunteers have been presenting opportunities provided by EVS at events organised in schools, universities and public libraries. |
| Informing the potential volunteers | 13. Consider launching a centralised youth portal on volunteering with a subsection on volunteering abroad (or a separate | X | MS: The Eurodesk in Germany runs a website on cross-border opportunities for young people www.rausvonzuhaeus.de where volunteering abroad is featured |
| Informing society at large | 14. In advertising volunteering opportunities for young people, draw attention to the skills and competences volunteers gain from the experience, including intercultural skills and interpersonal communication. | X | X | X | EU: The learning aspect of cross-border volunteering is emphasised in EVS: pre-departure, on-arrival as well as language training is organised for the participants. The programme is also promoted accordingly. 
**MS:** In Germany, the national full-time volunteering schemes FSJ and FÖJ are designed and promoted as learning opportunities. 
**Regional/local:** Emphasise acquisition of skills in cross-border volunteer placement advertisements. |
<p>| 15. Integrate actions promoting volunteering in general and cross-border volunteering in particular into national/regional/local development | X | X | MS: Lithuanian youth strategy 2010-2018 is due to include legalisation of volunteering among its implementation measures. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Regional/ local:</strong> Use international volunteering as a regional/ local youth policy instrument (include relevant projects or actions in the strategies). For instance, the Scottish youth work strategy admits that involvement in volunteer projects abroad increases young people’s motivation, self-confidence and life-skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Use national/ regional/ local volunteering strategies to promote youth cross-border volunteering.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Integrate the cross-border focus in the information campaigns (e.g. to be implemented during the European Year of Volunteering in 2011) aimed at promoting volunteering. Emphasise the benefits of voluntary work to the host societies and communities.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Supporting volunteers</td>
<td>18. Consider contributing funds to EVS volunteer exchanges in order to increase the number of placements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|           | 19. Consider establishing a national or regional scheme for volunteering abroad with both sending and receiving arrangements or introducing some full-time volunteering bursaries. | X X X | EU: AMICUS, the pilot project for EU civic service, allowed young volunteer exchange among national civic service schemes.  
MS: Some civil service schemes allow people to volunteer abroad, for instance:  
- German national schemes FSJ and FÖJ allow young Germans to go to other countries and young foreigners to come to Germany to volunteer full-time for 6-18 months.  
- Italian National Civic Service runs some projects abroad enabling young Italians to volunteer full-time in other countries.  
Regional/local: Consider introducing volunteer bursary |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting organisations</th>
<th>20. Grant tax exemptions for volunteers’ allowances and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses and ensure they are universally applied.</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>MS: Tax exemptions for volunteers’ out-of-pocket expenses are a usual practice in countries where the specificity of voluntary work is recognised (for example, Germany, Hungary, the UK). However, their implementation is not always properly ensured and volunteers may face some issues with tax authorities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting organisations</td>
<td>21. Consider introducing grant schemes aimed at organisations developing international youth volunteering.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young people with fewer opportunities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cross-cutting issue</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.</strong> Initiate research concerning participation of disadvantaged young people in cross-border voluntary activities.</td>
<td><strong>23.</strong> Develop ways of informing disadvantaged young people about cross-border volunteering opportunities (e.g. through social and youth workers, peer groups).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xxvi
| Research  | Cross-cutting issue | 27. Encourage collection of comparable data on young cross-border volunteer numbers across the Member States.  
28. Initiate research on the short- and term-effects of cross-border volunteering on the volunteers themselves and the communities involved in the exchange.  
29. In order to facilitate the creation of a framework for the recognition of non-formal education, initiate research on skills and competences gained while volunteering in various sectors.  
30. Initiate comparative studies on cross-border volunteer exchanges within the EU and with non-EU countries.  
31. Commission in-depth research on the needs of and effects on disadvantaged young people when participating in cross-border volunteer exchanges. | All levels |
Introduction

This final report was produced for the study ‘Mobility of Young Volunteers across Europe’. The contract N° CDR/ETU/30/2009 to carry out this study was signed in October 2009 and the preliminary report was submitted one month later. It was approved in a meeting with the Committee of the Regions (CoR) on December 14th. The progress report was submitted on March 1st and approved in the second meeting on March 10th. The draft final report was submitted on June 7th and discussed via conference call on June 17th.

The overall objective of this research project is:

To provide the CoR with the study “Mobility of young volunteers across Europe”, which deals with issues such as differences in the legal frameworks for youth volunteering across the Member States, various administrative obstacles (such as non-recognition of skills), needs of young volunteers, their motivation and the way these needs and motivations are addressed, and benefits for volunteers and receiving countries/regions.

The need and the legal basis for such a study are outlined in the CoR’s Opinion on the ‘Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Mobility of Young Volunteers across Europe’ where the CoR notes that:

<...> there are at present considerable differences between Member States regarding the way in which volunteering is organised and that there is a lack of statistical data and thorough research into volunteering. Because harmonisation of laws and regulations is neither possible nor desirable, the Committee of the Regions proposes that a phased approach be adopted. The first phase would consist of a detailed study of the different systems and laws and regulations which exist in the various Member States with regard to volunteering, the wishes of (potential) young volunteers and the obstacles which they encounter when they want to volunteer abroad, and the benefit of volunteering for the young volunteer as well as the region of origin and host region. This information could contribute to the discussion and generate a new policy which fits in well with the reality of youth volunteering in Europe. [own emphasis]

The main text of the report is divided into three parts. The first chapter provides a description of the research design and methodology. It delineates the scope of the study, defining the main terms and reviewing the types of voluntary service included in the analysis, presents the main questions guiding the process

---

of the research and introduces the methods used. The second chapter reviews the European policy framework for cross-border volunteering and explores the different dimensions of the policy approach to this issue (local/ regional, national and EU), outlining the added value of EU involvement in this area.

The third chapter summarises the research findings of the case studies and supplementary analysis. The findings are presented in five sections exploring different aspects of youth cross-border volunteering in Europe:

- Characteristics and motivations of young cross-border volunteers;
- Needs of young cross-border volunteers;
- Benefits of cross-border volunteering to volunteers and to the hosting and sending societies;
- Challenges to cross-border volunteering within the EU (legal, administrative, socio-economic, financial, information, social, cultural and personal aspects);
- Review of the variety of national schemes/ frameworks of volunteering among EU Member States.

The conclusions evaluating the status quo of European cross-border volunteer exchanges are followed by recommendations on how to improve it. Possible lines of action are suggested at various levels of policymaking and various examples of practices already pursued are cited from the main report or the case studies. Seven case studies that have been carried out are based on interviews with stakeholders in the selected Member States and the European Commission, document analysis and review of available statistical data. One of the case studies analyses the European Voluntary Service (EVS), whereas others focus on national frameworks of cross-border volunteering in Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. All case study reports are included as Annexes 1-7.

The project leader was Egidijus Barcevičius (PPMI) and the chief analyst was Indrė Balčaitė (PPMI). Completion of this study was made possible by the cooperation of partners – Italian regional voluntary support centre SPES and Orsolya Jeney from Hungary – as well as almost 100 interviewees from the selected case study countries and the EU institutions which shared their knowledge and insights. Some of them also contributed with valuable comments on the draft texts. The authors want to thank all of them and especially their contacts in the European Commission – Karin Lopatta-Loibl, Frode Dal Fjeldavli and Peggy Geneve - who provided a lot of information on EU policymaking and the EVS. In addition, we appreciate the smooth cooperation with the CoR.
1. Research design and methodology

This study has two specific research objectives designated in the ToR:

1. To review the conceptual and practical issues and problems a regional (local) administrator has to deal with if he/she wishes to design and implement a policy regarding young volunteers (see section 2.2. for more details):

2. To give recommendations and practical suggestions on how to handle issues and problems mentioned throughout the policy cycle.

In the following sections of this chapter, the research design aimed at satisfying the above objectives is presented. Firstly, the scope of our analysis is delineated by explaining the main concepts and types of cross-border voluntary service this study is concerned with (in sections 1.1. and 1.2.). Secondly, the conceptual grid of statements and questions, that is, the key issues to be researched and the main observations derived from the literature review are discussed (1.3.). Thirdly, research methods for the study are described (1.4.).

1.1. Scope of analysis: main terms

Our study is concerned with patterns and conditions of mobility of young volunteers across Europe. As it is vital to clarify the main concepts informing the study, below we explain our definitions of:

- Volunteering;
- Young volunteers;
- Mobility of volunteers;
- Geographical scope of the study (‘Europe’);
- National schemes/systems of volunteering.

The concept of volunteering is central to this study. Although it has long been an object of debate, a consensus seems to be emerging around the definition proposed by the United Nations. Volunteering has been defined as work performed of free will and without remuneration by Femida Handy and others\(^3\), but the UN definition is more specific. The toolkit compiled for the International Year of Volunteers (UN, 2001) suggests that volunteering should be defined as work which is:

---

1. Not undertaken primarily for financial gain;
2. Undertaken of one’s own free will (for example, when schools require their pupils to volunteer, it does not count);
3. Brings benefits to a third party in addition to the people who volunteer (i.e. not performed in a closed circle)\(^4\).

Some add that the activity should be performed within an **organised setting** (within NGOs, volunteer centres, organised groups, etc.)\(^5\). As it would be impossible to survey informal volunteering that is not contributing to the activities of any organised entity, the last point is also important in mapping the scope of our study. Moreover, legal, policy or information measures aimed at creating a volunteer-friendly culture are mainly applicable to formal volunteering.

Our definition of volunteering thus comprises all the above-mentioned four components: a non-financial motivation, free will of the participant, benefit to a third party, and an organised setting. Consequently, a **volunteer is understood to be someone who undertakes volunteering**, that is, **works for free for the benefit of others by his/her own choice within an organised setting**.

The first point should not be understood to imply that all the costs incurred by moving to and volunteering in another EU country must be undertaken by the volunteers themselves. Volunteering is not paid employment the purpose of which is first and foremost a financial reward. Nevertheless, volunteers can receive reimbursement of the costs, free accommodation and food (or an equivalent allowance) and some pocket money still much smaller than the legal minimum wage since this income in money or kind is not a consideration for volunteer work, but simply provides for subsistence\(^6\). However, this might still raise questions about some well-funded full-time volunteering schemes such as the Italian National Civic Service. In Italy, its participants are not considered volunteers in the legal sense because they receive a monthly allowance unrelated to their boarding costs or other expenses (see Annex 2).
The second requirement is interpreted as exclusive of the civic service\(^7\) programmes that make activities (that could be otherwise considered volunteering) mandatory for the participant. This happens when, for instance, a civic service is performed as an alternative to compulsory military service. This form of engagement is referred to as civilian service\(^8\) and it is practised, for instance, in Germany (see Annex 3) and used to be practised in Italy when military service was still compulsory (see Annex 2).

Although the European Youth Forum representing young people in the structural dialogue with the EU institutions implies in its policy paper that devoting time for work in participatory youth organisations is also a form of volunteering and should be supported as such\(^9\), in this study we are guided by the UN definition that requires voluntary activities to be beneficial to a third party outside the organisation where volunteering takes place. That is not meant to belittle voluntary engagement in one’s community, church, sports club or students’ union as these activities also nurture good, responsible citizenship and political outspokenness, but our focus is on the activities consciously aimed at the benefit of others. For the same reason, internships or unpaid work for profit-seeking organisations are also excluded from the analysis.

It is now recognised that volunteering should be accessible to all age groups. However, our study is focused on the needs of young people. We define young people as people aged 18-30 as this is the usual age limit for the participants of volunteering programmes. **Young volunteers** are thus people aged 18-30 taking part in cross-border volunteering activities.

By **mobility of volunteers** we mean cross-border exchanges with the aim of working in a host organisation located in another country. They do not have to be volunteer exchanges in the strict sense – involving swaps of volunteers between organisations in different countries, although sometimes these are categorised separately. Cross-border volunteering programmes included in our analysis can also be sending-only or hosting-only ones – as long as they satisfy other criteria.

---

\(^7\) According to the European Commission’s definition adopted here, civic service is a voluntary service managed by the State or on behalf of the State. See Communication from the Commission to the Council of 30 April 2004 ‘Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth. Proposed common objectives for voluntary activities among young people in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field’ (COM (2004) 337 final).

\(^8\) Ibid.

Transnational volunteer mobility is part of the free movement of people which is one of the four fundamental freedoms of the EU. The *scope of mobility* in the framework of this study is also set within the borders of EU-27. This is determined by the ToR where it is asked to explore “different systems of youth volunteering in the Member States” as well as “laws and regulations which exist in the various Member States” among other issues.

**National schemes/systems of volunteering** are conceptualised as the legal and socio-economic framework within the Member States, the national (or regional – in federal or devolved states) context in which sending, coordinating and host organisations of volunteering exchanges as well as volunteers themselves operate. This framework is set by the regulations affecting the organisations and defining the status of volunteers (in terms of their social security benefits, regarding income tax and healthcare, recognition of their skills and qualifications, etc.)\(^\text{10}\).

Studying national contexts for cross-border volunteering is important to assess to what extent cooperation between the various organisers of voluntary activities in different countries is possible. In other words, it is vital in order to evaluate to what degree the national schemes of volunteering exchanges among MSs are compatible with each other, given the variety of volunteering traditions, conditions and policies in Europe. The horizontal nature of volunteering requires a unified yet flexible approach\(^\text{11}\).

The compatibility of national frameworks can be evaluated by fulfilment of the following criteria:

1. Every resident can freely choose another EU Member State for volunteering if s/he so desires. The choice has no major influence on the benefits they would otherwise receive in the sending country. The grounds for granting residence permits in receiving countries include volunteering and distinguish it from employment.
2. In the country of their choice, volunteers receive adequate training (including a language course) which enables them to integrate into the receiving country’s society. Information about volunteering opportunities is sufficient, accessible and detailed; the rights, responsibilities and benefits for volunteers are clearly stated.

\(^{10}\) Our definition of the national scheme of volunteering (as overall conditions existing in a particular state for volunteering) is wider than that of the ‘national scheme for volunteering’ used by CoR in its opinion. Since the CoR has argued that “[n]ot all EU countries have national schemes for volunteering”, the term used seems to imply an existence of a national programme for promoting volunteering and organising placements. Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 31 March 2009 on the ‘Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Mobility of Young Volunteers across Europe’.

3. Skills and competences acquired while volunteering are recognised in other Member States.
4. Volunteers receive adequate social benefits and sufficient rights in the receiving country.

Hence, the aim of our study can be described as analysing patterns and conditions of cross-border volunteering exchanges of young European residents aged 18 to 30 within the borders of the European Union. This analysis should result in practical suggestions of ways on how these exchanges could be enhanced and facilitated.

1.2. Scope of analysis: dimensions of cross-border volunteering

Having defined the main terms, we devote this section to a review of the object of our study, that is, the diversity of cross-border volunteering programmes. This explanation of the characteristics according to which they can be sorted also helps to understand the scope of our study and its implications.

Volunteering opportunities are available in various places around the world and the geographical scope is thus one of the dimensions determining voluntary service. Volunteering can be local, that is, within the volunteer’s home country or in any other country (in-country vs. cross-border volunteering). Although local volunteering is considered beneficial in building a high-trust society for its gains in social, human and economic capital and promoted as such, the focus of this study is cross-border volunteering within the EU.

Work camps have a tradition dating back to the interwar period, whereas small-scale international long-term volunteering programmes have existed since the 1970s. Given its transnational nature, cross-border volunteering is usually more structured than local volunteering. Local volunteering can be done in one’s free time and does not necessarily follow regular hours. In contrast, volunteering

abroad entails full-time involvement, has a specific time frame and pre-defined tasks. Therefore, cross-border volunteering opportunities are usually arranged as voluntary service\textsuperscript{15}.

This object of research is still quite diverse as international volunteering projects vary greatly (as Table 1 summarising the biggest networks for international volunteering shows). As for their \textit{duration}, projects can last from a few days to a year or even longer. The \textbf{type of work} offered in the framework of the project can be teamwork or individual activities. A group of at least 10 volunteers can participate in European Voluntary Service (EVS) projects lasting from 2 weeks to 12 months while individuals and smaller groups of youth can only take part in activities that are of more than 2 months duration\textsuperscript{16}. Examples of teamwork include cleaning of seaside beaches, basic construction or forest planting work, while individual volunteers may, among other things, engage with children or teenagers, the elderly, the disabled or help coordinate volunteer exchanges themselves.

Another dimension of youth voluntary service is \textbf{age}. The usual age requirement for participants is 18-30 years as used by the EVS. However, some programmes do not set an upper limit of this kind. Such are the networks of The Alliance, Action d’Urgence Internationale (AUI), Service Civil International (SCI) and Internationaler Versöhnungsbund (see the list of organisations in Table 1 below). On the other hand, other schemes allow participation from the age of 16. Examples are the German national programmes FSJ and FÖJ (see Annex 3) or EVS projects for young people with fewer opportunities. However, the majority of volunteers still fall within the above-mentioned age range.

Alternatively, there are also programmes that are aimed at another age group. For instance, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) offers opportunities to people aged 30 to 35, whereas participants of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) must be 30 to 40 years old. Furthermore, EU-funded Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects supporting adult education are aimed at people in their 50s or older\textsuperscript{17}. This takes us to yet another aspect: projects also can be differentiated by the

\textsuperscript{15} “Voluntary service is part of voluntary activities and is characterised by the following additional aspects: fixed period; clear objectives, contents, tasks, structure and framework; appropriate support and legal and social protection.” Communication from the Commission to the Council of 30 April 2004 ‘Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth. Proposed common objectives for voluntary activities among young people in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field’.


profile of volunteers who are accepted as participants. VSO and UNV require professional experience, although most cross-border volunteering programmes and especially those targeting youth are open to non-specialised volunteers and serve as a tool for acquiring that experience.

To give a more specific example, most common short-term (2-4 weeks) volunteering projects offered by SCI are international work camps. They bring together 10 to 20 people from different countries to work on a local not-for-profit project that does not require special skills. However, medium- (1-3 months) and long-term (over 3 months) projects are usually individual placements (without specific skills requirement, too)\textsuperscript{18}.

To summarise, cross-border volunteering programmes differ in terms of their geographical scope, duration and type of voluntary activity offered and the age limits they set for their participants. In this study, we are concerned with programmes operating within the EU for the benefit of young Europeans (18-30 years old). Meanwhile, the study covers programmes of any duration and projects involving various types of activities: both work camps and long-term exchanges in fields varying from non-formal education of children to construction work.

Our study thus adds to the growing interest and awareness of policymakers and researchers of the potential of cross-border volunteering, exploring the present situation within the European Union and suggesting improvements to achieve better cooperation between organisers of volunteering exchanges in different countries. The study also contributes to knowledge generation in this field. However, in order to provide a comprehensive contextual analysis of the aforementioned issues, understanding of the previous research and empirical data is essential and that is a challenge in itself. Although studies on volunteering, volunteer motivation and the benefits of volunteering to the people involved and receiving countries are abundant, comparable statistical data on cross-border volunteering and analysis on the compatibility of national schemes is scarce. The ways of tackling this challenge are discussed in the following sections presenting the conceptual grid of statements and methods that were used to carry out the study.

Table 1. Some youth cross-border volunteering programmes operating in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of organisation</th>
<th>Duration of placements</th>
<th>Geographical focus of activities</th>
<th>Main topics and activities</th>
<th>Special requirements for volunteers</th>
<th>Age range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)</td>
<td>Co-ordinating body since 1948. 144 member organisations in 100 countries.</td>
<td>Short- and long-term</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Peace; Sustainable development; Inter-regional exchanges.</td>
<td>Non-specialised volunteers</td>
<td>No limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO)</td>
<td>Co-ordinating body since 1993. 13 member organisations.</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Legal status of volunteers; Central and Eastern Europe; Inclusion of disadvantaged volunteers.</td>
<td>Non-specialised volunteers</td>
<td>Mainly under 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Alliance</td>
<td>International network since 1982. 21 full and 9 associate member organisations.</td>
<td>Mainly short-term</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Inclusion of disadvantaged volunteers; Training and exchange for staff and volunteers; Development of medium- and long-term activities.</td>
<td>Non-specialised volunteers</td>
<td>No limit (average under 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Training and Seminars</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE)</td>
<td>6 - 12 months</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Training to improve the quality of long-term voluntary service; Seminars on issues such as youth mobility.</td>
<td>Non-specialised volunteers</td>
<td>18 - 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Federation of Intercultural Learning (EFIL)</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Secondary school exchange; EVS; Training seminars.</td>
<td>Non-specialised volunteers</td>
<td>15 (min. for school exchange) – 30 (max. for EVS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Type and Regions</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Work Areas</td>
<td>Min/Max Age</td>
<td>Type of Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Civil International (SCI)</td>
<td>International organisation since 1920. 33 branches and groups. Member of CCIVS and AVSO.</td>
<td>Short-term (and some medium- and long-term)</td>
<td>Europe, Asia and North America</td>
<td>Peace; International understanding; Sustainable development; Respect for the environment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-specialised volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntariato Internazionale Donna Educazione Sviluppo (VIDES)</td>
<td>International organisation since 1987. Member of CCIVS.</td>
<td>1 month to 2 years</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Peace; Debt relief; Promotion of women; Street children; Globalisation and solidarity.</td>
<td>Min. 21 for long term Otherwise min. 17 Max. 35</td>
<td>Non-specialised volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Action for Peace (YAP)</td>
<td>International organisation since 1923. 15 branches and groups. Member of CCIVS and AVSO.</td>
<td>Short- and long-term</td>
<td>Europe (east and west), Latin America and Mediterranean</td>
<td>Peace; Social change; Sustainable development; Environment.</td>
<td>Min. 18</td>
<td>Non-specialised volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Area of Work</td>
<td>Volunteers Type</td>
<td>Age Limit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Voluntary Service (EVS)</td>
<td>Part of the programme ‘Youth in Action’ of the EU implemented by National Agencies</td>
<td>Long- and short-term</td>
<td>Mainly Europe (with possibilities in Mediterranean and CIS countries)</td>
<td>Mobility; Intercultural Learning.</td>
<td>18 - 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationaler Versöhnungsbund</td>
<td>International network since 1914</td>
<td>Short and medium-term</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Ecumenism; Peace.</td>
<td>Min. 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Many of these networks are intertwined. For example, organisations of other networks may use EVS to fund their volunteering opportunities abroad. On the other hand, this list is not exhaustive of all cross-border volunteering opportunities in Europe as other small-scale schemes exist and individual arrangements are also possible.
1.3. Research questions and preliminary observations

The ToR gives the following tentative list of issues to be explored in the study:

1. The existing systems of youth volunteering (with the assessment of their positive and negative features);
2. Laws and regulations in the Member States;
3. Obstacles for volunteers (such as non-recognition of their skills, legal framework, etc.);
4. Their needs and motivations;
5. Benefits for volunteers from their activity;
6. Benefits for the host region from accepting cross-border volunteers.

It is obvious that such a research agenda implies both a national and regional dimension of the study. At the same time, an EU scope is required in order to allow room for comparison and to explore the obstacles and opportunities for compatibility of volunteering schemes. The methodology section will propose a strategy for reconciling these strands.

Desk research helped to identify the key problems and prompted some observations that are relevant for the study and that have to be taken into account. These are given below in the conceptual grid of statements (see Table 2). The statements are clustered into topics of current volunteering trends, volunteer motivations and different national contexts of various EU Member States. Observations on various aspects of cross-border volunteering are listed in the left-hand column of the tables, revealing the complexity of the cross-border volunteering phenomenon and presenting challenges for the study. On the right, respective actions taken to tackle the challenges are briefly discussed.

The conceptual grid of statements served as an awareness-raising tool that helped to draw the attention of authors to the various aspects and dimensions (personal/ regional/ national/ European or social/ political/ cultural, etc.) of cross-border volunteering within the EU. These observations guided the analysis of national (regional) legal documents and the process of interviewing the stakeholders of cross-border volunteering. Having reflected on the premises of our research, we discuss its methodology in the next section.
Table 2. Grid of statements for the study on cross-border volunteering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Implications for the study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General observations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus is emerging on the broadest definition of volunteering.</td>
<td>The definition of volunteering to be used in this study entails: no financial gain, free and non-compulsory commitment, benefits to third party, carried out within an organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering as a part of one’s career is becoming popular.</td>
<td>The existing frameworks for the recognition of volunteer skills were analysed. However, the altruistic nature of volunteering was not neglected either.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteers’ motivations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most volunteers are looking for an exciting experience. Aspects of challenge, making new friends, taking a break from paid employment/studies or getting to know another country are important in cross-border exchanges that open up opportunities for a multicultural experience. However, value-based commitment is still an integral part of volunteering and should be given proper acknowledgement.</td>
<td>Volunteering should not be understood as an entirely altruistic activity, nor should it be regarded as an egoistic attempt to enhance one’s career opportunities. Therefore, all possible motivations are explored in the study without presumptions about their value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering is a process of self-realisation and learning. ‘Old’ volunteering meaning long-term value-based commitment based on the membership in religious, political and other communities and ‘new’ volunteering referring to a project-oriented short-term activity</td>
<td>It is recommended that mechanisms be sought to give full recognition to the skills and competences acquired through volunteering. However, the use of these frameworks should be optional as some volunteers may not want to formalise their volunteering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
undertaken in order to learn certain skills and enhance one’s career opportunities are often contrasted.

Although a lack of recognition of voluntary activities still exists in the labour market, it is not true that employers always fail to acknowledge the value of volunteering now that the intercultural experience and foreign language skills are considered an asset.

A representative of employers has been interviewed to inquire whether the skills and competences of former volunteers are valued in the workplace. It is recommended to raise awareness of the skills and competences volunteers obtain.

### National contexts

Data is available on volunteering as such, but scarce on volunteer mobility. There is also lack of “reliable and comparable statistics on the scale, importance and socio-economic value of voluntary activity”.

EVS statistical data on volunteer mobility obtained from the European Commission was used for comparative review across the case studies, whereas within the case studies as many sources of data on cross-border volunteer numbers were sought.

Although there is a distinction between EU-15 and EU-12, some cases clearly stand out in terms of volunteering rates.

Case study countries (see the methodology section 1.4.) have been chosen primarily on the basis on volunteering rates and patterns rather than following the EU-15 and EU-12 distinction. However, countries from both groups were included as EU-12 countries typically have lower volunteering rates.

---


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries differ not only in terms of overall volunteering rates, but also with regard to who volunteers, how and why.</th>
<th>Different patterns of volunteering were taken into account when selecting the cases. Attempts were made to describe the socio-economic profile of a typical cross-border volunteer in each of the case studies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The socio-economic context may not be conducive to volunteering, at least full-time. Volunteers face socio-economic obstacles: incomplete healthcare coverage and possible loss of unemployment and other social security benefits, such as support for low-income families. Full-time volunteers, contrary to other low-income groups, such as students or retired people, do not receive discounts for public transport, cultural events, etc. Taxation sometimes applies to volunteer allowances (in money or in kind).</td>
<td>Legal provisions for volunteer social security, liability and health insurance were analysed within the case studies; possible hurdles with tax authorities were also pointed out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people may be willing to volunteer, but information about opportunities may be insufficient, specific opportunities may fail to address their needs adequately or public attitudes towards volunteering might be an impediment.</td>
<td>Obstacles to cross-border volunteering were explored and reasons for an insufficient spread of information identified were applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries may create opportunities and obstacles for young cross-border volunteers both as sending countries and as receiving countries.</td>
<td>Within the case studies, provisions concerning both incoming (e.g. immigration rules) and outgoing volunteers (e.g. available opportunities for volunteering abroad) were analysed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4. Research methods

This section briefly presents our main decisions regarding the research design and methodology that enabled us to achieve the aim of this study. Several methods were employed to achieve the research objectives:

- Literature review;
- Statistical review;
- Case studies of the EVS and selected EU Member States:
  - Analysis of laws, regulations and policies concerning youth volunteering and mobility;
  - Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders of cross-border volunteering.

Literature review has been used to explore the EU policy framework concerning volunteering and especially volunteer mobility: EU policy documents were analysed and the main developments in the EU youth and education policy fields summarised in Chapter 2. The method has also been used to review the relevant previous research on volunteering and to answer the research questions (see Chapter 3). In addition, literature review has been used in the case studies to analyse and present the results of the specific cases.

Statistical review was employed in order to elucidate the patterns of cross-border volunteer exchanges in Europe. However, the only available source of comparable statistical data EU-wide is the EVS database ‘Youthlink’ as most European countries have no official records either on volunteer mobility or in some cases even reliable data on volunteering rates in general. In the case study countries researched (see below), most volunteer mobility data is available only at the level of some single cross-border volunteering organisers. Data is not collected centrally and it is difficult to get the full picture of cross-border volunteering rates. The amount of data did not allow a fully-fledged statistical analysis so in most cases only a review of EVS mobility trends was carried out and presented. Within the case studies, we made an attempt to supplement EVS data and present the national scene of cross-border volunteering in numbers insofar as it was possible.

Given the limitations of the study and the lack of comparable data, a systematic comparative analysis of transnational volunteer mobility was unfeasible. Therefore, research is based on seven case studies: a horizontal case study of the EVS and six national ones – Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden, and

---

22 In this respect, Germany was an exception as we found statistics of cross-border mobility of volunteers was being compiled from various organisers (see Annex 3).
the UK (see Annexes 1-7). **Case studies** present a good methodological tool for deepening knowledge and testing hypotheses as they describe specific cases in their context and make it possible to see how policies work in practice. The combination of statistics, legal review and interview findings within case studies serves as an optimal mix of quantitative and qualitative methods.

The countries chosen represent various volunteering rates and patterns. In federal or decentralised states, research is focused on one region in particular: on Lower Saxony in Germany and on Scotland in the UK. A pilot case study of the German national scheme (Annex 3) of cross-border volunteering was completed first. It proved the validity of the main premises of research and confirmed the designated research questions were relevant and framed appropriately.

In the framework of national case studies, an **analysis of national** (and regional where appropriate) **legislation and policies** concerning volunteering was conducted. It was guided by the questions of cross-border volunteer legal status in the country, their social security and benefits, rights, obligations and legal as well as administrative issues they might face. Furthermore, a great deal of information was collected through **interviews** and consultations with the stakeholders: with policymakers/ administrators, researchers of volunteering, volunteers, NGO/ legal experts, etc. Each case study report builds on up to 24 interviews, providing a sound knowledge of the national schemes of volunteering.

The main study findings obtained using the methods described above are presented in Chapter 3. To clarify the context in which European cross-border volunteering operates, the next chapter reviews the EU policy framework for cross-border volunteering and the added value of EU involvement in promoting transnational volunteer exchanges.
2. European context of cross-border volunteering

2.1. Review of the European policy framework

EU initiatives in the field of volunteering began as part of the EU youth policy. At the same time, they are also considered to be instruments promoting non-formal education. In this chapter, we attempt to outline the main developments related to volunteering within both the EU youth and education policy fields. Although there are more EU policy areas that relate to volunteering, we consider these two to be the most relevant in the context of youth cross-border volunteering across Europe.

Following the lifelong learning approach, non-formal education opportunities are no longer confined to young people exclusively. Apart from the youth-targeting European Voluntary Service (EVS) funded and coordinated by the European Commission, similar opportunities exist for older people under the Lifelong Learning Programme. Namely, ‘Grundtvig’ supports adult learner mobility through Senior Volunteering Projects aimed at people over 50 years old. However, since our study concerns youth volunteering specifically, we focus on the European policy framework for youth volunteering.

2.1.1. Volunteering in the EU youth policy

In this section, we review the relevant EU legislation and policy documents addressing youth volunteering and cross-border volunteering in particular. In order to understand the ways EU initiatives on volunteering arise and are implemented, it is worth looking first at the overall structure of EU youth policy.

EU youth policy structure

In this section, we present how the EU youth policy structure originated and evolved to attain its current ‘shape’. Although the first EU initiatives targeting youth had a comparatively late and difficult start, today European policymaking in the field of youth affairs is conducted within a complex framework of MS co-

---

23 A recent study lists the EU policy fields of active citizenship, youth, education and training, employment and social policy, sport, external relations and international development and environment as linked to volunteering. See GHK, *Volunteering in the European Union*. Brussels: European Commission, 2010, p. 28.  
[Accessed 01-06-2010].


operation. It rests on three pillars – mainstreaming, Open Method of Coordination and the Lisbon Process – and is supplemented by the EU programmes aimed at youth empowerment and education.

The European youth policy was developed in response to the high unemployment rate of young people in the mid 1970s. The EU youth policy was thus first of all an attempt to achieve the social integration of young people. The first EU-level measures targeting young people started in the 1980s as support for pilot student exchanges, followed by the university student exchange programme ‘Erasmus’ launched in 1987.

The EU role in the coordination of youth policies was subject to discussions as there were both countries supporting and opposing initiatives at the EU level. The introduction of ‘Erasmus’ was challenged in the European Court of Justice. The Court upheld the national sovereignty in the areas of youth and education but allowed EU initiatives that MSs would agree upon following the established procedures.

A few years later, a legal basis was established for EU measures in the fields of youth and education. The Treaty on European Union signed in Maastricht in 1992 gave the EU certain competence in the youth policy field. Article 126 (2) of this Treaty stated that Community action should also be aimed at “encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors”. The exchanges set up by the Treaty of Maastricht were organised within specific programmes such as ‘Erasmus’ and ‘Youth for Europe’ which was implemented from 1988 to 1999. Until the 2000s, EU youth policy was confined to the implementation of such programmes.

In 2001, the European Commission published the White Paper ‘A New Impetus for European Youth’. Based on wide consultations at the national and EU level, the White Paper discussed many issues affecting young people and suggested long-term priorities in the youth policy field. Most importantly, the Commission proposed two strategies for moving forward in EU youth policy: establishment

28 Schröer, ‘Voluntary Service at European and International Level’, p. 320.
of the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) to encourage co-operation and mutual learning between countries and mainstreaming youth issues into other sectoral policies.

The OMC and mainstreaming were to become two of the three ‘pillars’ of the EU youth policy (the third pillar has been the Lisbon Process - see below). In 2002, the Resolution regarding the framework of European co-operation in the youth field was passed. Building on the White Paper, it established the OMC process in the European youth policy and also called for “the inclusion of the youth dimension in other policies and programmes, both at national and at European level”. The Resolution created a framework for monitoring progress on both aspects of cooperation and set four priorities for EU youth policy: participation of young people, information, voluntary activities among young people and greater understanding and knowledge of young people.

Similar to OMC implementation in other policy fields (e.g. social, employment policy), the co-operation on youth policy entails consultations with young people (through a ‘structured dialogue’ – see below), European Commission questionnaires for the MSs regarding the national measures of youth policy and regular reports of the MSs on the four priorities. These reports are evaluated by the Commission, which then presents its synthesis report for the Council’s consideration. It takes two to three years to complete a youth policy cycle, each including the preparation and submission of national reports, the Commission’s communication based on their evaluation and the subsequent Resolution of the Council of Youth Ministers.

However, all the Resolutions that have been released since 2002 were replaced by the first-ever Recommendation in the youth policy field (that directly concerned volunteering – see below) adopted in 2008. Since youth policy falls within the jurisdiction of the Member States, the Recommendation is non-binding but still carries more political weight than resolutions.

---

32 Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (2002/C 168/02).
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
37 Denstad, p. 27.
The third EU youth policy ‘pillar’ has been the **Lisbon Process**. The original Lisbon Strategy of 2000 had only mentioned young people in relation to the necessity of ensuring that European education and training systems were adapted to the needs of different groups of people as a knowledge society requires constant learning. In 2005, the Heads of State and Government of France, Germany, Spain and Sweden proposed the European Youth Pact that set priorities within the Lisbon Process specifically concerning young people. This Pact was adopted by the Brussels European Council of the same year. The initiative addressed issues outside the youth policy cooperation framework, that is, the social dimension of youth policy: employment, integration, social advancement, education, training, mobility and reconciliation of working life and family life.

The European Youth Pact was later integrated into the revised Lisbon Strategy and is now reflected in the new **Europe 2020 Strategy** adopted in June 2010. The new document shares the same concern for young Europeans, emphasising greater participation of young people in the labour market as a way to increase the overall employment rate and the need to improve education levels by reducing school drop-out rates. Moreover, one of the flagship initiatives announced to help achieve the ambitious goals of Europe 2020 - ‘Youth on the Move’ – specifically targets young people and is supposed to be developed into a programme for youth mobility primarily in higher education settings that would “enhance the performance of education systems and <…> facilitate the entry of young people into the labour market.”

As the White Paper of 2001 expired in 2009, a new long-term policy document was adopted after another round of extensive consultations with the stakeholders. The Commission Communication called ‘**An EU Strategy for Youth: Investing and Empowering**’ set youth policy priorities until 2018. The strategy reaffirmed the threefold structure of the EU youth policy consisting of:

---

38 Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000, No. 100/1/00.
39 Annex 1 of the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005 (7619/1/05 REV 1).
41 See Conclusions of the European Council of 25 and 26 March 2010 (EUCO 7/10).
• the ‘active citizenship’ strand that uses the OMC to pursue the abovementioned four priorities (participation, information, voluntary activities and greater understanding and knowledge of young people);
• the ‘social and occupational integration’ strand as set out in the European Youth Pact and implemented through the Lisbon Process, with three priorities (employment/social inclusion, education/training, reconciliation of work and private life).
• youth mainstreaming in other policies such as anti-discrimination, health, sport, etc.

In addition to the European youth policy tools mentioned above, consultations with young people take place in the form of a **structured dialogue**. MSs were first invited to develop a structured dialogue “with young people and their organisations at national, regional and local level on policy actions affecting them, with the involvement of researchers in the youth field” in the Council Resolution of 2005. As a result, MS authorities have been consulting National Youth Councils since 2006. At the EU level, regular meetings take place between the EU institutions and the European Youth Forum which is the main umbrella organisation representing young people in the EU.

**Development of the European Voluntary Service**

The previous section demonstrated that the EU youth policy started with the adoption of youth programmes. While the current European youth policy has since become more complex and multi-faceted, youth programmes remain one of the key policy instruments. Currently, the Commission is implementing the ‘Youth in Action’ programme. One of its five actions is the **European Voluntary Service (EVS)**, which is a cross-border volunteering scheme for young people.

The EVS was first introduced as a pilot scheme in 1996. Due to its success, it grew in scale and was later integrated into the ‘Youth’ Community Action Programme (2000-2006) as a separate Action. The eligible age for participation in the EVS was then 18-25 years. The ‘Youth’ Community Action Programme was established as a contribution to the development of transnational voluntary service activities and youth exchanges. In the Programme, volunteering was...

---

44 Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Pact for Youth and promoting active citizenship (2005/C 292/03).
defined as informal education that enables the acquisition of skills for working life and the MSs were encouraged to remove obstacles to voluntary service.\textsuperscript{47}

The ‘Youth’ programme was replaced by ‘Youth in Action’ in 2007-2013. As mentioned, it also includes EVS. The concept of young people was expanded for the new period by changing the volunteers’ age limit from 18-25 to 18-30.

EVS is arguably the main EU contribution to the development of international volunteering, enabling several thousands of youngsters to explore another country through voluntary service each year. Its scope and methods of operation as well as its benefits and challenges are explored in Annex 1 (EVS case study). The next section reviews the development of EU youth policy from the perspective of volunteering.

Volunteering in the EU youth policy

EU policy on volunteering and cross-border mobility of volunteers has developed mainly as a part of the wider youth policy field. The cooperation between Member States based on the OMC proved useful in helping to identify the obstacles to volunteer mobility and initiating measures for cooperation. At policy level, voluntary activities have been a priority of the EU youth policy ever since the White Paper ‘A New Impetus for European Youth’ was released (during the International Year of Volunteers 2001). The timeline of the main EU-level developments in the field of volunteering is shown in Figure 1 below.

The White Paper ‘A New Impetus for European Youth’ (2001) identified four priority areas for cooperation between the Member States on youth policy. One of them was ‘voluntary service among young people defined as “a form of social participation, an educational experience and a factor in employability and integration”’. The paper stated that it was necessary to recognise voluntary service as an educational experience, that is, a form of non-formal learning. The MSs were urged to act immediately to remove obstacles to young volunteer mobility at national, regional and local levels.\textsuperscript{48}

The subsequent Council Resolution regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (2002) that established the OMC process as proposed by the White Paper also included ‘voluntary activities among young people’ as one of the four priority areas. In particular, it emphasised the aims of facilitating opportunities for volunteering, promoting voluntary activities and

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} European Commission White Paper ‘A New Impetus for European Youth’.
fostering their recognition and appreciation by public authorities, businesses and NGOs.\textsuperscript{49}

The first cycle of the OMC started in 2003 when the Commission sent out questionnaires to the MSs on the voluntary activities of young people. Based on their replies, the Commission proposed draft common objectives and lines of action.\textsuperscript{50} As a result, four objectives (as well as measures to achieve them) were adopted in the \textit{Council Resolution on common objectives for voluntary activities for young people} (2004)\textsuperscript{51}:

(1) Encourage the development of voluntary activities of young people with the aim of enhancing awareness of the existing possibilities, enlarging their scope and improving their quality;
(2) Make it easier for young people to carry out voluntary activities by removing existing obstacles;
(3) Promote voluntary activities with a view to reinforcing young people’s solidarity and engagement as responsible citizens;
(4) Recognise voluntary activities of young people with a view to acknowledging the value of the personal skills thus acquired and their engagement to society and the role that voluntary activities play in terms of facilitating the transition from education to work and adult life.

The national reports on the implementation of the priority concerning the voluntary activities were submitted in 2006. Having analysed the reports, the Commission came to the conclusion that the common objectives remained relevant and suggested further steps by putting forward concrete actions in the area of voluntary activities.\textsuperscript{52} The Council \textit{Resolution on voluntary activities of young people} (2007) that followed emphasised the need to reinforce the OMC as well as the co-ordination between different policy fields because of the cross-sectoral nature of volunteering. The MSs were invited to adopt national \textbf{strategies for voluntary activities} and to improve the image of volunteering, among other things, by encouraging businesses to support it. The measures listed in the Resolution also drew attention to the importance of reducing the legal and administrative barriers to volunteering (abroad) by reviewing the legal

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{49} Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field.\textsuperscript{50} Communication from the Commission to the Council of 30 April 2004 ‘Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth. Proposed common objectives for voluntary activities among young people in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field’. This document also provided definitions later referred to in EU documents of voluntary activities, voluntary service, civic service and civilian service (see Footnote 16).\textsuperscript{51} Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 15 November 2004 on common objectives for voluntary activities of young people (13996/04).\textsuperscript{52} Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 5 September 2007 ‘Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society’ (COM(2007)498 final).}
framework\textsuperscript{53}. This measure echoed the call of the European Economic and Social Committee the year before for all Member States to draw up a legal framework to guarantee the right to carry out voluntary activities independently of an individual’s legal or social status\textsuperscript{54}.

In 2008, the previous resolutions were replaced by the only Recommendation in the youth policy field so far – the \textit{Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union}. In fact, this study can be seen as a review of the \textit{status quo} regarding the MSs’ efforts to implement the Recommendation by transforming existing and creating new opportunities for cross-border volunteering. The \textit{Recommendation} characterised \textbf{cross-border voluntary activities} as “open to all young people, undertaken of their own free will in the general interest, for a sustained period, within a clear framework and in a country other than the country of residence, unpaid or with token payment and/ or coverage of expenses”\textsuperscript{55}. It recommended that the MSs take action both to promote cooperation between the organisers of voluntary activities in different countries and work to facilitate access to information about cross-border volunteering opportunities, promote recognition of volunteer learning outcomes, etc. It advised the MSs to ensure access to cross-border volunteering for young people with fewer opportunities\textsuperscript{56}.

The \textit{Recommendation} also stressed the benefits of cross-border volunteering – not just to volunteers themselves, but also to the local communities\textsuperscript{57}. The recognition of volunteering as an important factor in creating the social capital, local and community development and in promoting social and economic cohesion has become the new focus in EU policy on volunteering. Initially it was perceived as non-formal learning bringing benefits primarily to the individuals who participate in it. Yet over time, not only did the focus on structured learning emerge, but also volunteering and its economic and social benefits became increasingly recognised by the EU institutions\textsuperscript{58}. It was acknowledged in the CoR’s \textit{Opinion on the contribution of volunteering to economic and social cohesion}\textsuperscript{59} and in the European Parliament \textit{Resolution on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion in

\textsuperscript{53} Council Resolution of 19 November 2007 on voluntary activities of young people (14427/07).
\textsuperscript{54} Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 13 December 2006 ‘Voluntary activity: its role in European society and its impact’ (2006/C 325/13).
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Interview with Irish Member of the Committee of the Regions, 27-05-2010; GHK, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{59} Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 7 February 2008 on ‘The contribution of volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion’ (2008/C 105/03).
2008. The noteworthy point of the latter document was the call to include “volunteering as a special category in the statistical accounts of Eurostat”\textsuperscript{60}.

It was this wish to highlight and to celebrate the benefits to volunteering that eventually led to the decision to devote the year 2011 to volunteering. The last section of this chapter describes how this decision was reached and what expectations various stakeholders have of it. However, a review of the EU approach to volunteering from the perspective of youth policy only would render our analysis incomplete. Therefore, in the next section we explore the main developments from another angle – that of education policy.

\textsuperscript{60} European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion (2007/2149(INI)).
Figure 1. Key developments in EU policy concerning volunteering (1992-2009)

Note: The upper part of the timeline presents the key volunteering-related developments in the EU youth policy, whereas the lower part sums up the achievements of the EU education policy concerning volunteering. In the middle, the three youth-targeting programmes are added for orientation.
2.1.2. Cross-border volunteering in EU education policy

Volunteering has also been addressed within the EU education policy. Most importantly for cross-border volunteers, the focus has been on volunteer mobility which was dealt with in the wider context of mobility for learning purposes. Concern for volunteering as a way of acquiring new skills and competences seemed to go hand in hand with the development of the EVS itself.

In 1996 (the same year as the pilot EVS started), the Commission published the *Green Paper ‘Education, training, research: the obstacles to transnational mobility’*. Mobility for learning purposes (of volunteers as well as students, trainees and researchers) was named a fundamental principle of **free movement**. Participants of voluntary activities were perceived as young ‘voluntary workers’. In spite of this name, the voluntary service was “distinguished from paid work and conventional systems of vocational training”, but considered as affording “opportunities for gaining formative experience”\(^{61}\). **Benefit** for both volunteers and the community was acknowledged. Even then, the Green Paper outlined obstacles to transnational volunteering that are still encountered today. Lack of legal volunteer status was identified as the main obstacle leading to all others and hence a specific legal status for trainees and voluntary workers was proposed. Issues of social protection, taxation, loss of benefits while undergoing training in another MS, recognition of skills gained, linguistic and cultural obstacles were also named\(^{62}\).

A few years later, the *Resolution concerning an action plan for mobility* (2000) was adopted by the Council and the representatives of the MSs. The Action Plan outlined measures to define and democratise mobility in Europe, promote appropriate forms of funding, increase mobility and improve the conditions for it\(^{63}\). It referred to volunteers among other groups pursuing education in another MS.

The following year, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the *Recommendation on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers* (2001). Again, it defined transnational mobility for learning purposes as an integral part of freedom of movement. In addition to common measures aimed at removing obstacles to mobility, **specific measures to facilitate volunteer mobility** were included in the Recommendation. These encompassed national legal and administrative

---


\(^{62}\) Ibid.

actions corresponding to the specific nature of the voluntary activity; certification of volunteering as a tool of recognition; non-discrimination of volunteers in healthcare, social protection and social welfare policies as well as distinguishing volunteering from paid employment. Volunteers were defined as participants of the EVS or similar programmes undertaking “an activity which specifically involves solidarity, is non-profit making and unpaid and helps them acquire social and personal skills”.

It is clear that volunteering has been considered as non-formal learning in the EU policy framework. Hence the Council Resolution on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field (2006) applies to young volunteers as well. The Resolution itself does not explicitly refer to volunteers, but to people active in youth work and youth organisations as well as to the Commission’s ‘Youth in Action’ programme. In the document, Member States and the Commission are encouraged to develop a “a comparable and transparent youth-specific element within Europass for identifying and recognising the skills and competences acquired by young people through non-formal and informal learning that could be attached to or form an integral part of, certificates or other recognition tools”. This would be a bridge between non-formal learning and formal education, which is especially important for young people with fewer opportunities.

The expert group set up to follow the implementation of the Recommendation of 2001 emphasised the need to focus on improving the quality of cross-border mobility for education and training purposes rather than just its intensity. Another Recommendation was adopted in 2006 that included the European Quality Charter for Mobility. Measures outlined were aimed at ensuring that education or training abroad was planned, prepared for and adequately supported. Aspects such as language training, mentoring, recognition and reintegration were covered, making both the country of origin and the host country responsible for the quality of the mobility experience. The section on volunteer needs (3.2.) presents the quality criteria and shows how they relate to volunteers.

The recent Green Paper ‘Promoting the learning mobility of young people’ (2009) once more stresses the importance of making mobility for education

---

65 Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field (2006/C 168/01).
66 Ibid.
purposes the rule rather than the exception and reflects on the arrangements and support needed to promote it for young people going to another MS or outside the EU for education or training. Volunteering placements are again cited as one of the learning mobility options.

2.1.3. European Year of Volunteering and stakeholders’ expectations

In the EU, the most recent landmark development in the sphere of volunteering was the decision to designate 2011 as the ‘European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship’ (more informally called the ‘European Year of Volunteering’). This initiative was proposed by the NGOs and the respective Commission proposal was preceded by various consultations considering a potentially deeper EU role in this field and endorsed by the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and various civil society organisations, before it was finally adopted by the Council.

Four objectives have been set for the European Year of Volunteering:

1. Work towards an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU;
2. Empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering;
3. Reward and recognise volunteering activities; and
4. Raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

This year is seen as an “opportunity to make a greater impact” and a tool “to strengthen the impact of existing policies”. More exactly, information and promotion campaigns, conferences and events, studies and research are to be organised.

---


74 Ibid.
Interviews conducted with the stakeholders in various MSs revealed great expectations of the European Year of Volunteering. Many interviewees noted they expected it to drive the development of national volunteering frameworks and raise public awareness. But some look forward to even more profound changes.

The European Year of Volunteering coincides with the EU presidency of Poland and Hungary. In Hungary, where voluntary organisations and volunteers are still grappling with the legacy of the Communist era (see Annex 6), it could help to secure higher recognition of volunteering within society. The Hungarian Act on Voluntary Activities in the Public Interest which currently puts foreign volunteers in a legally ambiguous position could be reconsidered. Likewise, in Lithuania, steps have already been taken to discuss the possibility of preparing a law on volunteering that is currently a non-regulated activity. Meanwhile, as Italy was one of the several MSs participating in the pilot pan-European civic service project AMICUS (see Annex 2), an officer of the Italian Civic Service Abroad expected that 2011 would mark the start of a European Civic Service, an EU-wide voluntary service scheme.

A member of the Irish delegation to the CoR who presided over the CoR’s Economic and Social Policy Commission that prepared two CoR opinions related to volunteering thought that the European Year of Volunteering presented an opportunity to begin deliberations on much more complex issues impeding cross-border volunteering in the EU. Such issues would include the possibility of introducing a uniform legal status for volunteers across the MSs, a framework for social protection of volunteers, common immigration rules and clearance procedures for them.

However, the coordinator of the year at the EC warned against expecting miracles. The implementation of the European Year of Voluntary Activities depends on the MSs – their national coordinating bodies and other stakeholders. Therefore, the political support of the MSs is vital for the success of the
The effects of the European Year of Volunteering are yet to be seen. The next section explores what actions can be taken to support and promote youth cross-border volunteering at various levels given the current EU context. Chapter 3 reviews the present situation of youth cross-border exchanges in the EU.

2.2. EU added value in facilitating cross-border volunteering

Where does the EU contribution to facilitating cross-border volunteering have added value? The choice of the EU is to promote the compatibility of national schemes and to actively foster the subsidiarity principle with regard to volunteering in formal settings, that is, organisations. Thus all political levels – local, regional, national, European – have a role to play in creating better opportunities and removing obstacles for cross-border volunteers. In this section, we review the various actions that have been proposed or are already being taken at each of the levels.

Using the classification developed by US social psychologists Suzanne C. Thompson and Jennifer Pitts in 1992, Italian psychologist and researcher of volunteering Piero Paolicchi has distinguished the emotional, information and instrumental types of support for volunteering. Typically, he argues, the support for volunteer work is instrumental, yet in some situations the other kinds may be equally or more important. For different levels of policymaking adequate and balanced mixtures of the three types of support should be found and, even while emphasising one of them, others should not be forgotten. For instance, different levels of administration could support capacity building in volunteer organisations as they often lack management and marketing skills.

Most of the legal and policy prerequisites for a culture favourable to youth volunteering are to be created at the national level. It is within the competence of the MSs to promote volunteering and to ensure equal access to volunteering opportunities by supporting voluntary activities of marginalised groups or groups which typically do not volunteer. MSs have the choice of, for instance,

\[^{80}\] Ibid.


including volunteering in existing youth policy programmes\textsuperscript{83} as well as in State of the Nation addresses\textsuperscript{84}, which would offer important symbolic recognition. Some MSs already have volunteering strategies and budgets reserved for promotion of volunteering.

Drafting and implementing adequate legal provisions regulating volunteer accident and illness (related to their voluntary activities) as well as liability insurance is within the national jurisdiction\textsuperscript{85}. As efforts should be made to protect the rights of volunteers to a safe, secure and healthy working environment, and the right to be provided with basic subsistence support, the rights and duties of volunteers and volunteer-receiving organisations could be specified in national laws\textsuperscript{86}. Creating a framework for combining family, professional life and volunteering is also a matter that could be deliberated at the state level\textsuperscript{87}.

It has been argued that national volunteering programmes should include more opportunities for cross-border volunteering. This would help to promote volunteering abroad\textsuperscript{88}. For instance, completing voluntary service abroad is already possible within the German or Italian national programmes (see case studies in Annexes 3 and 2). Furthermore, German national civic service programmes for youth \textit{Freiwilliges Sociales Jahr} (FSJ) and \textit{Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr} (FÖJ) allow foreign participants to come to Germany to volunteer. A similar possibility is provided for in the new French Civic Service\textsuperscript{89}.

There have been many suggestions of incentives that could be used to promote volunteering at the national level. If possible, VAT exemptions for voluntary organisations registered in the EU could be introduced on purchases related to the accomplishment of the objectives of these organisations\textsuperscript{90}. Other tax

\textsuperscript{83} Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 16 May 2007 on implementing the common objectives for voluntary activities of young people (2008/C 241/01).
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{87} European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion.
\textsuperscript{90} European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion.
exemptions for volunteers and organisations could be considered as well as discounts for public transport and other financial incentives for volunteers\textsuperscript{91}. Volunteers and their families should not be deprived of the social benefits they would otherwise receive\textsuperscript{92}. In some countries such as the UK or Germany opportunities exist to accredit voluntary service as an achievement valid within the framework of formal education (see case studies in Annexes 4 and 3).

Regional and local authorities are closest to the organisations managing voluntary work, the young volunteers themselves and the potential volunteers, including young people with fewer opportunities. In many MSs, they are directly responsible for shaping youth policy and organising activities for young people. Therefore, they have great potential in terms of promoting volunteering among young people and encouraging volunteer exchanges\textsuperscript{93}. The CoR has thus advised that more accurate statistical information on volunteer involvement at this level be collected to support the development of the volunteering infrastructure and promote volunteering by public service agencies, at the same time as emphasising the importance of respecting the autonomy of the voluntary sector\textsuperscript{94}.

Administrative procedures could be simplified while maintaining control of the spending of public money, and authorities could offer help to voluntary organisations in accessing funding\textsuperscript{95}. Regional authorities could introduce policy measures in order to protect the right of volunteers to receive the necessary information, training, supervision and support\textsuperscript{96}.

As the legal system in the EU does not provide for harmonisation of national systems in the field of volunteering, cooperation between the existing schemes in the Member States rather than unification should be promoted\textsuperscript{97}. Many EU policy documents stress that the diversity of voluntary activities and systems should be preserved and further developed\textsuperscript{98}. Without aiming to reduce the diversity of volunteering systems, EU institutions strongly encourage the MSs to

\textsuperscript{91} International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Volunteers, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{93} Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 26 November 2008 on ‘Proposal for a Council Recommendation on mobility of young volunteers across Europe’.
\textsuperscript{94} Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 7 February 2008 on ‘The contribution of volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion’.
\textsuperscript{95} European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion.
\textsuperscript{96} International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Volunteers, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{97} Commission Proposal of 3 July 2008 for a Council Recommendation on mobility of young volunteers across Europe.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
become involved in promoting cross-border volunteering since the national, regional and local authorities are usually preoccupied with local volunteering. A platform for the development of bilateral and multilateral agreements and partnerships among the Member States could thus be proposed

The added value of **EU action** is the opportunity to “benefit from the dimension of exchanges and of experience and good practice between Member States”\(^\text{99}\). Exchanges of information and good practice as well as setting of standards are especially useful in seeking to ensure fair treatment of volunteers, securing their social rights, providing a framework for volunteer training (including language learning) and recognition of their skills.

The CoR has urged the EU to pay attention to volunteering not just within programmes directly targeting volunteering (such as ‘Youth in Action’, ‘Grundtvig’ or citizenship policy), but also in other EU policies\(^\text{101}\). For example, acceptance of the monetary equivalent of volunteering as match funding in EU funded programmes could help to promote the recognition of the economic contribution of volunteering. In addition, it has been suggested that a European volunteering programme for all ages be established\(^\text{102}\). As for education policy in particular, inclusion of voluntary work among the categories and competences listed in the Europass\(^\text{103}\) would be beneficial.

Meanwhile, Eurostat could collect data on EU-wide volunteering and promote research on the voluntary sector \(^\text{104}\) because most of the data on volunteering is currently incomparable across the MSs. This is due to the different definitions of voluntary activities as well as the methods and techniques used for collecting information. In general, the need for more extensive research on volunteering has been repeatedly pointed out. The EU could be an important arena for awareness-raising regarding volunteering. The European Volunteer Centre (CEV) has suggested that the EU

\(^{99}\) Ibid.
\(^{100}\) Commission Staff Working Document of 3 June 2009 on European Year of Volunteering 2011: Evaluation Ex ante.
\(^{102}\) ‘The contribution of volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion’; Interview with European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet - Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres, c/o European Volunteer Centre (CEV), Brussels, 19-01-2010.
\(^{103}\) European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion.
\(^{104}\) European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion; Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 7 February 2008 on ‘The contribution of volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion’; European Volunteer Centre, General Assembly Conference ‘Putting volunteering on the economic map of Europe’, p. 19.
introduce volunteer cards, volunteer awards and other public appraisals and, in fact, the European Year of Volunteering 2011 will allow room for that. Moreover, an award for the most volunteer-friendly city, local or regional authority established at Community and individual MS levels could integrate all three different levels for the benefit of public visibility of voluntary work. The proposed introduction of a funding initiative within the Town Twinning programme co-financed by the EU to allow volunteer exchanges between sister cities and towns would also facilitate synergy between the European and local levels of action.

However, as has been highlighted already in various contexts, the main rule in promoting volunteering is that it should not replace or be confused with employment. Neither should volunteering replace public services provided by governments. Hence, as the working group of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Volunteers suggests, labour laws should clarify that compensation for volunteering does not fall under the concept of paid labour, and ensure that volunteering is not used to cover up illegal low-paid labour. It is very important that laws exempt volunteer compensations from the general taxation systems, as their inclusion would reduce the already modest compensations that volunteers receive. It has also been argued that the minimum wage should not be applied to non-profit organisations, but implementation of such a suggestion would be difficult and might make it impossible to distinguish between volunteering and employment in the not-for-profit sector.

It can thus be seen that there are both challenges and opportunities for a multi-level policy on volunteering. The EU, national governments and regional administrators must work to allow all citizens, regardless of their financial resources, to volunteer if they so desire. Policy recommendations are included

---

105 European Volunteer Centre, MOVE Conference on ‘Mutual recognition skills and competences gained through volunteering: Towards a European debate’ organised by the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Commission, p. 18.
107 Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 7 February 2008 on ‘The contribution of volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion’.
110 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Volunteers, p. 12.
at the end of the report, whereas the challenges are analysed in more detail in the next chapter (3.4.).
3. Assessment of the status quo in European cross-border volunteering

The third part of our report presents the main findings of our desk research and interviewing, structured according to the research themes. Recommendations were drafted based on this assessment of the current situation. Five broad topics are explored in this chapter. In the first section, the socio-economic profile of young cross-border volunteers is sketched and their motivations for participating in international voluntary service are discussed. The second section discusses the needs of young (potential) cross-border volunteers as expressed by interviewed volunteers themselves and people with substantial experience in managing international exchanges. In the third section, the benefits of volunteering both to volunteers themselves and the sending and host societies are summarised. The fourth section contains an analysis of the various types of challenges to cross-border volunteering, divided into several clusters. Finally, different national schemes of volunteering are reviewed, the incompatibility of which causes some of the problems for cross-border volunteering.

3.1. Characteristics and motivations of young cross-border volunteers

Unambiguous answers are not available to the questions of what it means to be a volunteer and what motives drive the decision to volunteer abroad. These questions have also been discussed in academic debates. Below we present a short overview of the recent discussions on this topic in order to illustrate the various and changing perceptions of cross-border volunteering.

Different studies have focused on personality types that tend to volunteer. Academic literature has also looked into different types of volunteering, volunteer profiles and motivation. Omri Gillath and others have researched volunteer altruism from a psychological perspective, relating it to the theories of attachment. For their part, Sara Dolnicar and Melanie Randle distinguished “classic volunteers” (motivated by firstly “doing something worthwhile; then

---


personal satisfaction; and helping others”), “dedicated volunteers” (embracing all of the aforementioned motivators), “personally involved volunteers” (who join organisations or causes through personal relationships), “volunteers for personal satisfaction”, “altruists” and “niche volunteers” (who have specific drives, such as gaining work experience)\textsuperscript{114}.

Despite this variety, some authors have stressed that volunteering becomes increasingly related to career opportunities and personal development motivation – it seems to become an investment\textsuperscript{115}. Several authors have pointed out that volunteering abroad has shifted from an activity popular among those willing to escape the “consumerist” culture to a step in one’s career, which enhances future prospects and develops skills recognisable by both employers and society at large. Although some authors express extensive criticism towards what volunteering abroad has become, it should be highlighted that recent developments in international volunteering have also made it more attractive to various people and created more opportunities for everyone to discover themselves by volunteering.

Similarly, the international volunteering portal ‘Transitions abroad’ highlights that while previously dominated by humanitarian aid and charity projects, international volunteering is changing its “face”. Firstly, more people are interested in short-term volunteering (or so-called volunteer vacations, which have become known as “voluntourism”))\textsuperscript{116}. Instead of a long-term commitment, they want to choose their way of contributing ‘à la carte’\textsuperscript{117}. On the other hand, even long-term volunteering can be attractive due to the fact that, unlike regular long-term vacations, it offers more contact with the locals. Secondly, as safety is turning into an issue of prime importance, there is a market for volunteering activities which are “fairly pleasant and easy”. Thirdly, as volunteering is becoming more common and the demand for volunteering opportunities is growing, less commitment and lower qualifications are required from volunteers\textsuperscript{118}. Volunteering for the sake of a new exciting experience differs from the original purpose of volunteering, namely, helping others.

\textsuperscript{114} Dolnicar, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{115} For instance, John Wilson and Marc Musick quote different surveys showing that around a third of volunteers in the US and Canada associate their volunteering expectations with new useful contacts that could help in their careers, and new skills. John Wilson and Marc Musick, ‘Doing well by doing good: Volunteering and occupational achievement among American women’. \textit{The Sociological Quarterly}, 2003, 44(3), p. 434 (433-450).
\textsuperscript{118} Poelzl.
It has been argued that boundaries between volunteering, tourism and short-term work abroad are becoming blurred. This seems to apply more directly to overseas volunteering which is more costly and seen as more ‘exotic’ than volunteering within Europe. Development of volunteer mobility across the EU bears fewer risks as it is less likely to attract ‘adventurers’ or people who could provoke conflicts and misunderstandings in the host country because of their naive wish to achieve quick change by ‘reforming’ local ways’. In such cases, volunteers’ preconceptions prevent them from relating to the local people and their service then brings more harm than benefit. European cross-border volunteering contributes to the building of European identity and cannot reproduce the deep inequalities between countries of the so-called ‘First’ and ‘Third World’. However, the risk still exists that young volunteers from Western European countries with supposedly strong traditions of volunteering and democracy may feel superior to their peers in the former Communist states.

In the context of these developments, the main debate is whether the cross-border volunteers are motivated by altruist or by self-centred reasons. However, the distinction should be made not between ‘egoistic’ and ‘altruistic’ motives. In fact, the decision to volunteer is determined by a mix of personal motivations, which usually contains elements of both altruistic values and more self-centred interests.

3.1.1. Socio-economic profile of European cross-border volunteers

The EVS database and the observations of interviewees show that the typical participant of cross-border voluntary activities can be described as a young, well-educated woman from a relatively wealthy family background. In this section, we explore the socio-economic portrait of a typical young cross-border volunteer in more detail before moving on to the issue of the motivation for volunteering.

It is difficult to judge the average age of European cross-border volunteers from the scarce information available, but EVS data shows that the majority of EVS volunteers are 22-26 years old (even though the formal age limit is wider). Young people usually embark on a period of voluntary service during the ‘threshold’ periods of their life: in most cases, either after finishing school or university.

---


120 Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), Brussels, 19-01-2010.
Volunteering after graduation from university is the dominant trend in Europe. Therefore, another attribute describing cross-border volunteers across the EU is the **higher education degree**. According to the evaluation of the ‘Youth’ programme, 75% of the young people who participated in EVS 2000-2006 had a university education and only a few were graduates of a vocational school\(^\text{121}\). Research on volunteering in Italy, Germany, France, the Czech Republic and Poland has also shown that most of the participants are well-educated\(^\text{122}\). This has also been confirmed by all the case studies conducted (see Annexes 1-7).

However, the average age of volunteers varies across the EU and a difference between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ EU members can be seen. Young people from the EU15 also choose volunteering quite often after finishing secondary education. On the other hand, among young Eastern European participants of cross-border voluntary activities, this group makes up only a fraction. Poles, Hungarians or Lithuanians are more likely to take up cross-border volunteering during or after their university studies\(^\text{123}\).

One possible explanation may be the situation in the higher education market. In countries such as Germany where demand for a place in university is much higher than the supply, school-leavers need to ‘bridge’ school and university with some other temporary activity and thus many cross-border volunteers are only 19 years old (see Annex 3). Nevertheless, public attitudes are also important here: in Western Europe it is socially acceptable to take some time off to reflect on what to do in the future, what studies and career path to pursue and volunteering can be seen as a reasonable option during this period. Meanwhile, many Eastern Europeans tend to think of full-time volunteering as non-productive time which could be better used by pursuing a formal degree or entering the labour market. There is considerable social pressure to go to university straight after school.

Young people who choose to participate in cross-border voluntary activities predominantly come from an **upper social class background** and are thus able to pay the programme fees or to cover any other costs, such as living, travel


\(^{123}\) Agnieszka Moskwiak, ‘Learning and recognition of voluntary activities’ in Williamson and Hoskins with Boetzelen, p. 148 (145-156). See also Annexes 5 and 6.
expenses etc.\textsuperscript{124} Higher education and well-to-do social background are often interrelated and reinforce each other. Meanwhile, people from a disadvantaged background often lack the skills and experiences that would facilitate a longer stay abroad and are less likely to be interested in cross-border volunteering. Therefore, their percentage is low among the participants, even in EVS, in spite of its explicit inclusion policy with regard to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds\textsuperscript{125}.

As was mentioned already, another important aspect is that the majority of cross-border volunteers in the EU are female. EVS 2005 data on programme participants (in projects with programme countries in Europe) reveals that 70\% of the volunteers were young women and only 30\% young men\textsuperscript{126}. Percentages differ from one MS to another, but the trend is confirmed in all the case studies where data on gender proportions was available. For instance, in Italy 75\% of incoming and 62\% of outgoing EVS volunteers are women (see Annex 2). Even 80\% of the participants of German national cross-border volunteering initiatives (FSJ and FÖJ) could be women, if men who choose volunteering schemes in order to complete civilian service are excluded (see Annex 3).

The possibility of completing a civic service instead of a military one encourages volunteering-like activities, despite not being voluntary in the strict sense as they are required by law. On the other hand, the young men who have completed military or civilian service are not so keen to spend another year volunteering. However, this does not explain why females dominate in voluntary activities abroad EU-wide as many EU members have already abolished compulsory military service. In fact, this may be more related to the fact that women tend to dominate in in-country volunteering as well.

3.1.2. Motivations of young Europeans for volunteering abroad

The fact that some groups are more willing to volunteer leads us to the complex question of motivation. As was mentioned already, it is almost impossible to reduce it to a single strand – usually it is a mix of motives. The time perspective is also an important aspect as motivations change: the reasons for beginning voluntary service become adjusted to the reality of the host country and

\textsuperscript{124} Kate Stanley, ‘More than a numbers game: a UK perspective on youth volunteering and active citizenship’ in Howard Williamson and Bryony Hoskins with Philipp Boetzelen (eds.), Charting the landscape of European youth voluntary Activities, 107-115.

\textsuperscript{125} Schröer, ‘Youth civic service in Europe: comparison of policies and programmes – France, Germany, Italy, Czech Republic, Poland and at European level’, p. 96.

organisation. Eventually the question “why did I start?” becomes less important as volunteers have to decide what keeps them going.

In-country volunteering in most cases is motivated by the wish to help others and to take up a meaningful part-time activity. Meanwhile, cross-border volunteering is a more difficult decision as it means leaving home for a longer period of time. Therefore, starting a cross-border voluntary activity is motivated by other factors or in any case by a wider range of reasons. As stated in a study on motivations for international volunteering, they can be altruistic or more self-centred but mostly a combination of both types of motives. For example, even though research on Swiss volunteers found 77% of respondents said they were motivated by helping others, just 11% admitted it was “the only driving force behind their interest in international volunteering.”

Volunteering abroad is first of all appealing to young people because of the opportunity to get to know another country (to gain intercultural experience). Intercultural experience includes becoming acquainted with a new culture and its traditions, and also meeting new people which make living abroad even more interesting. This is the reason for participating in youth cross-border volunteering cited in several studies. Knowing a new culture and new people was cited most frequently by young Poles as a reason for participating in EVS. A survey of German EVS participants in 1999 also found that knowing another culture or society was important to most of them. Half of their Lithuanian counterparts and an overwhelming majority of the incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers (85%) surveyed in Hungary also said they took up EVS because of the intercultural experience.

A wish to get to know another culture is complemented by aspirations for change, adventure and challenge. Leaving the home country for a longer time is often associated with a break from normal activities and the everyday environment and an opportunity to do something completely different, something exciting. On the other hand, volunteering abroad may be understood

\[128\] Rehberg, p. 119-120.
\[129\] Ibid, p. 113.
\[130\] Ibid, p. 119.
\[131\] Rehberg, p. 113.
\[132\] Moskwiaık, p. 150.
as simply a way to discontinue routine activities or studies. Some authors observe that this motivation has recently become more popular. According to Kate Simpson, taking a gap year between education and employment (or further education) “was once an act of rebellion”, yet now it has become “an institutionally accepted commercial gap year industry which helps form new citizens for a global age”.

Voluntary service abroad may be a real challenge since a person cannot change his/her mind easily and return home, as a former EVS volunteer in Germany stated. Volunteers embark on cross-border volunteering because they understand that stressful and unexpected situations enable them to test their limits. Some even argue that volunteering abroad – surviving on your own in an unknown environment without the support of family and friends – serves as a rite of passage into adulthood.

Taking time off volunteering abroad can also be seen as an opportunity to reflect on what to do next, what direction to choose for the future. That is why young people usually embark on it at certain significant moments of their life – between school and higher education or between university and employment. For example, one German EVS volunteer in Lithuania saw her service as a possibility to decide what to study later. Another EVS volunteer – a Lithuanian school-leaver – decided to study German philology after volunteering in Germany. At the same time, voluntary service can be a temporary solution to a situation in the education and/or the labour market or other problems (for instance, in the case of young people with fewer opportunities). For some, it can be a way to avoid unemployment at home (see Annexes 3, 5 and 6). In either case, international voluntary service helps to bridge different stages of life.

Cross-border volunteering is perceived as enhancing one’s skills and abilities. The most prominent aspect here is the wish to master a foreign language which motivated almost 89% of Hungary’s EVS volunteers in 2006 and over a third of Lithuanian EVS volunteers surveyed. A non-tourist stay abroad and

---

135 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 03-02-2010.
137 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010.
138 German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 29-01-2010.
140 German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 29-01-2010.
141 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, 27-01-2010.
142 Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium, p. 18.
143 Kėžaitė and Špokevičiūtė, p. 6.
practice of a foreign language is seen as a highly valuable experience both for personal development and for a successful future – in terms of professional orientation, work experience and soft skills applicable in the workplace. Since it is believed to increase one’s employability, it may be a motivating factor for those who are still considering their future plans. Work in a certain field enables improvement of professional capabilities or testing of a possible career. In such cases, more attention is paid to the project activities rather than the host country. For the former EVS volunteer from the UK who had studied IT, volunteering at the European Capital of Culture project in Luxembourg for one year was an opportunity to retrain and later get a job in the field of culture.

According to the research on EVS volunteers from Poland, almost one fourth of respondents indicated that participation in EVS was a chance to use the knowledge and skills gained in school or university. Volunteering abroad may thus serve as training or an internship in a specific field.

Similarly, a person’s choice of a particular project may also be determined by a wish to volunteer in the same area where he/she has already been volunteering in the home country. This might be interrelated with the wish to help other people because in-country volunteering is mostly driven by altruistic motivations as mentioned above. However, surveys of German EVS volunteers and Hungary’s EVS volunteers indicated that the wish to help was a highly motivating factor in cross-border volunteering as well (see Annexes 3 and 6). Those driven by a wish to help often undertake activities that allow direct interaction with people.

In addition, there is a variety of personal reasons such as the wish to run away from one’s parents, to feel independent (and possible redefine yourself) or to visit the home country of one’s friends. Despite the fact that every person is driven by a different set of motives, it can be concluded that the most common driving factors to volunteer abroad are as follows: getting to know a new culture (in its broadest sense), facing new challenges and having an exciting experience, while at the same time doing something worthwhile and meaningful.

---

144 For example, Moskwiak, 150-151; Roland Becker et al., p. 14; European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
145 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010.
146 Interview with former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.
147 Moskwiak, p. 149.
148 European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
149 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 03-02-2010.
3.2. Needs of young cross-border volunteers

Volunteering abroad can be a life-changing experience for the young people who undertake it – and in most cases it is, despite some annoyances and inconveniences. However, there are examples when the waited-for volunteering adventure turns out to be a disappointment because the parties involved fail to do their best. It can also be that the volunteers have ungrounded prior expectations or do not put in enough effort to find out details about the exchange programme, host project, country or organisation.

In fact, the gap between the individual’s expectations and the realities of volunteering abroad in a particular project could be the main reason for discontinuing international voluntary service as German research on EVS early drop-outs suggests\(^{150}\). However, the mismatch can happen because the information future volunteers received was inadequate or incomplete as has been pointed out by many EVS volunteers interviewed. In addition, disappointed expectations alone rarely lead to a decision to quit and return home – usually there are other grievances as well\(^{151}\). EVS volunteers who left prematurely also frequently complained that their work was not demanding enough or too demanding and they could not rely on their mentors/ tutors to help solve the problems\(^{152}\).

The latter issues are certainly within the responsibility of the host organisations. If the problems cited above arise, it shows a lack of attention on behalf of the organisation in arranging and preparing the placement. The neglect of international volunteers by the organisations and the authorities makes them especially vulnerable given their foreign background and the fact that many MSs do not consider being a volunteer as a legal status.

On the other hand, the potential of cross-border volunteering is not being fully exploited. A Eurobarometer survey of 2007 showed that only 16% of young Europeans interviewed participated in any voluntary activity. However, 74% of the respondents said they would be interested in volunteering if there were more programmes encouraging it\(^{153}\). The main European cross-border volunteering scheme EVS may have between 5,000 and 6,000 participants a


\(^{151}\) Ibid., p. 13.

\(^{152}\) Ibid., p. 24-26, 29.

year, yet the European Commission has estimated that even if only 0.1% of 96 million young people in the EU between the age of 15 and 29 wished to participate in a cross-border volunteering project, this could amount to 64,000 young volunteers going abroad annually.\textsuperscript{154} 64,000 volunteers a year may sound very ambitious, but it would still be less than a third of the annual participation rate of ‘Erasmus’.\textsuperscript{155} Obviously, given the current rate of funding, it would be impossible to create and manage all these volunteering opportunities within the EVS alone.

Interviews with EVS volunteers and other stakeholders suggest there are certain needs that organisers of international volunteering and policymakers have to take into account in order to ensure volunteering abroad is attractive for many young people and in order to make their voluntary service in another country successful. Fulfilling these conditions could be expected to help cut the numbers of volunteers who leave the host project prematurely.

As an international intern helping to manage volunteer exchanges at Great Britain’s branch of the Service Civil International put it, all volunteers need adequate support before, during and after their volunteering project; they want their work to be visible, recognised and appreciated with thanks and feedback; lastly, they need opportunities to learn while volunteering and share their experiences and values among themselves and with the local community.\textsuperscript{156} When these conditions (elaborated below in more detail) are in place, the personal responsibility of volunteers to abide with the requirements of the programme or a specific project can be also brought into question.

\section*{Adequate information}

As pointed out above, adequate and full information available before the actual start of volunteering is crucial for young volunteers in order to make informed decisions about the host project and avoid disappointment. According to an interviewee in the German NA, young people looking for volunteer opportunities abroad want to know everything – about money, about their insurance while abroad – and need a lot of details about the hosting project.\textsuperscript{157}

However, serious misunderstandings because of incorrect project (activity) descriptions are not unheard of. For instance, one Lithuanian EVS volunteer

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{155} 174,163 in the 2007/08 academic year. See more details in the EVS case study report.
\textsuperscript{156} Interview with Slovenian intern at IVS GB (International Voluntary Service – Great Britain), Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{157} Interview with Public Relations Officer, JUGEND für Europa – German National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Bonn, 05-02-2010.
\end{flushright}
who searched specifically for opportunities to work in her field of studies, namely kinesiotherapy, did not get the chance to do so, despite the initial promise of her host organisation.\textsuperscript{158}

It is useful to have an advance meeting with the organisation prior to the start of the volunteering. It serves as an opportunity to find out about the future tasks, working environment and colleagues and thus lowers the chances of the project failing. However, advance visits seem to be unknown outside EVS, whereas within EVS they are normally only funded for disadvantaged participants who require more support.

Nevertheless, even though it is usually not possible to have an advance visit, contacting former volunteers who were involved in the same organisation could give an idea of what the voluntary service is going to be like and preparations could be made accordingly.\textsuperscript{159} Therefore, exchange organisers are advised to help project participants to get in touch with former volunteers of the same country and host organisation.

**Expenses**

As mentioned, volunteers need to have a clear understanding of the costs of the project. If the expenses are all covered (as in EVS), having an overview of the actual amount of money spent on him/her can help the volunteer realise the investment in him/her. Although all-funded programmes are attractive and accessible, some argue that they actually spoil the participants. It is better, the argument goes, when the volunteer needs to contribute a smaller share of the required amount so that he/she feels more responsibility for the project and considers his/her own involvement more seriously.\textsuperscript{160} However, in cases when young people do not realise that voluntary service abroad can be an investment in their future, full coverage may actually strengthen the motivation to participate. That is also one of the reasons why, for instance, disadvantaged young people should not be charged fees.

**Language training**

The possibility to learn or practise another language is a strong motivation to become involved in international volunteering. However, cross-border volunteering programmes should not be regarded as foreign language schools and few actually offer language training. Since there is also work to be done, organisers of the placements need to be sure about the young people’s...

\textsuperscript{158} Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010.

\textsuperscript{159} German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 29-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{160} Interview with Programme Coordinator at Volunteer Centre Foundation, Budapest, 11-03-2010; former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal, Budapest, 02-04-2010.
motivation to volunteer for a specific project. Nevertheless, the language aspect is definitely important as in many cases volunteers need at least some basic knowledge of the local language in order to get by at work and in other everyday situations. It is also crucial for integration into the host society.

Many interviewees, however, were dissatisfied with the language training element of the EVS. They thought the course should last longer than it does and ideally start before the volunteer’s involvement in the host organisation begins. Another criticism was that the language course should be more related to their work. However, the fact that this course is being offered, is definitely an advantage of EVS compared to many other cross-border volunteering schemes that do not arrange any language training.

**Intercultural training**

In addition to language training providing survival conversation skills, introduction to intercultural communication and the host country is essential, especially for volunteers with no previous experience of living abroad. Sensitising volunteers to the intercultural aspects of their service helps to prevent trouble caused by opinionated participants who think they know how to do things better and come to ‘save the world’ and teach the natives.

For this purpose, International Voluntary Service in Great Britain (IVS GB) pays special attention to instructing the outgoing volunteers to be observers and learners in the local communities rather than teachers and encourages them to explore the destination country’s background. In addition, IVS volunteers receive peace and conflict-resolution training.

Although pre-departure and on-arrival training is provided for EVS volunteers, some do not actually get it or it fails to meet participant expectations. An Italian EVS volunteer reported she had no pre-departure training as it was organised only once a year in Italy. Among those who had one, some express doubts about its usefulness: in Lithuania, more attention seems to be paid to meeting other outgoing volunteers and preparing to present their own country in the host country than to practicalities. After their arrival, some volunteers would have liked more opportunities to get to know their host country and its culture, but others do travel a lot on their own.

---

161 European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
162 Interview with German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 10-02-2010.
163 German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 29-01-2010.
164 Interview with Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
165 Interview with Italian EVS volunteer in UK, 02-04-2010.
166 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010.
167 Interview with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Italy, 24-03-2010.
168 Interview with Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania, Vilnius, 19-03-2010.
Support and mentoring
Support by the organisers of the placement is essential for a successful and constructive volunteering experience as help or guidance should be readily available for volunteers experiencing problems. Services to volunteers should include support with the practicalities of the stay abroad (form-filling, registration, accommodation, meals and other arrangements) as well as mentoring within the organisation regarding the psychological aspects and reflection on the learning outcomes.

Therefore, it is important to have a designated and well-informed mentor, tutor or volunteer coordinator within the host organisation. The mere existence of a mentor, however, is not sufficient: it is important that he/she is also motivated for the task; it should not be a random member of staff to whom volunteer management is just an additional responsibility. The person supervising and supporting the volunteer’s work should be the connection between the volunteer and the staff. The mentor conveys the organisation’s culture to the volunteer, assigns tasks, sets the aim of volunteering and is responsible for evaluating the whole project with the volunteer.

Volunteers need to be sure that basic arrangements are in place to cater for their needs, such as for their accommodation, meals, adequate tasks at work and transparency\textsuperscript{169}. Yet they also need day-to-day support, opportunities to discuss how they are doing, allowing the mentor or even the sending organisation to intervene when necessary.

However, the extent of support sending institutions offer varies greatly: some keep inquiring how volunteers are doing, whereas others almost disappear\textsuperscript{170}. The same goes for the host organisations: there are both positive and negative accounts. A former British EVS volunteer reported his tutor had not helped him solve the issues with accommodation, leading to him losing some of his belongings\textsuperscript{171}. Some EVS volunteers in Germany have complained of stressful work conditions with no corresponding psychological support services\textsuperscript{172}.

Quality of work
Organisations involved in volunteer exchanges need to be professional because managing volunteering programmes does require extra competence. It is important for them to assess realistically beforehand whether they are truly

\textsuperscript{169} Interview with EVS Program Coordinator, Neso-Mobilitás – ‘Youth in Action’ National Agency, Budapest, 17-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{170} EVS volunteer in UK, 02-04-2010; Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania, Vilnius, 19-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{171} Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{172} Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010; Mutz and Korfmacher, p. 25.
capable of hosting/ sending cross-border volunteers: not just in terms of volunteer management capacity, but also the command of foreign languages among staff members and the willingness to open up to international exchanges so that the presence of foreigners does not become a source of stress\textsuperscript{173}. These conditions should be ensured through the process of accreditation but it is not always present.

The host organisation has to have a clear picture of what it wants the volunteer to do in order to formulate clear tasks and avoid volunteers feeling useless. Volunteers want to feel their work is actually needed, “real and reliable”\textsuperscript{174}, as one former Hungarian EVS volunteer put it. Therefore, volunteers cannot be used to perform tasks that nobody else wants to do: photocopying documents all day hardly presents a learning opportunity\textsuperscript{175}. The work should be challenging and rewarding, allowing some tangible results to be achieved by the end of the project so that volunteers can later prove volunteering abroad has allowed them to gain and develop certain skills. However, volunteer duties should be balanced as well because it is not fair to replace paid staff with volunteers. Volunteers may be eager to develop their own initiatives so the hosts should leave some space for their creativity.

The need for the volunteer role to be balanced and suited to the individual person brings us back to the question of the volunteer coordinator. The existence of a tutor helps to ensure continuity between the placements of different volunteers. That way, a new volunteer does not have to start everything from scratch\textsuperscript{176}. At the same time, volunteer work becomes more tangible and beneficial for the host organisation as well.

**Local contacts**
Although volunteers spend a lot of time at their host organisation carrying out tasks, just as much learning happens outside the host organisation. It constitutes a dimension lacking in in-country part-time volunteering. Cross-border volunteering makes the participants much more aware of their social environment: being away from home, family and friends, foreign volunteers have to construct new social networks in a limited period of time. If they succeed in making new friends and getting to know the community they live in, a lot of intercultural learning and sharing takes place.

\textsuperscript{173} Interview with Executive Director of \textit{Volunteer Centre Foundation}, Budapest, 26-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{174} Interview with EVS Coordinator at \textit{Cseresznye Youth Office}, Budapest, 22-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{175} Interview with Project Officer for European Voluntary Service, Contracts and Projects at \textit{British Council}, London, 31-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{176} Interview with former Hungarian EVS Volunteer in Portugal, Budapest, 07-03-2010.
Unfortunately, whereas volunteers socialise daily with staff of their host organisation and other volunteers, they often lack opportunities and incentives to get to know people outside this circle. In many cases, foreign volunteers build a close-knit group that uses a language different from the local one (usually English) and hardly integrates into the local society. EVS volunteers interviewed regretted having almost no contact with local people their own age which prevented them from finding out more about the host country and its culture. Therefore, it is good practice to have an ‘outside mentor’ or a so-called ‘local friend’. It is similar to the arrangement when foreign ‘Erasmus’ students are paired up with a local student of the same university. In the case of young cross-border volunteers, this person could be a young local volunteer.

To conclude, the volunteer needs, based on interviews with stakeholders and presented above, mirror the quality criteria defined in the European Quality Charter for Mobility. Although the Recommendation to which the Charter was attached concerned all transnational mobility for education and training purposes (including students, teachers and trainees as well), our research confirms that the standards are valid for cross-border volunteer mobility of young people. Below we briefly discuss each criterion individually in the context of youth cross-border volunteering:

- **information and guidance**: as presented in the relevant section, full and adequate information about the costs involved, opportunities available and services on offer are crucial for volunteers to take informed decisions and prepare for the voluntary service, avoiding mismatch of volunteers and host organisations;

- **learning plan**: it is hardly possible to pre-plan long-term voluntary service in terms of what skills should be gained and when, but it is clear that the host organisations need to do their homework in preparing a balanced job role for the volunteer;

- **personalisation**: volunteer duties should take his/ her abilities into account and allow some space for his/ her own initiative and creativity;

- **general preparation**: volunteers should receive preparatory training emphasising the intercultural aspects of their service and introducing them to the host country;

- **linguistic aspects**: as language training is vital for the integration of foreign volunteers into the host society, volunteers wish their language training to start early, be long enough and be tailored to their needs at work, although in many cases the linguistic training is missing altogether;

---

177 Interview with German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 31-03-2010; French EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 31-03-2010; former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.

• **logistical support**: sending and host organisations are expected to help volunteers with the paperwork needed to settle in a different country as well as arrangements for their basic needs such as accommodation, meals and other practicalities;

• **mentoring**: volunteers need a mentor who could advise and support them throughout their service and help settle difficulties if they arise;

• **recognition**: foreign volunteers want their work to make a difference and thus be recognised – in the organisation in the first place; although they are not too much concerned about formal certificates while volunteering, these are useful after the voluntary service has ended;

• **reintegration and evaluation**: mentors should guide volunteer reflection on their service and evaluation of it in terms of non-formal learning outcomes; volunteers rarely explicitly express a wish to receive reintegration guidance specifically, but they do need advice on questions such as their social insurance and possible taxation issues after their return;

• **commitments and responsibilities**: all the parties involved in transnational volunteer exchange – the volunteer, the sending and host organisation – should know and honour their responsibilities; in EVS, this is ensured by signing the Activity Agreement and this may be the reason why EVS volunteers interviewed did not feel it was important to point it out.

### 3.3. Benefits of volunteering

Benefits of volunteering both to volunteers themselves and to those whom it affects are a broad topic, but representative and quality research is lacking in this area. In fact, research on long-term youth voluntary service in Europe conducted in 2007 concluded that nearly all published and unpublished studies reviewed had used retrospective design. That is, the impact of voluntary service (in-country or abroad) is usually assessed by surveying former volunteers or staff of NGOs organising voluntary service. The downside of this method is that the answers may be subjective, making the findings ‘rosy’. It would be more reliable to survey volunteers once they have completed their service and compare their answers with those of a non-volunteer control group. Alternatively, changes would be evident by comparing volunteer attitudes before their service and afterwards.\(^{179}\)

However, more rigorous methods are rarely used because they take longer and require more financial resources. Below we summarise findings of previous research on international volunteer exchanges and our own interviews. Volunteers cite new skills and knowledge gained as a result of their service, strengthened personalities and increased civic engagement. Meanwhile, all of the stakeholders are enriched by the intercultural encounter and the services provided by volunteers.

3.3.1. Benefits for the young volunteers

Cross-border volunteering meets young people’s expectation of improving or gaining **skills and knowledge**. During voluntary service, a lot of informal and non-formal learning takes place. Non-formal education includes preparation for volunteering and on-the-job training as well as organisational learning within the host facility. In addition, informal learning takes place because of the new surroundings, new acquaintances and intercultural sharing. Volunteers practise a foreign language or even two: often the working language in the organisation and/or among the volunteers is English, while for other interactions the national language of the host country is used. The EVS participants attend training sessions before departure, after arrival and in the middle of the volunteering period. Moreover, EVS volunteers are entitled to a short language course.

In particular, benefits can be reaped **for future professional life**. Work in the host organisation may provide work experience in the area of study. Even when that is not the case, participants still gain work experience – sometimes for the first time. They develop generic skills that are applicable in any workplace: German EVS volunteers reported that they had strengthened their ability to work in a team, resolve conflicts, present their views etc. Findings of a study on Lithuanian EVS volunteers are similar. According to research data, 62% of former volunteers consider that their EVS experience has changed their career possibilities for the better. In fact, voluntary service in general, not just abroad has been shown to decrease the career indecision of young people. That is

---

181 Becker et al., p. 98.
182 Kėžaitė, Špokevičiūtė, p. 18.
184 Powell and Bratović, p. 29.
why volunteering after school before choosing a further career path benefits both volunteers and the education institutions (see Annex 3 and 7).

Furthermore, a lot of personal development also happens during voluntary service. Some authors found that community engagement lowers the possibility of depression\(^{185}\) and helps solve problems of interpersonal communication\(^{186}\). Volunteering teaches young people to interact with strangers under various circumstances and thereby enhances their self-confidence, flexibility and ability to deal with uncertainty and unexpected situations. According to the study on German EVS volunteers, their **personal character** (personal autonomy, maturity, broader perspective and openness) and **social competences** (communication skills and empathy) are enhanced\(^{187}\). Volunteering in a foreign country also results in a greater **sense of solidarity** and **tolerance** among the young volunteers\(^{188}\).

Finally, cross-border volunteering strengthens participants' civic values. The ‘Youth’ Programme evaluation report contained an observation that it was successful in improving youth **citizenship competences**\(^{189}\). Intercultural and voluntary experience encourages **political and social engagement** and former participants become more active in their home country\(^{190}\). Even those who had not volunteered before are likely to take up part-time volunteering when they return to their home country. Moreover, former EVS volunteers indicate that they have become more conscious of their national identity and have developed a more realistic attitude to their country by putting their experience in perspective\(^{191}\).

Transnational friendships and freedom of movement across the continent construct a more positive attitude among young people towards the EU and its institutions\(^{192}\). Their **perception of Europe** gains substance as well as the **feeling of being a European citizen**\(^{193}\). In fact, a higher rate of turnout in European Parliament elections is observed among former EVS volunteers\(^{194}\). It

---


\(^{186}\) Gillath et al., p. 441.

\(^{187}\) Becker et al., p. III.

\(^{188}\) Koppert et al., p. 106; Kėžaitė, Špokesvičiūtė, p.15.

\(^{189}\) Koppert et al., p. 21.

\(^{190}\) Ibid., p. 102.

\(^{191}\) Kėžaitė, Špokesvičiūtė, p. 18; former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.


\(^{193}\) Becker et al., p. III.

\(^{194}\) Interview with *Youth in Action* Head of Unit, EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
can thus be seen that volunteering strengthens both national and European affiliations, responsibilities and engagement.

German psychologists A. Thomas, C. Chang and H. Abt, who conducted a comprehensive and systematic study on the long-term effects of international youth encounters (including multinational work camps), confirm the findings presented in this section. They state that the participants benefit in terms of self-development (self-confidence, independence etc.), intercultural learning, relationship to the host country, foreign language skills, social competence, openness, flexibility and composure, self-knowledge, cultural identity, follow-up activities (participation in other intercultural initiatives/ voluntary engagement) and professional development\textsuperscript{195}.

Some evidence suggests that disadvantaged young people gain even more from voluntary service than other participants\textsuperscript{196}. To summarise, the gains volunteers get are mainly human capital and social capital as they tend to return as more mature, autonomous, resourceful and sociable individuals. The non-formal training they undergo makes them more likely to be mobile later in life and to benefit from the single European labour market.

3.3.2. Benefits for the sending and hosting societies

In addition to the multiple benefits experienced by the volunteers, advantages of cross-border volunteering for the host and sending organisations and the local communities should not be forgotten either. Moreover, the usual gains from volunteering are complemented by increased cultural awareness, an aspect unique to cross-border volunteering.

The most obvious benefit of voluntary work to \textit{organisations} receiving volunteers is their \textbf{capacity to develop a wider scope of activities} than would be possible without the involvement of volunteers. In other words, although volunteers are not employees and their relationship with the host organisation is not an economic one because their work is not remunerated, volunteering (and even more so cross-border volunteering) does have its costs and its returns that can be calculated in financial terms. However, the economic dimension of voluntary work has been rather neglected for a long time. It is only recently that policymakers and researchers have become more interested in the economic


\textsuperscript{196} Powell and Bratović, p. 35.
added value volunteers produce and the recent EU policy documents stress this aspect 197.

The economic value of volunteering would become more obvious if the suggestion (presented in Section 2.2.) of accepting the monetary equivalent of voluntary work as match funding in project applications (not necessarily for EU funding) was implemented. Economic analysis of volunteering is rarely conducted, but a comparative study by the Institute for Volunteering Research (UK) has measured that most organisations investing in volunteers receive returns that are between threefold and eightfold 198. Preliminary estimates also show that EVS probably at the least pays for itself in terms of the value of work EVS volunteers do in relation to the financial costs of running the programme 199.

Volunteers help with regular activities and contribution of new ideas. As representatives of EVS host organisations reported in a study on the impact of EVS on young people and organisations in Lithuania, the biggest influence of volunteers was their energy, ideas and new methods that add variety to the usual activities. The staff of host organisations also stated they had gained management experience 200 as work with volunteers required more attention and more arrangements for their accommodation, supervision, paperwork etc. Managing volunteering thus makes organisations more professional and more able to host or send other volunteers and ensure their cross-border service is well-organised.

Through the volunteers whom they host or send, organisations also undergo an **intercultural experience**. Integration of a foreign volunteer into an organisation’s activities requires tolerance and understanding. Moreover, people from the host organisation are also made to learn or improve **foreign language** (usually English) skills 201. Albeit more indirectly, sending organisations, volunteers’ friends and family members also learn about the country where the voluntary service takes place.

197 See European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion. Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 7 February 2008 on ‘The contribution of volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion’ draws attention to the contribution of voluntary activity to the economy through extra human resources and creation of social capital and better “quality of life” that can stimulate investment and job creation.
199 Powell and Bratović, p. 36.
200 Kėžaitė, Špokevičiūtė, p. 28.
201 Ibid, p. 18.
The **societies** that volunteers come from or are hosted in are then subject to the aggregate impact of the cross-border volunteering activities. Research suggests that community gains are in the form of economic and social capital\(^{202}\). For instance, the UK case study revealed that foreign volunteers were helping to reduce inter-community tensions in Northern Ireland (see Annex 4). Insights presented above suggest that volunteering decreases the numbers of disaffected young people by giving them a stake in society. Involvement in a particular sphere turns young people into stakeholders who realise they can be agents of social change. Both in-country and cross-border volunteering thus nurtures active citizenship in the sense of being informed, standing up for your own and others’ rights and taking care of common goods and values. A 2008 study by UN Volunteers established that volunteering, like social activism, fosters opportunities for participation by people from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, it can be change-oriented and a tool for development\(^{203}\).

By giving young people the opportunity to be active in an organisation, that is, an organised but democratic environment, volunteering contributes to the development of civil society as the young people gain the prerequisites for political participation and community development. Like the social capital which it creates, volunteering can be ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ depending where it is performed\(^{204}\). Cross-border volunteering has a big bridging potential that ties different groups within the society together and even links societies together by mutual personal ties and organisation partnerships.

To conclude, all stakeholders have a lot to gain from successful volunteer exchanges. First and foremost, great benefits are reaped by the volunteers themselves who enhance their skills and knowledge, personal character, social competences and employability. The organisations managing cross-border exchanges gain management experience, whereas entire societies are strengthened by the increase of social capital and the political engagement of former full-time volunteers. Meanwhile, intercultural experience has an enriching impact of opening new horizons at all three layers: individual, organisations and societies. Nevertheless, more in-depth research is needed to define the impact cross-border voluntary service has on the various groups of stakeholders.

---

\(^{202}\) Ibid., p. 33-36.


3.4. Challenges to trans-European volunteering

Factors that may hinder a person’s choice to volunteer abroad can be individual or structural. Numerous reasons to abstain may be found, since the choice to participate in a volunteer exchange is to some extent a more difficult decision than to become involved in in-country volunteering, especially part-time. In contrast, cross-border volunteering is a full-time commitment, even though for a limited period of time. It entails higher social costs as it requires leaving your social life behind and creating a new one in an (in most cases) unknown country. Moreover, for those who have been employed in their home country before, volunteering abroad may mean living on a tighter budget than they are used to.

As indicated in the EU policy documents, most of the obstacles occur because of insufficient or inadequate regulation and, first and foremost, because volunteering is not defined and recognised in national and international law. However, problems and hindrances may arise in other areas as well. All the difficulties can be grouped into the following clusters:

- Legal and administrative obstacles including the vague legal status of volunteers, accreditation of organisations and recognition of skills gained by volunteers;
- Socio-economic and financial obstacles;
- Lack of information;
- Social and cultural issues;
- Personal obstacles.

3.4.1. Legal and administrative obstacles

What laws are applied to cross-border volunteering in Europe and beyond depends on the country of volunteering and that of the volunteer’s origin – the country of which he/she is a citizen or a permanent resident. The various possible situations are shown in Table 3. In this study, we deal with volunteering within the EU Members by EU citizens or legal residents.
Given the growing rates of cross-border volunteering, the need for a special volunteer status has been becoming more obvious recently. The introduction of a statute would solve several problems regarding recognition, social protection and taxation\(^\text{205}\). Therefore, analysis of the legal and administrative obstacles starts with the discussion of issues related to the legal status of volunteers in the host country. In the following sub-sections the problems of certification are presented, namely, those of organisation accreditation and skill recognition.

### Legal status of volunteers

Absence of volunteer status in national and international law presents a serious obstacle for young volunteers and may imply various legal hurdles in the MSs. A common understanding of volunteering is lacking in the EU as a variety of national interpretations exist, not to mention an agreement on the status of

\(^\text{205}\) ‘Analysis of the replies of the Member States of the European Union and the acceding countries to the Commission questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people’ in Williamson and Hoskins with Boetzelen (eds.), p. 185 (175-193).
volunteers. Several MSs (Germany, France, and Lithuania) are considering the introduction of special laws that would clarify and consolidate it\textsuperscript{206}. Before it becomes the norm in the EU, issues are likely to continue being solved on a case-by-case basis, impeding the growth of cross-border volunteering.

The absence of a legal basis for cross-border volunteering may lead to problems when applying for a residence permit. Visa and residence permit issues are usually related to volunteers from third countries and first of all to Turkish volunteers\textsuperscript{207}. However, EU citizens staying in another MS for a period longer than three months also need to contact the migration authorities and obtain a document certifying their right to stay in the country. That could prove difficult as in some countries volunteering may not be considered a sufficient legal ground to reside in the country. For instance, in Belgium a volunteer must be registered either as a tourist, a student or an employee because no other basis is recognised. In the Netherlands, the EVS volunteers were granted an exception due to the efforts of the Dutch NA: being an EVS volunteer is now an acceptable explanation for the Dutch Migration service\textsuperscript{208}. A similar arrangement has been made in Lithuania for volunteers participating in programmes financed by the EU or its MSs (see Annex 5).

In the worst case scenario, a residence permit can also be declined: this often happens to EVS participants from Turkey and non-EU partner countries, but sometimes also to EU citizens\textsuperscript{209}. In that case, those who are supposed to volunteer for a period longer than the maximum stay as a tourist (3 months), have to leave the country and come back again. It works as a temporary solution, yet implies having to leave and come back twice in a period of, say, 9 months of volunteering, which is the average duration of an EVS. This is not only an inconvenience, but also the travel expenses add up. The makeshift solution when volunteers are registered as workers (or treated as such by individual institutions) may imply an obligation to conform to existing employment legislation and eventually the volunteer and/ or his/ her host organisation may have to deal with the tax and labour authorities. If the tax authorities are not familiar with the specifics of voluntary work, they may attempt to tax the income volunteers receive during their service\textsuperscript{210}.

\textsuperscript{206} Interview with Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010; Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010; Jaunimo reikalų departamentas prie Socialinių reikalų ir darbo ministerijos.

\textsuperscript{207} Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{208} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{209} Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{210} Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010. In Hungary, the EVS volunteers (or, for instance, Italian National Service Abroad volunteers if they came to participate in a project in Hungary) would have to be taxed according to the law as they receive allowances higher than the set limit. However, in reality EVS volunteers are not taxed (see Annex 6).
Furthermore, laws on the minimum wage may also consequently come into play for volunteers if they are treated as employees. However, they hardly have a chance of satisfying the legal minimum, even if the financial equivalents of their income in kind, that is, free accommodation and food, are added to the meagre sums of pocket money.\footnote{Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.}

Cases when foreign volunteers are systematically declined the right of residence, taxed or their host organisations are requested to comply with the minimum wage requirements are hard to come by. In any case, EVS volunteers are in a better position as they can rely on the support of the National Agency in the host country. But even they sometimes experience tiring and time-consuming legal and administrative hurdles with the authorities of the receiving state most of which could be avoided by having a firmly established legal volunteer status (that would apply to foreign nationals as well) and explicitly exempting their legitimate allowances from taxation.

**Accreditation of organisations**

Some barriers exist related to the accreditation of organisations arranging cross-border volunteer exchanges. This too is within the competence of the MSs and hence different requirements apply. Although some are critical of the accreditation requirements for EVS organisations or NGOs organising civil service placements (as in Germany or Italy), others point out that this is a measure to ensure quality of the volunteering experience.

In Germany, organisations participating in voluntary service programmes have to be accredited by the regional authorities in a particular Land. In France, the requirement for the regional authority to approve every incoming foreign volunteer delays the whole volunteering process.\footnote{‘Analysis of the replies of the Member States of the European Union and the acceding countries to the Commission questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people’, p. 185.} A Swedish interviewee thought that the EVS accreditation of organisations could be an obstacle for new organisations to enter cross-border volunteering exchanges within Europe.\footnote{Interview with Diversity Coordinator of Jönköping municipality, 29-01-2010.}

Furthermore, sending a young person to volunteer in another MS is a long process of complex procedures. In the framework of EVS, application takes a few months and after the whole process the project can still be denied funding. It discourages both volunteers and voluntary organisations from applying - an interviewee in Germany said his organisation no longer arranged EVS placements for this reason.\footnote{‘Analysis of the replies of the Member States of the European Union and the acceding countries to the Commission questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people’, p. 185; Interview with Regional Manager of iجد – Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.}

\footnote{Regional Manager of iجد, Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.}
Different standards can influence the quality of voluntary activities. In cases where requirements for accreditation are low, organisations may lack experience and the quality of their work may be poor, resulting in a lack of appropriate housing or proper training and language courses for volunteers. This in turn may have an impact on the readiness of volunteers for the service and their subsequent experience. Therefore, some accreditation or at least established partnerships among organisations are needed in order to ensure the quality of the voluntary service.

**Recognition of volunteering**

Another broad topic related to volunteering and relevant to the social, legal and administrative spheres (both societal attitudes towards cross-border volunteering and the formal evaluation of it) is the recognition of skills and competences gained during the volunteering period and the relevance of the volunteering experience to the labour market. Although the need for a recognition scheme of volunteer skills and experience is routinely emphasised, improvements are still required in order to ensure the transparency of the volunteers’ qualifications and awareness by stakeholders.

Volunteering experience may be considered useful in the non-governmental sector and in the field where the volunteer has worked, mainly social work or care. In contrast, voluntary service experience has not long been seen as an advantage by the business sector. Business employers prefer practical experience in private companies which can hardly be gained through cross-border volunteering as the activities are normally organised by not-for-profit organisations. Internship and volunteering are both types of non-formal learning but still of a different status and that may influence the choice of young people.

Nevertheless, positive new trends can be also observed showing that investment in volunteering does pay off. In the UK where volunteering has received a lot of publicity and government support lately, companies are more aware of the benefits of volunteering, as well as the skills volunteers gain in the process. As a result, voluntary work is now much more likely to appear on CVs and be appreciated by private employers as well (see Annex 4). In Germany, stakeholders still feel that big companies could improve the situation by

---

216 ‘Analysis of the replies of the Member States of the European Union and the acceding countries to the Commission questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people’, p. 185; Interview with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 03-02-2010.

217 European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

218 Ibid; Editor of www.youthreporter.eu, private public relations agency (hired by JUGEND für Europa), Bonn, 05-02-2010.
promoting volunteering. They could do that by publicly stating that it is a valuable experience; no less so than a foreign language course\textsuperscript{219}.

At the same time, there is more to recognition than just appreciation of the fact of volunteering. The volunteers must be able to prove that they actually gained new competences or strengthened the existing ones. As in the case of formal education, this raises the question of \textit{certification} of volunteer skills. As long as it is not fully developed, it may work as an obstacle or disincentive as well. Introducing an adequate certification system would ensure that volunteering experience is more widely accepted. National strategies of doing so may differ substantially. However, in any case certification should remain optional in order not to discourage people who are not interested in skills-based volunteering, but who are volunteering for the sake of an enjoyable experience or in order to help others.

For the EVS, \textbf{Youthpass}, the certificate issued at the request of the volunteer at the end of his/her service is supposed to fulfil the role of EU-wide certification. Introduced in 2007, it provides a tool to reflect and analyse the competences gained through cross-border volunteering. The volunteer and his/her tutor produce the evaluation according to a single template of the eight key competences for lifelong learning recognised in the EU education policy\textsuperscript{220}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item communication in the mother tongue,
  \item communication in foreign languages,
  \item mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology,
  \item digital competence,
  \item learning to learn,
  \item social and civic competence,
  \item sense of initiative and entrepreneurship,
  \item cultural awareness and expression.
\end{itemize}

Reception of Youthpass among employees or education institutions is still difficult to assess, although the first signs are reassuring\textsuperscript{221}. Still, some implementation issues remain and these mainly depend on the host organisations. In some cases, volunteers cannot obtain the certificate in the language of their choice simply because there is no one in the organisation who

\textsuperscript{219} Editor of www.youthreporter.eu, Bonn, 05-02-2010.
\textsuperscript{221} Interview with Project Coordinator for Youthpass, SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
is able to write it for them. So the volunteer cannot use his/her Youthpass readily as a proof of skills to increase their employability because of the delayed translation.

Currently, Youthpass is only used within the ‘Youth in Action’ programme activities. However, it provides a good example that can be emulated in other volunteering contexts. In fact, similar techniques are already used in non-formal education certification tools developed in some MSs (see Annexes 4 and 7 for British and Swedish examples). The individual nature of the voluntary service renders any uniform testing system unfeasible so methods based on reflection guided by the volunteer’s immediate supervisor are likely to be the only solution. The process of reflection though needs to be focused on skills and competences that are understandable to possible future employers and formal education institutions (in other countries as well) in order to make the added value of the volunteering experience transparent.

In order to recognise the volunteering experience within the formal education system, an official position of the respective MS is needed. Examples exist of such integration. In the UK, the volunteering experience may be accredited if pursued as structured and goal-oriented learning, and vocational qualifications corresponding to those of formal learning can be granted (see Annex 4). If the voluntary service fits their requirements, universities in some MSs recognise it as an internship complementing studies in a related field such as social pedagogy. For instance, this can be done in Germany, Spain and in Italy to some extent (see Annex 2).

Regarding the employment of former volunteers, the issue of recognition of competences gained through non-formal education requires close cooperation and consensus among the non-profit and business sectors and the state. The UK’s example shows that networking, partnership and awareness-raising can sensitise potential employers and inform them about the existing certification of volunteer skills so as to make them consider their certificates in the recruitment process.

---

222 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, 27-01-2010.
224 Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania, Vilnius, 19-03-2010.
225 European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
Clearance

One of the CoR opinions on volunteering highlighted that the “lack of a coordinated EU-wide police clearance process by the Member States” presented a barrier for migrants to volunteer with children and vulnerable adults. The issues that arise from the obligation to obtain a criminal record check (disclosure) as a precondition to volunteering in many care activities is explored in the UK country case study (Annex 4). To our knowledge, volunteers also face a similar legal requirement in Ireland.

Although not all the Member States require volunteers to undergo the clearance process to work in a certain field, this legal peculiarity of the UK and Ireland does present a challenge to many young European cross-border volunteers given the popularity of the Anglo-Saxon countries as volunteer destinations. In addition to the attractive opportunity for improvement of English skills they offer, these MSs are also known to have high living standards and an advanced culture of volunteer management. But as organisations there undertake the same duties regarding their volunteers as they do towards their employees, they also have the responsibility towards their clients, regardless whether they are being taken care of by paid staff or volunteers.

In the UK, the legislation protecting children and vulnerable adults requires that persons – employees and volunteers – working with children or vulnerable adults (or having access to their records) such as patients, inmates, the elderly in residential care or anybody in need of assistance in their own affairs obtain clearance for such activity (whether it is in education, health or social care or some other field). In the Republic of Ireland, a criminal record check proving there is no reason to ban them from this activity is also a prerequisite to volunteering in the childcare and youth work sectors and certain sports organisations.

The British and Irish institutions are adapted to satisfying requests from their own citizens wishing to volunteer in the above-mentioned fields. British citizens get the disclosure in a few weeks and volunteers are not charged for it (see Annex 4). In Ireland, organisations have to apply on behalf of their personnel and volunteers and there is no fee. However, incoming foreign volunteers also

226 Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 7 February 2008 on ‘The contribution of volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion’.
227 Art. 59 of the UK’s Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (c. 47).
have to bring equivalent proof from their national police obtained at their own expense. That can be a hurdle because **prices and procedures vary considerably even within the EU and in some countries it may be difficult to find an equivalent.** Finally, **costs of translating the certificate** of good conduct also fall on volunteers (see Annex 4). As a result, charities organising projects for children and youth may find it difficult to involve cross-border volunteers. Given the fact that care is a very usual field of voluntary work, this can have an impact on the offer of projects that incoming volunteers can participate in.

### 3.4.2. Socio-economic and financial obstacles

Apart from the vital legal questions, socio-economic and financial disincentives may be strong enough, too. The main socio-economic issues are the loss of social benefits and issues of insurance while volunteering abroad. Financial obstacles include expenses for insurance and additional travel and living costs as well as the loss of discounts.

Socio-economic aspects can pose a serious problem. Most importantly, cross-border volunteering may not even be considered by groups of young people who receive social security benefits\(^{230}\). **Loss of social benefits** is an acute problem in cross-border volunteering narrowing the chances of involving people with fewer opportunities.

Payment of unemployment benefits is subject to fulfilment of certain obligations which can impede participation in volunteer exchange. Unemployed people are required to register themselves with the unemployment agency and report regularly on their job-seeking efforts. Local volunteering is even encouraged while looking for employment in some MSs. For example, the UK has abolished restrictions on the number of hours a week you can spend volunteering (see Annex 4). Yet once you go abroad for a longer period, you lose the unemployment allowance because you are not available for the compulsory meetings\(^{231}\) and for work if a suitable offer appears\(^{232}\).

---

\(^{230}\) For example, Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 of the Council of 14 June 1971 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons and their families moving within the Community and related provisions only cover those volunteers who are insured under national security legislation. Consequently, issues related to social protection can sometimes act as a disincentive to engage in voluntary activities in another Member State. Commission Proposal of 3 July 2008 for a Council Recommendation on mobility of young volunteers across Europe.

\(^{231}\) Interview with Project Officer of *Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs* Swedish National Agency for 'Youth in Action' programme, 29-01-2010.

\(^{232}\) Interview with Policy and Practice Adviser at *Volunteer Development Scotland*, Stirling, 30-03-2010.
Registered jobseekers may officially not be allowed to leave the country for a certain period of time or their unemployment benefits (which can also include subsidies for accommodation for the jobseeker’s family) may be withdrawn. What is more, the months abroad are then not counted towards the years worked against which their retirement pension is calculated. Given these circumstances, cross-border volunteering does not look attractive at all, unless the programme is fully-funded, while in fact it could lead to the acquisition of new skills that would boost one’s employability. It would help to recognise cross-border volunteering programmes as training measures for jobseekers, possibly with some financial incentives attached.

Another possible hurdle concerns volunteer insurance. If a volunteer’s insurance status is not considered equivalent to that of an employee or student in a country where volunteering is not seen as a proper legal ground for residence, they might be asked to get private health insurance for the period of their volunteering. For example, in the Netherlands this can happen even to EVS volunteers, although they are already insured by the Executive Agency. But still even the EVS healthcare insurance is of a limited sum and might not provide complete coverage. A volunteer might need to contribute to the bills. In Lithuania, a recent change in legislation makes it necessary for outgoing volunteers to declare their stay abroad in order not to be taxed compulsory national health service premiums for each month they were not insured in Lithuania (see Annex 5).

Not every volunteering programme covers all the living and travel expenses. In EVS, 90% of the travel costs are borne by the European Commission. However, in many other schemes, in order to take part in voluntary activities abroad, young people have to find additional funding from their relatives or special funds in order to raise enough money for living abroad (several German national programmes can be an example – see Annex 3). Opportunities offered by the SCI network do not charge very high fees that include accommodation, insurance and food, but volunteers have to cover their own travel expenses. World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) also provide food and lodging, but volunteers have to arrive using their own means. That implies that you have to estimate whether you can financially afford to participate before

233 Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
234 Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), Brussels, 19-01-2010.
235 Ibid.
236 Interview with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010.
deciding to take up cross-border volunteering. For this reason, young cross-border volunteers come predominantly from well-to-do backgrounds.

Furthermore, lump sums calculated to finance voluntary services in different countries are not always adequate, especially given the different price levels and living standards between the city and countryside. Hence the quality of affordable accommodation and the actual value of the volunteer’s pocket money may differ strongly. On the other hand, the monthly allowances of Italian National Civic Service Abroad are fixed and do not differentiate between the countries (see Annex 2), although the service can be done in various continents. On the other hand, full-time volunteers, in contrast to other low-income groups such as students or retired people, may not receive discounts for public transport, cultural events, etc. In Germany, where foreign volunteers of the main national programmes as well as EVS are given the same status as the German full-time in-country volunteers, they basically enjoy the same privileges as students. However, in many other countries they face a less favourable situation. Meanwhile, the mobility card ‘EURO 26’ proving entitlement to certain discounts is not equally accepted across the EU as volunteers discover.

The socio-economic and financial obstacles are especially acute when it comes to disadvantaged young people. Exclusion of certain groups of young people is obvious from the socio-economic characteristics of cross-border volunteers (see section 3.3.). Issues such as poor financial situation, disadvantaged family background or disability often restrict young people from participating in cross-border voluntary activities.

Furthermore, in many countries volunteering is hardly a youth policy priority and receives little attention in the public discourse or state financial support that would help to develop the infrastructure of voluntary organisations. Voluntary organisations are short of financial resources for voluntary services and activities, especially when it comes to support for people with fewer opportunities. Meanwhile, MSs differ substantially in the scale of support they provide to voluntary activities and services.

---

238 Brian Gran, ‘Public-private obstacles to voluntary service and citizenship’ in Williamson and Hoskins with Boetzelen, p. 129 (121-134).
239 European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
240 Interview with Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, ijgd (Nord), 03-02-2010.
241 Interview with German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 04-02-2010; Project Officer for European Voluntary Service, Contracts and Projects at British Council, London, 31-03-2010.
242 ‘Analysis of the replies of the Member States of the European Union and the acceding countries to the Commission questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people’; European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
243 ‘Analysis of the replies of the Member States of the European Union and the acceding countries to the Commission questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people’, p. 188.
Although the would-be volunteers may not be aware of all the listed socio-economic and financial aspects of their decision to volunteer abroad, the cost of the voluntary service is something they all want to know. Therefore, stakeholders should ensure that a wide range of options exists in the field of international volunteering (in terms of duration and host countries) and that can be considered by many young people as an attractive and useful way of spending their time.

3.4.3. Lack of information

In theory, information may be inaccessible due to group closure or unequal access to information. In other words, this situation may occur either because a certain group of young people isolate themselves from outside information or because some groups are not in a position to receive the information about volunteering opportunities.

The former can be true for young people with fewer opportunities who usually do not consider that they could ever participate in a cross-border volunteering project and thus are not interested in the existing opportunities. For an example of the latter, some groups may not have access to the information presented in certain types of media: newspapers, TV, Internet, social networks etc. This can be illustrated by the fact that, for instance, Internet usage varies heavily across the EU, ranging from 33.4% penetration in Romania to 89.2% in Sweden.

Great differences could be found between the various social strata within the MSs, too.

Access to information can also be limited because of the language barrier. Even though participation in voluntary programmes does not always require knowledge of a foreign language, project descriptions may not be available in one’s own language. This restricts would-be volunteers from familiarising themselves properly with the projects on offer.

Furthermore, sometimes the descriptions are inadequate. Lack of information on the actual living and working conditions or work characteristics may cause disappointment upon arrival at the host organisation. The mismatch between expectations based on limited information and the reality is often the reason for quitting the volunteering programme (see Annex 2 for the reasons of Germany’s

---

244 Gran, p. 127.
246 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010.
247 Ibid.
EVS drop-outs). Although volunteers have the choice of discontinuing the project, such a decision by EVS volunteers, for instance, means their organisations are penalised as they have to return the project funding\textsuperscript{248}.

Another criticism often from heard from current and former EVS volunteers is that information on the databases they have used to find a host organisation is outdated. The databases do not make it possible to check which projects have already received volunteers and no longer require any. Some opportunities no longer exist in the form they have been described\textsuperscript{249}. For volunteer exchange schemes that are smaller in scope it may not be so difficult to track all the opportunities, but finding a host can be a challenge in EVS. Due to the outdated information, a lot of applying is in vain and potential participants can be made to wait for months before they secure a place\textsuperscript{250}.

The way information is provided is also important. Too much complex information in a formal style may make the opportunity seem unattractive. Simple, accessible style and readiness to answer any questions is critical when working with severely disadvantaged young people (e.g. poor education or language skills) who can lose interest in the exchange programme easily.

**Information provided by peers and shared in person** has a greater impact on young people. Former volunteers of the same sending or host organisation are an especially important source of information for future volunteers as they may give the best advice. Therefore, in addition to leaflets and websites, the German NA coordinates a ‘Europeers’ group of young people – former EVS volunteers who promote EVS in schools and other places where young people gather\textsuperscript{251}. Promotional events for young people featuring former volunteers are known in other countries as well. Information on EVS is also available across the EU from the drop-in Eurodesk information points (see Annex 1).

Exchanging information about volunteering possibilities, voluntary organisations and good practice is a part of promoting voluntary activities. The scale of information exchange depends both on the organisations and MSs, however, some of the EU members dedicate this function only to voluntary organisations\textsuperscript{252}. If they are not active, under-resourced and a good standard of work is not ensured in this area, information flows may be limited and a lot of young people may remain unaware of the existing opportunities. In addition,

\textsuperscript{248} Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), 19-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{249} German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 04-02-2010.
\textsuperscript{250} Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{251} Public Relations Officer, *JUGEND für Europa*, Bonn, 05-02-2010.
\textsuperscript{252} ‘Analysis of the replies of the Member States of the European Union and the acceding countries to the Commission questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people’, p. 188.
management of volunteering abroad could be made smoother by using up-to-date ICT solutions where suitable, making it possible to show availability and update information easily.

3.4.4. Social and cultural issues

Social and cultural obstacles are not of a prohibitive nature, but may make one feel uncomfortable when taking up volunteering or be a hindrance in carrying it out successfully. By social issues we mean attitudes unfavourable to cross-border volunteering, whereas cultural issues arise due to difficulties in adapting to the culturally different environment of the host country.

Society’s attitudes towards volunteering influence young people’s decisions. For example, volunteering still has negative connotations in some post-Soviet countries such as Poland, Hungary and Lithuania. It reminds people of the compulsory Soviet ‘volunteering’ drives and discourages them from becoming involved in voluntary activities. It is certainly more difficult to motivate young people to take part in an unpopular activity.

When it comes to cross-border volunteering in particular, a two-way sceptical attitude towards volunteering may occur. Volunteering in a foreign country can be viewed negatively and considered to be a waste of time by volunteers’ relatives and friends as paid employment may look like a more reasonable option. On the other hand, foreigners may be treated as strangers in the host country/community. And civil society organisations are not always very open to foreign volunteers, mainly because of the language barrier and the hassle that comes with dealing with a person from a different organisational and cultural environment. Volunteer integration into the organisation’s structure and local society may be hindered in this way.

Cultural differences can also be an obstacle for young people considering cross-border volunteering. The most prominent aspect is the foreign language. Even though learning a foreign language can work as an incentive to go, being unable to communicate effectively can become highly discouraging after a while, as a Dutch EVS volunteer in Sweden has discovered. It is hardest in countries where few people speak languages other than their mother tongue.

253 Moskwiak, p. 153. See also Annexes 5 and 6.
254 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-20-2010.
255 European Liaison Officer (former EVS volunteer in Croatia) at CSVnet, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
Those who endure this challenge, later call it a valuable experience that made them master the language. However, some people might feel eventually overwhelmed, especially if other issues come into play.

Moreover, some societies or compact local communities might be not open and hospitable to foreigners (or the host institutions are at times located in remote places) so volunteers may not have opportunities for socialising with the local population and contributing to the mutual cultural exchange. In such a situation, it is difficult to expect proper integration of volunteers and exploration of the host culture\textsuperscript{258}. Likewise, people from the host organisation and its surroundings do not find out about the culture of volunteer’s country of origin either.

Cultural and geographical differences without any help from locals can make it complicated to adapt to a new environment. In most programmes, cross-border volunteers are supposed to have a mentor in the host organisation or at least a local point of contact. However, sometimes mentoring is poor or even absent as the designated people are not trained to work with volunteers. Volunteers often complain of lack of support in their service and this may be one of the main reasons for leaving the project before the appointed time (see Annex 3). Furthermore, mentors from the hosting organisation are not enough because they are mainly responsible for technical and organisational matters. That is why in some countries EVS volunteers are also assigned ‘a local friend’ (a local volunteer). Unfortunately, this practice is not yet widespread\textsuperscript{259}.

Social and cultural issues might render voluntary service abroad less attractive to young people. However, they cannot be eliminated by any legal solutions. In order to spread a more favourable attitude to volunteering in general and volunteering abroad in particular, investments and awareness-raising campaigns can be advised. Meanwhile, the stress caused by cultural and geographical differences can be managed by experienced volunteer mentoring and well-planned efforts to help foreign volunteers integrate into the host community and society.

\textsuperscript{258} Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-20-2010.

\textsuperscript{259} Ibid.
3.4.5. Personal obstacles

Aside from all the external reasons, there is a whole list of personal issues that may be of importance to young volunteers. Obligations that may make individuals feel reluctant to leave the country as well as their fears of going abroad, especially for a longer period, can be clustered here.

Firstly, personal issues may be related to family responsibilities: young people’s obligations towards their parents, siblings, own children or other family members. Alternatively, they may see their studies, employment or relationship as an obstacle or the alternative costs may seem too high.

Secondly, there are reasons that can discourage visiting certain countries. Religious people may be unwilling to stay in another country if they think they may not be able to practise their religion freely\(^\text{260}\). For instance, young Muslims may be wary of going to Christian-dominated countries. Other fears can be an obstacle, too: for instance, people from sexual minorities will obviously be reluctant to go to countries that are thought to be unsafe for them because of the low levels of tolerance\(^\text{261}\).

Another aspect that can make someone abstain is confidence in being prepared to participate. This includes volunteers’ perspective on their educational background, experiences and language skills that are necessary for volunteering abroad\(^\text{262}\). A would-be volunteer must also estimate the opportunity costs such as income, formal educational and career chances and they can sometimes be greater than the benefits\(^\text{263}\).

To summarise, there is a broad list of obstacles to volunteering in another EU country alone, not to mention the hurdles in the volunteer exchanges with the third countries. Many of these obstacles could be removed or avoided by adopting a common volunteering definition and establishing a legal status of volunteers among the MSs. It is worth mentioning that most of these issues have been already identified in the first EU documents concerning mobility and voluntary activities (see section 1.1.). However, analysis shows that major progress is still needed in the implementation of the Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across Europe (2008).

\(^\text{260}\) Gran, p.124.
\(^\text{261}\) Interview with Head of Third Sector Division at Public Sector Reform Directorate of The Scottish Government, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
\(^\text{262}\) Gran, p. 130.
\(^\text{263}\) Ibid.
3.5. National schemes of volunteer exchanges

Although there are significant similarities among cross-border volunteers worldwide, and volunteering is to a great extent an international experience in itself, national contexts and dominant values play an important role in shaping volunteer motivations and opportunities. These differences have to be taken into account when coordinating volunteer mobility across the EU. Therefore, we summarise the available data on popularity of volunteering in the European states and discuss several EU examples of national frameworks of cross-border volunteering we have researched in the country case studies (Annexes 2-7).

Rates of volunteering

Data on cross-border volunteering in Europe is very scarce and hardly comparable between separate MSs. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the only available source of comparable statistics for mobility of European volunteers is the EVS database. The breakdown of EVS volunteer numbers by country of origin and destination within the EU is presented in Annex 1. Although numbers of EVS volunteers sent and hosted correlate with the MS’s population, the size of the country is not the only factor that matters.

Figure 2. Percentage of people doing voluntary work in EU Member and Candidate States

![Figure 2. Percentage of people doing voluntary work in EU Member and Candidate States](image)


In addition, some proxy indicators to assess the relative importance and scale of voluntary work across various countries are used here. The graph above (Figure 2) compares the rates of voluntary work among the MSs and current Candidate Countries: Croatia and Turkey. However, the data is not comprehensive as only
employed individuals are represented: students, unemployed persons who volunteer or full-time volunteers are excluded.

Overall, the percentage of people volunteering is lower in Candidate Countries than in most MSs. However, differences among separate MSs are pronounced. Volunteering rates are very high in Northern (Sweden, Denmark and Finland) and Anglo-Saxon (Great Britain, Ireland) countries with the exception of Northern Ireland, which is assessed separately in the study concerned. It tends to be lowest in ex-Communist Eastern and Central European countries (Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania and Latvia), with the notable exception of Slovakia. There is no single pattern for Southern (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal) and Continental (Austria, Germany, France, Hungary) countries. It can be seen that a vibrant civil society is more conducive to volunteering.

A 2007 Eurobarometer survey found that helping others or doing voluntary work is considered important by 79% of the respondents in the EU-27 and not important by 19% of respondents. The attitude that helping others or doing voluntary work is important is somewhat less widespread in Latvia (65%), Ireland, Romania (both 63%) and Bulgaria (62%)\(^2\)\(^6\). The graph below (Figure 3) shows to what extent help to others and voluntary work is valued in comparison with professional work and leisure.

**Figure 3. The importance of work, leisure and helping others/voluntary work in the lives of Europeans**

![Graph showing the importance of work, leisure and helping others/voluntary work in the lives of Europeans](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_273_en.pdf) [Accessed 03-01-2010].

---

In most countries (except for France, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Bulgaria and Romania) people found leisure more important than work and voluntary work. In Greece, Cyprus, the Netherlands and the UK more people find voluntary work more important than their careers. Voluntary work is valued most in Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia; and least in Ireland, Latvia, Bulgaria and Romania.

**National schemes of youth cross-border volunteering in the case study sample**

Patterns of local and international volunteering as well as ways of defining, regulating and managing it can vary greatly. Our case study findings from MSs with different traditions of volunteering help give a glimpse of this variety. The national schemes of youth cross-border volunteering in the six selected MSs – Italy, Germany, UK, Lithuania, Hungary and Sweden – are explored in the country case studies (Annexes 2-7). Below we briefly summarise the main characteristics of transnational volunteer exchanges in the selected states. Numbers of EVS volunteers cited are for 2009.

**Italy** is the third most active MS in the EVS volunteer exchanges (over 300 outgoing EVS and more than 200 incoming volunteers a year – within the EU). Italy’s main partners in the EVS volunteer exchanges are Spain, Germany, France and Poland. Moreover, a state-funded National Civic Service exists, previously used for civilian service and now open to all young Italians aged 18 to 28. Civic Service Abroad annually sends almost 600 Italian youths to other countries. However, only 30% of them stay within Europe as the majority of international projects are implemented in the developing world. Young Italian cross-border volunteers seem to be older than the European average. The absence of a coherent national system for the validation and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal learning as well as the specifics of the Italian labour market where personal connections are important may work as disincentives for taking up voluntary service abroad. The legal definition of a volunteer excludes foreign volunteers because it only concerns members of specific types of organisations who work for free and receive no allowances (only reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses).

Both in-country and international volunteering is established in **Germany** in the form of a one-year full-time voluntary service after graduation from school or university. The numbers of Germans undertaking it as well as completing it abroad have been rising recently. German youths are also the most eager

---

participants of the EVS in the EU: the country sends over 700 volunteers to other MSs, but it hosts less than half of that (300). Within EVS, the biggest share of Germany’s incoming EU volunteers comes from France, whereas outgoing volunteers favour the UK, hoping to improve their English language skills. However, schemes for volunteering in the third (usually developing) countries are better financed and seem more attractive to young Germans. Both local and foreign volunteers enjoy legal guarantees similar to those of employees and at the same time are granted discounts like those that students receive. The possibility of issuing a new national law that would consolidate volunteer status is now being discussed. It should be noted that Germany was the only country in our sample where information on overall numbers of international volunteers was available: 2008 data suggests that over 8,000 Germans participated in various voluntary services abroad.

In contrast, youth cross-border volunteering receives little support from the authorities in the United Kingdom. Although heavy investments have recently been made in local youth volunteering aiming to promote community-building, integration and empowerment, participation in voluntary service abroad is regarded as a matter of individual choice. Nevertheless, volunteering abroad is popular among gap year takers. Most of them go to developing countries, using self-funded schemes; the few government initiatives that exist to support them are also related to development volunteering. Even within EVS, British volunteers are eager to go to non-EU countries. However, the UK itself is a popular country of destination for European volunteers (over 300 hosted EVS volunteers from the EU annually – only Spain hosts a few more), whereas Italy and Germany are much more active as sending countries. Big British charities also run their own volunteering schemes that also accept foreign participants. Voluntary work is hardly regulated as such, but duties of the organisations towards their volunteers as well as good practice in management of volunteers is emphasised. However, foreign volunteers and their host organisations may find it difficult to comply with the requirement to pass a criminal record check before they can start working in various care roles (concerning vulnerable groups) as disclosure procedures and charges differ greatly in various countries.

Lithuania is now considering whether legal regulation of volunteering is needed. Currently, volunteering is not regulated and hurdles of a legal or administrative nature can occur. Awareness of the benefits of volunteering is rising slowly along with the popularity of voluntary activities, although the older

266 However, over 1,000 of them (exact number is hard to tell) cannot actually be called volunteers as they were conscientious objectors using volunteering programmes to complete their civilian service. In fact, the state funding of civilian service makes the conscientious objectors more likely to complete their full-time service abroad than other participants of the same programmes who face financial challenges (see Annex 3).
generation still regards it rather suspiciously due to the negative experiences of ‘mandatory volunteering’ in the Communist era. Few cross-border opportunities exist so Lithuanians are relatively active participants of EVS (given the population size): 80 EU volunteers are hosted and over 60 sent to other MSs annually. Lack of other sources of funding means that organisations often seek EVS accreditation in order to finance volunteer exchanges. Probably the most important obstacle to volunteer mobility is the weak civil society as few NGOs that could send or host volunteers exist outside the cities.

In Hungary, volunteering is not yet so widespread either, although positive changes have been taking place since 2001, the International Year of Volunteers. EVS is the main scheme of volunteer mobility, to such an extent that many stakeholders do not think about volunteer exchanges beyond it. Nevertheless, some other opportunities exist, including a new initiative targeting young Roma. Within EVS, Hungary is far more active as a sending country than a host: over 190 volunteers are sent annually to other MSs and over 70 EU volunteers are hosted. Like Lithuania, the main exchange partner is Germany. Hungary does have a law on voluntary activities but, similarly to the Italian one, it applies to volunteers of certain organisations only – public benefit organisations. However, unlike Italy, organisations have to apply for this status and are subjected to extra financial monitoring that aims to ensure tax exemptions for volunteer expenses are not used for the wrong purposes. The law sets the upper limit for volunteer allowances which should make EVS volunteers' pocket money taxable, though in practice it is not being done.

Sweden, on the contrary, does not interfere in its voluntary sector and no official definition of volunteering exists. Full-time cross-border volunteering is associated with humanitarian or development work. Therefore, as in the UK, EVS is not so popular: despite a population at least three times bigger than that of Lithuania, the Swedish EVS participation rates are lower (around 50 inbound and outbound volunteers annually within the EU). Among the incoming EVS volunteers, the biggest share comes from Germany, whereas the outgoing volunteers are almost evenly spread. Many opportunities to volunteer abroad are available to young Swedes, a lot of them self-funded. Swedish organisations are experienced in managing volunteer exchanges and recognition of skills acquired through non-formal education is advanced.

The evidence collected so far points towards the conclusion that although the status of foreign volunteers is bound to be different from that of in-country volunteers (because they are non-nationals of the host state), in states where local volunteering is more established the overall conditions are also likely to be more favourable to cross-border volunteering. However, different strategies can be pursued to ensure favourable conditions to volunteering: in some countries,
laws are used to ensure volunteer rights, while in others stakeholders focus on the quality of volunteer management and solve problems through the close cooperation between the voluntary and public sectors. However, where the approach to volunteering is rather negative in general, cross-border volunteers also face more obstacles. Another parallel is that the disadvantaged groups of society are less likely to be represented within both the in-country and cross-border volunteer workforce (see the next section).

Studying national contexts thus makes it possible to build a general picture as to what extent the MS concerned provides opportunities or creates obstacles for international volunteers both as a sending and as a receiving country. There is no doubt that different legislation and volunteering traditions, as well as dominant attitudes filter and shape volunteering opportunities and preferences. However, the increasing internationalisation of volunteering increases the mobility among different systems. This in turn requires a broader policy approach to international volunteering. Suggestions as to what can be done at various levels of policymaking (EU, MS, regional/local) are set out in the Recommendations section.
Conclusions

This study contributes to the growing area of research on volunteering, a topic that has received relatively little coverage until recently. The lack of research and reliable statistical data on volunteering has been repeatedly emphasised by various organisations and institutions in the EU. Given that awareness of the importance of volunteering is rising, this lack of information constrains the initiation and implementation of policies aimed at promoting voluntary work.

Even less research has been done on international volunteering. In response, this study is an attempt to elucidate the patterns of youth cross-border volunteering in the EU. Being based on seven case studies (six national ones and a horizontal one of the European Voluntary Service programme), it obviously does not exhaust the topic of volunteer mobility. However, since most studies focus on in-country volunteering or international volunteering in one country or within one programme, it is one of very few attempts to analyse cross-country mobility of young volunteers within the EU. Within the case studies, a variety of issues were explored, namely, the national concepts, regulations, policies, levels of youth cross-border volunteering, profiles and motivations of volunteers, the benefits of volunteering to the volunteers themselves, the sending and hosting societies and existing tools for recognition of their skills.

For the purpose of this study, volunteering is defined as work undertaken not for financial gain, of one’s own free will, benefiting a third party and performed in an organisational setting. International volunteering, cross-border volunteering and transnational volunteer exchanges (all used synonymously here) are understood as voluntary activities performed outside the volunteer’s country of residence. Due to the fact that volunteering abroad is bound to be more structured (specific time period, full-time engagement) than most of the domestic voluntary activities (part-time, ad hoc volunteering), it can usually also be called voluntary service. International volunteering is often run by NGOs, but programmes of civic service, that is, state-funded voluntary service, also fall within the scope of the study since they offer placements abroad. However, civilian service undertaken instead of compulsory military service is not considered volunteering because of the absence of the free will element.

The analysis is focused on cross-border volunteer exchanges taking place within the EU and undertaken by people aged 18 to 30. No specific type of voluntary activities abroad is excluded: work camps abroad or short-term volunteering (up to 1 month), medium- (1-3 months) and long-term engagement (over 3 months). However, although the motivations for joining, the benefits and
profiles of participants are mostly similar among the three types, most of the obstacles to volunteer mobility that have been explored here apply to long-term volunteering as it requires more preparation, planning and paperwork than other types of activities. It can also be expected to have a deeper impact on the volunteer and the host society. Furthermore, most of the volunteers interviewed were doing or had previously done a long-term EVS. They were easier to find as EVS is the most popular cross-border volunteering scheme in Europe.

The recent rise in awareness of volunteering has been fuelled by the efforts of international organisations such as the EU and the UN as well as national governments and NGOs. The EU initiatives concerning mobility of young volunteers specifically date back to the mid 1990s. Two policy fields have been the most important in this respect, namely, youth and education. In both of them, voluntary activities in another MS are regarded as use of freedom of movement – mobility for learning purposes. Voluntary service is seen as intensive non-formal learning similar to internships. Especially in the context of the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy, transnational volunteer mobility within the EU is encouraged as one of the ways to train a mobile workforce for a fast-changing knowledge economy. However, transnational exchanges are much more established in the formal (tertiary) education sector and it would be regrettable if the Europe 2020 ‘flagship’ initiative ‘Youth on the Move’ were only to concern university students.

The youth policy OMC process and EU education policy concerning volunteering are complementary as both have highlighted the need to reduce the obstacles to the mobility of young volunteers and recognise their learning outcomes. In particular, in the youth policy field, the development of cross-border volunteering opportunities, promoting them and making them accessible to every young person (including those with fewer opportunities who have more to gain from them) has been stressed. A very significant EU youth policy contribution to youth cross-border volunteering was the EVS (now part of the European Commission’s ‘Youth in Action’ programme) currently enabling around 5,000 young people a year to volunteer abroad.

In the field of education policy, the question of quality of mobility has been addressed. The European Quality Charter for Mobility (2006) makes it clear that in order to make the best use of the voluntary service abroad (or other forms of learning mobility) it has to be planned, prepared for, structured, goal-oriented and evaluated. Quality standards are essential for the recognition of competences gained through this non-formal learning experience. As long as their transparency is ensured, the learning outcomes are understood and

---

appreciated by potential employers and suited to complement formal education achievements. Recognition of skills gained while volunteering is especially important for disadvantaged young people who cannot take pride in their success in the labour market and/or in formal education. In fact, recognition can be a factor increasing their employability or helping them to get into the formal education system.

EU competence in both the education and youth fields is limited and therefore the so-called Open Method of Coordination (OMC) has been used to encourage policy coordination between the Member States and the exchange of experience. For example, encouraging voluntary activities of young people is one of the four priorities of youth policy OMC. The most influential policy documents (adopted at the Council level) so far are Recommendations: in education – Recommendation on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers (2001); in youth policy – Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the European Union (2008). The Committee of the Regions has also released several important opinions on volunteering, notably the Opinion on the contribution of volunteering to economic and social cohesion (2008).

The overall percentage of young Europeans volunteering abroad is still very low, especially in comparison to student exchanges: from the estimated 96 million young people (15-29 years old) in the EU, only 3,418 took part in EVS in 2009 (within the EU), whereas 170,951 participated in the ‘Erasmus’ student exchange (within the EU). Out of the 14.53 million young people in Germany (Eurostat 2007 data), only 8,210 are known to have participated in voluntary service programmes abroad in 2008. However, at least 1,230 of the participants cannot be considered volunteers as they undertook civilian service.

In addition, few disadvantaged young people can access cross-border opportunities or are motivated to use them. A typical European cross-border volunteer is likely to be from an upper social class background and a university graduate. Therefore, the majority of EVS volunteers fall within the 22-26 year age range as they already hold a BA or Masters degree. Furthermore, the number of young women participating in transnational volunteer exchanges is significantly higher. Most frequently cited motivations to undertake volunteering abroad are the wish to get to know a new country, learn or improve a language, take a break from normal life and reflect what to do next, be challenged, gain skills or test a career in a particular field and help other people. If the costs of volunteering abroad are covered, this can also work as a temporary solution for unemployed young people. Obviously, motivations for volunteering abroad are more complex than those for local volunteering.
For a successful volunteering experience, **young volunteers need** adequate information (about the opportunities available, the placement of their choice, costs involved, their insurance, commitments etc.), language and intercultural training, support from both the sending and host organisations and mentoring. They need help to overcome the financial obstacles (e.g. some programmes cover travel or accommodation costs). Organisers of voluntary work have to be professional because the quality of work is also important: volunteers cannot be used to substitute for paid staff, yet they have to do work that is valued and provides opportunities for learning. Furthermore, opportunities for establishing contacts with the local youth and for integrating better into the host community are desirable.

Interviews with stakeholders confirm that **cross-border volunteering is beneficial** both to volunteers themselves and to the organisations, communities and societies involved. International volunteering has great potential for integration, cultural learning and empowerment (for civic participation, among other things) and, when organised within the borders of the EU, it helps the development of a European identity (at the same time allowing reconsideration of one’s national identity or becoming more conscious of it). The volunteers gain competences needed for mobility (either for learning or work purposes) and return home more mature, more self-confident and potentially more active citizens. Meanwhile, their hosts not only benefit from the work performed directly by volunteers, but are also enriched by the intercultural dialogue and sharing, which sometimes leads to questioning of established truths and stereotypes. The employers of former volunteers profit from a more experienced workforce.

However, many **challenges** still exist for cross-border volunteering within the EU: legal, administrative and organisational, socio-economic and financial, those related to availability of information, social and cultural obstacles. These have been repeatedly identified in various EU policy documents, but have yet to be addressed at the policy level in many MSs. In any case, most of the obstacles require national solutions. The most significant added value of EU involvement is the encouragement of cooperation between the MS, aimed at promoting and facilitating cross-border volunteering (helping to achieve the complementarity of national frameworks for volunteering). An EU-level forum is especially needed in order to discuss ways of managing the issues related to disparities of volunteer status, social security issues (health, social and liability insurance), clearance procedures and recognition of volunteer skills and competences.

The MSs pursue various approaches with regard to volunteering and in most cases cross-border volunteering receives much less attention than in-country activities. Nevertheless, most of the barriers to cross-border volunteering would
be eased by improving the conditions for full-time volunteering in general. First
and foremost, clarifying the legal status of volunteers (including those who
arrive from other countries for a full-time placement) would help to address
several key issues, such as: immigration and residence in the host country, social
security status of full-time volunteers, their rights and responsibilities, and the
relationship between unemployment and voluntary work.

Many improvements can be made in other areas as well. One of them concerns
the integration of volunteering into the framework for recognition of non-formal
education qualifications. General awareness-raising on the benefits of
volunteering and its learning outcomes could contribute to public approval of
volunteering, whereas partnerships with private and NGO employers would
encourage them to place a higher value on volunteer skills and competences in
the recruitment process. Other important steps are: strengthening the network of
civil society organisations that can participate in cross-border volunteer
exchanges, supporting the development of their management capacity and
international partnerships with other organisers of voluntary work, and
developing financial incentives that would make cross-border volunteering more
affordable and attractive.

Regional and local authorities have an important role to play in promoting
young volunteer exchanges. However, they tend to be rather preoccupied with
local volunteering (if any at all). In fact, the positive impact of cross-border
volunteering is best felt in small communities that are naturally less diverse, but
eager to embrace other nationalities. Some of them are close to the national
border, which could suggest possible directions of exchange of young
volunteers. Another possibility could be to enrich the usual partnerships with
municipalities in other countries (twin towns/ sister cities) with a scheme of
youth cross-border volunteering, making the twinning more tangible and youth-
oriented (such a project, although on a small scale, was implemented in the
small Lithuanian town of Telšiai). Some Swedish municipalities are EVS
accredited organisations and actively participate in cross-border volunteer
exchanges, which gives them a stake in and an understanding of the issues
involved. As a result, the problems arising are successfully solved in
cooperation with other sending and hosting organisations. Other possible areas
of action for regional and local authorities include capacity-building of NGOs,
development of financial incentives, spread of information to potential
volunteers and awareness-raising among stakeholders.
### Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main fields of improvement</th>
<th>Specific issues</th>
<th>Recommended actions</th>
<th>Levels of action</th>
<th>Suggestions and examples of actions at different levels (based on the main report and case studies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal framework</td>
<td>Legal status</td>
<td>1. Define the legal status of volunteers, including cross-border volunteers, i.e.:</td>
<td>EU:</td>
<td><strong>MS:</strong> Special German law regulates the national full-time volunteering programmes FSJ and FÖJ (both in-country and abroad) and lists all the legal rules defining their insurance situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- In order to avoid situations where volunteers have to pay their own health or liability insurance, clarify the part-time and full-time volunteer insurance regime, specifying the responsibilities of sending and host organisations, volunteers and the state;</td>
<td>MS:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Include volunteering as a legal ground for residence in the country;</td>
<td>Regional/local:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>X</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MS:** Lithuania specifically exempts participants of volunteering programmes funded by the EU or its Member States from the obligation to get a work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>o Define the relationship between unemployment and volunteering, preferably designating placements abroad as periods of training;</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>MS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The UK abolished the previous time restrictions (max. 16 hours a week) for the unemployed to undertake volunteering. However, this only helps promote full-time volunteering within the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• In Hungary, Volunteer Centre Foundation has been implementing the ‘ÖTLET’ programme enabling jobseekers to volunteer for 10 months in order to sustain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>permit (if coming outside the EU).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Italy has introduced a special <em>missione/V</em> visa whereby volunteering is established as a sufficient legal ground for European Voluntary Service (Action 2 of EC’s ‘Youth in Action’ programme) volunteers from non-EU countries to come and stay in Italy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
their motivation, help them gain work experience and remain competent for the labour market. Again, the programme concerns in-country volunteering only.

- In Sweden, EVS was recognised as a period of learning.

- Clarify the level of reimbursement of volunteers' out-of-pocket expenses that should not be considered as salary (taking into account full-time volunteer allowances such as for food and accommodation).

- In the UK, reasonable reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of volunteers' duties is allowed and so are allowances for food and accommodation.

- In Germany, the law regulating FSJ and FÖJ volunteering programmes states that full-time volunteers may receive accommodation, board and work clothes (or equivalents in cash). Their pocket money in cash cannot be higher than 6% of the earnings ceiling for
2. Use the OMC co-operation framework to discuss and settle the issues arising due to the different legal treatment of foreign volunteers in various Member States.  

| Recognisation of skills and competences gained through volunteering (abroad) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|

3. Enable optional recognition (within the formal education and training system) of non-formal learning qualifications gained through volunteering.  

| Recognisation of skills and competences gained through volunteering (abroad) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|

4. Use the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to achieve complementarity between systems in various Member States. Where national frameworks of qualifications exist, cross-reference them to the EQF.  

| Recognisation of skills and competences gained through volunteering (abroad) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|

5. Develop transparent tools (based on self-assessment guided by mentor) for the evaluation of skills and competences through volunteering and raise  

| Recognisation of skills and competences gained through volunteering (abroad) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|

---

**EU:** Council has adopted the Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across Europe based on consultation and reports and questionnaires filled in by the MSs.

**MS:** The UK has a single framework of qualifications for recognition of formal and non-formal education.

**EU:** ‘Youthpass’ certificate issued to EVS volunteers is based on the eight Key Competences for Lifelong Learning linked to the EQF.

**MS:** Swedish NGO Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange has developed a non-formal education recognition tool ELD (Experience, Learning, Description) for use in cross-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Awareness</th>
<th>6. Discuss the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes with NGOs and employers’ organisations in order to encourage consideration of volunteer skills and competences in the recruitment process.</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Regional/ local: When hiring staff to positions in local/ regional government institutions, consider candidates’ (international) volunteering experience.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional/ local: Spread awareness of non-formal education recognition tools through regional/ local partnerships. For example, take advantage of ‘Youthpass’ for EVS volunteers and raise stakeholder awareness of it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations</td>
<td>Capacity-building of coordinating, sending and host organisations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Regional/ local: Consider hosting foreign volunteers in public institutions to contribute to delivery of services. For example, Swedish and Italian municipalities are active as accredited EVS organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations</td>
<td>7. Encourage the development of organisations capable of participating in transnational volunteer exchanges.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations</td>
<td>8. Support existing organisations in developing cross-border volunteer exchanges and their infrastructure.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, in no way can volunteers be used to replace paid labour and their responsibilities should provide opportunities to learn.

9. Support training and exchange of good practice on the management of cross-border volunteers among NGOs.

| Networks | 10. Encourage the development of international networks and partnerships among | X | X | X | Regional/local: Initiate seminars for regional/local NGOs.  
- Volunteering England or Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) are examples of organisations spreading the good practice of volunteer management in the UK.  
- In Lithuania, EVS coordinating organisations ‘Actio Catholica Patria’ and ‘Youth Exchange Agency’ have organised training sessions in order to strengthen NGOs in the countryside.  
| EU: EC’s ‘Youth in Action’ programme provides opportunities for partnership |
organisations which use voluntary work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional/local:</th>
<th>Encourage partnerships among local NGOs for participation in cross-border volunteer exchange, for instance, by organising networking events.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Consider introducing a volunteer exchange aspect in existing transnational cooperation schemes at various levels.

| MS: | German-French and German-Czech bilateral partnerships include small-scale volunteer exchange schemes. Regional/local: Begin volunteer exchange within the partnerships of twin towns and sister cities. For example, the municipalities of the Lithuanian Telšiai town and its partner town Steinfurt in Germany have implemented a successful volunteer exchange project to enhance their cooperation. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Informing the potential volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. Facilitate access to full and adequate information on youth volunteering abroad (including costs and conditions, social security status, rights and responsibilities).

| MS: | In Germany, the EuroPeers network of former participants in ‘Youth in Action’ activities promotes this EU programme (including the EVS) and other mobility opportunities to young Germans in schools and clubs. |
| 13. Consider launching a centralised youth portal on volunteering with a sub-section on volunteering abroad (or a separate portal) where all the available networks and schemes would be listed with a clear description of costs and conditions. | X | MS: The Eurodesk in Germany runs a website on cross-border opportunities for young people www.rausvonzuhaus.de where volunteering abroad is featured as a separate category and main programme options are presented. |
| 14. In advertising volunteering opportunities for youth, draw attention to the skills and competences volunteers gain from the experience, including intercultural skills | X | X | X | EU: The learning aspect of cross-border volunteering is emphasised in EVS: pre-departure, on-arrival as well as language training is organised for the participants. The programme |
and interpersonal communication.

<p>| Informing society at large | 15. Integrate actions promoting volunteering in general and cross-border volunteering in particular into national/ regional/ local development strategies and strategic policy documents in various sectors (e.g. education, youth). | X | X | MS: Lithuanian youth strategy 2010-2018 is due to include legalisation of volunteering among its implementation measures. Regional/ local: Use international volunteering as a regional/ local youth policy instrument (include relevant projects or actions in the strategies). For instance, the Scottish youth work strategy admits that involvement in volunteer projects abroad increases young people’s motivation, self-confidence and life-skills. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16. Use national/ regional/ local volunteering strategies to promote youth cross-border volunteering.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Regional/ local: Sections on international volunteering in regional/ local volunteering strategies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. Integrate the cross-border focus in the information campaigns (e.g. to be implemented during the European Year of Volunteering in 2011) aimed at promoting volunteering. Emphasise the benefits of voluntary work to the host societies and communities.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>MS: The UK National Agency for the ‘Youth in Action’ programme – British Council – is planning an event to celebrate EVS volunteers’ achievements in 2011. Regional/ local: Consider events promoting international volunteering on the regional/ local scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Supporting volunteers</td>
<td>18. Consider contributing funds to EVS volunteer exchanges in order to increase the number of placements.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Financial Supporting volunteers | 19. Consider establishing a national or regional scheme for volunteering abroad with both sending and receiving arrangements or introducing some full-time volunteering bursaries. | X | X | EU: AMICUS, the pilot project for EU civic service, allowed young volunteer exchange among national civic service schemes. MS: Some civil service schemes allow people to volunteer abroad, for instance:  
  - German national schemes |
| Supporting organisations | 20. Grant tax exemptions for volunteers’ allowances and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses and ensure they are universally applied. | X | MS: Tax exemptions for volunteers’ out-of-pocket expenses are a usual practice in countries where the specificity of voluntary work is recognised (for example, Germany, Hungary, the UK). However, their implementation is not always properly ensured and volunteers may face some issues with tax authorities. |

FSJ and FÖJ allow young Germans to go to other countries and young foreigners to come to Germany to volunteer full-time for 6-18 months.
- Italian National Civic Service runs some projects abroad enabling young Italians to volunteer full-time in other countries.

Regional/local: Consider introducing volunteer bursary scheme funded by the regional/local authority.
21. Consider introducing grant schemes aimed at organisations developing international youth volunteering.  

**Regional/local:** Targeted regional/local authority support for organisations managing cross-border volunteer exchanges.

| Young people with fewer opportunities | Cross-cutting issue | 22. Initiate research concerning participation of disadvantaged young people in cross-border voluntary activities.  
23. Develop ways of informing disadvantaged young people about cross-border volunteering opportunities (e.g. through social and youth workers, peer groups).  
24. Develop instruments of pedagogical support for young disadvantaged participants.  
25. Support volunteer-sending and hosting organisations targeting young people with fewer opportunities.  
26. Consider introducing cross-border volunteering bursaries for disadvantaged young people. | All levels |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Research                           | Cross-cutting issue | 27. Encourage collection of comparable data on young cross-border volunteer numbers across the Member States.  
28. Initiate research on the short- and term-effects of cross-border volunteering on the volunteers themselves and the communities involved in the exchange.  
29. In order to facilitate the creation of a framework for the recognition of non-formal education, initiate research on skills and competences gained while volunteering in various sectors.  
30. Initiate comparative studies on cross-border volunteer exchanges within the EU and with non-EU countries. | All levels |
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Commission in-depth research on the needs of and effects on disadvantaged young people when participating in cross-border volunteer exchanges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of sources

Note: the following list does not include all the sources used to complete the study, only those cited in the main report. See additional lists of interviews, documents, legal acts and websites in the case study reports (Annexes 1-7).

List of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Karoline</td>
<td>Becker</td>
<td>Editor of <a href="http://www.youth">www.youth</a> reporter.eu</td>
<td>Private Public Relations Agency (hired by JUGEND für Europa), Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>05-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ulrich</td>
<td>Beckers</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator (EVS)</td>
<td>JUGEND für Europa – German National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>04-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>Bergstein</td>
<td>Project Coordinator for Youthpass</td>
<td>SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>04-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Bömer</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Raffaele</td>
<td>De Cicco</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>UNSC – National Bureau for Civic Service, Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>22-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Vaida</td>
<td>Dieninyt</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>03-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Pontus</td>
<td>Ekstam</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Swedish National Board</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Contact Details</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Simona Fisichella</td>
<td>Italian EVS volunteer in the UK</td>
<td>for Youth Affairs - Swedish National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>02-04-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Bernd Göddertz</td>
<td>Regional Manager (Nord)</td>
<td><em>ijgd – Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste</em> (Nord), Hildesheim, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>03-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Gergely Grányák</td>
<td>Adviser responsible for International Affairs</td>
<td><em>Department for Children and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour</em>, Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>25-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Jana Gruden</td>
<td>Slovenian intern</td>
<td><em>IVS GB</em> (International Voluntary Service – Great Britain), Edinburgh, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>29-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Constance Hanniffy</td>
<td>Member delegated by Ireland</td>
<td><em>Committee of the Regions</em>, Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>27-05-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Sophie Janin</td>
<td>French EVS volunteer in</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>31-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Contact Details</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Conor Keenan</td>
<td>Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>02-04-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Jutta Koenig-Georgiades</td>
<td>Policy Officer for Citizenship policy: Europe for citizens (coordinator of European Year of Volunteering 2011)</td>
<td>EC, DG EAC (now moved to DG Communication), Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>20-01-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Vanda Kovács</td>
<td>EVS Coordinator</td>
<td>Cseresznye Youth Office, Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>22-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>John Lee</td>
<td>Policy and Practice Adviser</td>
<td>Volunteer Development Scotland, Stirling, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>30-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Pascal Lejeune</td>
<td>Youth in Action Head of Unit</td>
<td>EC, DG EAC, Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-01-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Karin Lopatta-Loibl</td>
<td>Youth Policy Officer – Youth Volunteering, Cross-border Mobility &amp; Evidence-based Policy Making</td>
<td>EC, DG EAC, Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>07-05-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Attila Lovászi</td>
<td>EVS Programme Coordinator</td>
<td>Neso-Mobilitás – ’Youth in Action’ National Agency, Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>17-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Stefania Macchioni</td>
<td>European Liaison Officer</td>
<td>CSVnet - Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres, c/o European</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-01-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer Centre (CEV), Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Virág</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>07-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>Modin</td>
<td>Diversity Coordinator</td>
<td>Jönköping municipality, Jönköping, Sweden</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Frederike</td>
<td>Müller</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>31-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Geoff</td>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>Head of Third Sector Division</td>
<td>Public Sector Reform Directorate, The Scottish Government, Edinburgh, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>29-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Peil</td>
<td>Public Relations Officer</td>
<td>JUGEND für Europa – German National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>05-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Purves</td>
<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>International Voluntary Service – Great Britain, Edinburgh, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>29-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Rytis</td>
<td>Rakauskas</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Italy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>24-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Simona</td>
<td>Ruškytė</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>27-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Salmann</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>04-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (Nord), Hildesheim, Germany</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Kerstin Thürnau</td>
<td>Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (Nord), Hildesheim, Germany</td>
<td>Kerstin Thürnau</td>
<td>Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (Nord), Hildesheim, Germany</td>
<td>ijgd – Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste (Nord), Hildesheim, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Zsófia Tornóci</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
<td>Zsófia Tornóczi</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>András F. Tóth</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>András F. Tóth</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Daniel Uceda</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation</td>
<td>Daniel Uceda</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Tessza Udvarhelyi</td>
<td>Former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal</td>
<td>Tessza Udvarhelyi</td>
<td>Former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Vaida Urbonavičiūtė</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td>Vaida Urbonavičiūtė</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face, Vilnius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Katja Vossenberg</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>Katja Vossenberg</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face, Vilnius</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of publications


List of legal and policy documents

6. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the


19. European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion (2007/2149(INI)).


29. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (2002/C 168/02).
30. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Pact for Youth and promoting active citizenship (2005/C 292/03).
32. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field (2006/C 168/01).

List of websites


European Voluntary Service

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) constitutes Action 2 of the EU programme ‘Youth in Action’. EVS was introduced as a pilot action in 1996\(^ {268}\) and has evolved into a volunteering exchange scheme unique in its scope and comprehensiveness. Unlike many overseas schemes popular with Western graduates who want to do a gap year, EVS is a free voluntary service with almost all of its costs covered by the European Commission. It is the only truly ‘European’ volunteer exchange scheme: it transcends the bilateral or regional initiatives of the MSs, giving their young citizens a wider choice and a high-quality service. Although its activities are mostly concentrated in Europe, it is also open to the rest of the world.

Objectives

The ‘Youth in Action’ Programme has the following general objectives\(^ {269}\):

1. promoting young people’s active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular;
2. developing solidarity and promoting tolerance among young people;
3. fostering mutual understanding between young people in different countries;
4. contributing to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field;
5. promoting European cooperation in the youth field.

Since EVS is essentially a programme for non-formal education, these general objectives complement those of life-long learning and contribute to the recognition of cultural, multicultural and linguistic diversity in Europe, as well as to fostering social cohesion and combating discrimination\(^ {270}\).


\(^{270}\) Ibid.
Geographic scope and participants

EVS pursues its aims by managing individual and group volunteer exchanges mainly within Europe. The programme country list encompasses\(^\text{271}\):

- EU Member States;
- European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries which are members of the European Economic Area (EEA): Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway;
- Turkey as a candidate for accession to the EU;
- ‘Neighbouring Partner Countries’ which include the Balkan states, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and the Mediterranean countries;
- Other countries which have signed agreements with the European Union relevant to the youth field. However, the usual visa policies apply to project participants (and often cause problems for reasons mentioned in the Obstacles to mobility section).

EVS allows those aged 18 to 30 who are legal residents of an eligible programme country\(^\text{272}\) to participate in a project carried out in another country. Since the whole programme is concerned with social inclusion, special attention is devoted to involving young people with fewer opportunities who can participate from the age of 16\(^\text{273}\) (projects with inclusion as their focus are also given priority).

Given the results of online public consultation in the youth field, EVS seems to be the most well-known EU measure for youth among individual young people\(^\text{274}\). In 2008, 5,900 volunteers were sent abroad through the EVS\(^\text{275}\). A comparison with some other major transnational mobility schemes is provided below. It includes another EU initiative *Erasmus* which is a student rather than volunteer exchange and which has grown exponentially since it was established.


\(^{272}\) European Commission, *Youth in Action* Programme Guide, p. 54.

\(^{273}\) Ibid., p. 54.


\(^{275}\) Interview with Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (thereinafter – EC, DG EAC), Brussels, 19-01-2010.
Table 4. Number of volunteers in international mobility schemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobility scheme</th>
<th>Number of volunteers per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EVS</td>
<td>5,900 (2008)²⁷⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasmus</td>
<td>174,163 (2007/08 academic year)²⁷⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Corps</td>
<td>7,671 (2009)²⁷⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Volunteers</td>
<td>7,753 (2008)²⁷⁹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2007-2009, the average age of EVS volunteers was 22 years. The EVS volunteer workforce is predominantly female: although the exact percentages differ from one MS to another, 65% of the programme participants in Europe are young women and only 35% young men²⁸⁰.

Projects and management

An EVS project lasts up to 24 months, whereas the duration of an individual’s voluntary service may be from 2 weeks to 12 months. Within EVS, both individual and group voluntary activities are possible, the latter involving from 2 to 100 volunteers²⁸¹. Unlike Erasmus that provides for student mobility in a highly formalised university setting, EVS targets all young people regardless of their occupation and especially young people with fewer opportunities who are unlikely to have access to other initiatives facilitating young people’s mobility. As such, EVS is a catch-all programme, flexible enough to suit the needs of all young people²⁸².

However, it is also a complex one to manage. The whole ‘Youth in Action’ programme employs a team of 25 people in the European Commission²⁸³. Meanwhile, there is a designated National Agency (NA) in each participating country that coordinates the programme activities, including those of the EVS, on the national scale and manages the state’s share of its budget. For larger scale centralised projects (such as volunteering at a European Capital of Culture or European Sports Championship) or projects involving promoters from outside the EU or the EU Neighbourhood countries, applications are submitted to the

²⁷⁶ Ibid.
²⁸⁰ Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
²⁸² Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
²⁸³ Interview with Youth in Action Head of Unit, EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (Executive Agency in short) of the EC. Regarding other projects, funding decisions are taken by the NAs. The statistical data used in this report concerns only projects funded by the NAs.

Projects are implemented by promoters in each of the countries involved. There must be at least one sending organisation (SO) and one host organisation (HO). In small projects concerning only one volunteer, one of those two partners acts as a coordinating organisation (CO) that is responsible for the project budget. Usually project promoters are non-profit, non-governmental organisations or local/ regional public bodies. Bodies active at European level in the youth field, international governmental organisations or profit-making organisations (only when they organise an event in the area of youth, sport or culture) are also allowed to apply but their applications are managed by the Executive Agency as mentioned before. Each applicant must be from a programme country.

The operation of EVS is supported by other elements of EU youth policy, most importantly, the SALTO Youth Resource Centres and the Eurodesk network. The network of eight SALTO (Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities) Youth Resource Centres scattered across Europe facilitate implementation of the ‘Youth in Action’ programme by providing training for organisers of youth cross-border projects (including volunteer exchanges) and networking to enhance the cooperation opportunities. Meanwhile, the network of Eurodesk offices in 31 European countries supports the programme's implementation by providing information and advice concerning Europe to young people and to those working with them. At the same time, they can help the young people find information on volunteering opportunities in Europe.

**Project implementation**

Organisations that can act as sending, host and/or coordinating bodies have to be accredited as such. Depending on their nature, this is done by the NA (usually), Executive Agency or SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre (for South East Europe project promoters). Accredited host organisations and

---

285 Ibid., p. 53. Descriptions of the roles of the sending, hosting and coordinating organisations can be found ibid., p. 56-57.
suggested activities are included in databases and can be searched by individual would-be volunteers with the support of the sending organisations providing them with information on opportunities.

Lists of accredited organisations can be found on the official Commission website (http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm), on the NGO website www.youthnetworks.eu or the sending organisation can suggest their partner organisations. Unfortunately, project information provided in the databases is not always up to date and potential applicants cannot check whether somebody has been accepted already and if any more volunteers are still needed.

The project starts when a suitable opportunity is found and the host organisation approves the involvement of a particular volunteer. An EVS project encompasses three phases: 1) planning and preparation for the voluntary service, 2) implementation of the project (the actual volunteering) and 3) evaluation (including reflection on a possible follow-up). For a graphical depiction of the project cycle, see Figure 4.

Once the host organisation is found and agrees to participate, a project application is developed in cooperation between all the project partners including the volunteer(s) and submitted to the NA (or the Executive Agency if applicable). If the project is funded, an Advance Planning Visit might be arranged for the inclusion projects. Otherwise, an agreement is signed straightaway by the project promoters and the individual volunteer(s). Volunteers are then enrolled in the insurance scheme managed by the European Benefits Administrators that provides EVS volunteers with free health and liability cover which provides world-wide coverage from the start of their service till 2 months after the end of it. The insurance premiums are paid by the Executive Agency. However, healthcare expenses are reimbursed after the bills are paid and the money may take a while to arrive.

In preparation for the voluntary service, training sessions are offered before departure and on arrival. Pre-departure training is aimed at preparing volunteers for the intercultural experience by allowing them to meet former EVS volunteers, for example. Meanwhile, the on-arrival training session attempts to introduce volunteers to their host country and the environment they are going to be working in, at the same time as giving them an opportunity to get to know

---

289 Interview with German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 20-02-2010.
other volunteers. In addition, at the beginning of their voluntary service, volunteers also start a language course.

**Figure 4. Participating in EVS**

1. Finding the **SENDING ORGANISATION** (filling in volunteer’s form)
2. Finding the **HOST ORGANISATION**
3. The **COORDINATING ORGANISATION** (usually either the Sending or Host Organisation) submits application
4. **Advance Planning Visit** (only for EVS Activity involving young people with fewer opportunities)
5. **Signing EVS Activity Agreement** (by the volunteer and representatives of the Coordinating, Sending and Host Organisations)
6. **Enrolment into the Group Insurance Plan** for EVS volunteers (The Coordinating Organisation, in cooperation with the Sending and Host Organisations, is responsible for the enrolment of the volunteer)
7. **Pre-departure training**
8. **On-arrival training**
9. **Volunteering**
10. **Mid-term evaluation**
11. **Evaluation of the Activity**

*Source: PPMI, based on the ‘Youth in Action’ Programme Guide.*

---

Once the actual project activity has started, for voluntary services lasting more than 4 months, a mid-term evaluation of the experience gathered so far is arranged, which also offers an opportunity to meet other volunteers from different projects throughout the host country. At the end of the service, a final evaluation is conducted to assess the performance of the EVS activity: its aims, objectives, motivation, expectations, and tasks performed during the service. This evaluation provides the basis for the Youthpass (see below) issued by the host organisation that serves as recognition of the skills gained while volunteering.

**Socio-economic profile of the participants**

It has already been noted that participants of EVS are predominantly young women. As for the social profile of volunteers, EVS is often associated with **young educated people from well-to-do backgrounds**. A lot of university students/graduates take part in the EVS during their gap year, holiday period or after their graduation and before embarking on a professional career. The explanation is that they are aware of this opportunity in the first place whereas people from more deprived backgrounds may not have access to the information about EVS. University students also have the means to participate and are more likely to already have a command of the language they will need in their host country\(^\text{293}\).

However, there are other populations within the EVS volunteer workforce and one of these is people who are unemployed at a given moment and who are looking for something to do\(^\text{294}\). Although EVS is not paid employment, it is a structured full-time volunteer activity that helps participants gain new skills and may assist them in deciding on their future career path.

Finally, there are inclusion projects involving **people with fewer opportunities**. These are more likely to be short-term projects that better suit the needs of this target group. However, some host organisations may be reluctant to accept volunteers from a seriously disadvantaged background\(^\text{295}\).

---

\(^{293}\) Interview with Youth Policy Officer – Youth Volunteering, Cross-border Mobility & Evidence-based Policy Making, EC, DG EAC; Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\(^{294}\) Interview with Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010; CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

Inclusion Strategy of the ‘Youth in Action’ programme (2007-2013) offers a wide definition of ‘youth with fewer opportunities’. Young people can be considered ‘disadvantaged’ for numerous reasons:

- **Social:** discrimination on various grounds, limited social skills or anti-social or risky sexual behaviours, precarious situations they find themselves in because of their family situation (broken families, young and/or single parents, orphans) or their record of crime, drug use or alcohol abuse, etc.
- **Economic:** low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system, long-term unemployment, homelessness, poverty, debt or financial problems, etc.
- **Disability:** mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities.
- **Educational:** learning difficulties, early school leaving, lower qualifications, poor school performance record, etc.
- **Cultural:** immigrant or refugee background, belonging to a national or ethnic minority, linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion problems, etc.
- **Health:** chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions, mental health problems, etc.
- **Geographical:** living in remote or rural areas, small islands or peripheral regions, urban problem zones, less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities, abandoned villages…), etc.

To give an example, records of the Italian NA show that 20% of the outgoing Italian EVS volunteers (2007-2009) faced economic exclusion, 17.5% experienced social obstacles, 13.7% had learning difficulties and the same proportion faced geographical obstacles, 12.7% were from a different cultural background, whereas 6.8% had a disability and 5.7% suffered from health problems. According to the Programme Manager of EVS, from 17 to 20% of all EVS participants can be considered as coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the discretion of employing the definition is entrusted to the NAs because interpretation of the abovementioned obstacles is context-dependent. For instance, young migrants or children of migrants can come from a well-to-do background and be well integrated into the host society in terms of education and qualifications.

---


297 Data provided by the National Youth Agency – Italian National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ Programme. See Italy case study report for more details.

298 Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.


300 Interview with Regional Manager of *ijgd – Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
Moreover, some young people object to the use of such a label as they do not consider themselves ‘disadvantaged’ despite being eligible for the given categories or they think of it as offensive\textsuperscript{301}. In fact, an interviewee from a German organisation coordinating volunteer exchanges felt that the aim of recruiting participants from ‘underprivileged’ backgrounds is too remote from reality: at the very least it is difficult to offer projects that would be attractive enough to people from really deprived strata and to keep them committed to these projects\textsuperscript{302}. However, supporters state that such participants can potentially gain most from the experience of volunteering abroad regardless of the obstacles they (and the organisations mentoring them) might need to overcome\textsuperscript{303}. An interviewee from the German NA suggested that the only way round the problem would be to aim for ‘diversity’ in the EVS volunteer force rather than prioritising ‘youth with fewer opportunities’ because the concept is bound to cause misunderstanding and heated debate\textsuperscript{304}.

\textbf{Budget}

The budget of ‘Youth in Action’ for the 2007-2013 financial period stands at EUR 885 million\textsuperscript{305} of which 23\% are allocated to EVS\textsuperscript{306}; this means EUR 203.55 million for 7 years or EUR 29,078,571 a year. This is actually not very much given the fact that it costs about EUR 7,000 to fund an individual voluntary service in another country for 10 months. Obviously the EVS cannot satisfy all the mobility needs of the young Europeans – or at least not at the current rate of funding\textsuperscript{307}.

Expenses of a cross-border project covered by the ‘Youth in Action’ programme\textsuperscript{308}:

a. Visa (if needed) and related costs, residence permit fees, vaccination (if needed) costs;

b. 90\% of the travel costs (one return trip from home to the project venue);

c. Sending activity costs including recruitment, preparation of the volunteer, staying in contact with the volunteer, evaluation, project administration/communication;

\textsuperscript{301} Programme Manager \textit{Youth in Action}, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{302} Regional Manager of \textit{ijgd} (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.

\textsuperscript{303} Youth Policy Officer – Youth Volunteering, Cross-border Mobility & Evidence-based Policy Making, EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{304} Public Relations Officer at \textit{JUGEND für Europa} – German National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Bonn, 05-02-2010.


\textsuperscript{307} Interview with \textit{Youth in Action} Head of Unit, EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{308} European Commission, \textit{‘Youth in Action’ Programme Guide}, p. 63.
d. Host activity costs including language training, support to volunteer, accommodation, food, local transport, project administration/communication;

e. Volunteer allowance – ‘pocket money’ for volunteer personal expenses (within the EU, the allowance ranges from EUR 60 a month in Romania to EUR 150 a month in the UK);

f. ‘Coordination costs’ (when more than one sending and one host organisation are involved): coordination, monitoring, networking, communications, administration, arranging insurance, help with visa, arranging meetings of project promoters;

g. Additional dissemination and exploitation of project results if this was planned for in the application (up to EUR 500 for each project promoter).

Special funding measures can be used to accommodate the needs of participants with fewer opportunities as long as they are provided for in the project application form:

- Volunteers from a disadvantaged background are allowed a paid-for Advance Planning Visit to the project site for up to two days;
- Costs directly related to additional personal support to volunteers with fewer opportunities in the preparation phase or during the EVS activity abroad are covered;
- Exceptional costs directly related to volunteers with fewer opportunities or special needs are covered.

Some stakeholders in the MSs point out that these measures are still insufficient given the special needs of the severely disadvantaged youth who are less likely to know foreign languages or to have previous experience of going abroad. Most importantly, these tools cannot be used to finance additional pedagogical personnel, which is vital when implementing projects with young people who need much more counselling and guidance. Therefore, not only is more funding required but it should be more flexible.

The allowance amounts (lump sums) are calculated for each individual country and set for the whole of the financial period by the EC. However, the rates do not match the local living standards in some cases, especially given differences in the costs of living in cities and in the countryside.

---

309 Ibid., p. 72.
310 Ibid., p. 64.
311 Public Relations Officer at JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 05-02-2010.
312 CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
Regardless of some criticisms, the stakeholders do agree that EVS is a quality cross-border volunteer exchange programme that other schemes rarely match in terms of provision for the individual volunteer’s needs. It can serve as an example for other schemes, as in fact it already has for several national German schemes or for Belgian inter-community volunteer exchange initiatives bridging societal gaps (between the Flemish, French and German speaking communities). Expansion with the current restrained budget is only possible if MSs or EU regions start contributing significantly with their own funding, that is, if the percentage of EC funding per volunteer decreases. That would allow more Europeans to be sent abroad without having to compromise the comprehensiveness of the scheme.

**Patterns of mobility**

In this section, we review the statistics of EVS volunteer mobility within the borders of the EU and discuss the main trends of this volunteer exchange. Observations are based on 2009 data. Numbers of volunteers sent and hosted by each MS are presented in Figure 5.

Although the overall number of EVS participants exceeded 5,000 in recent years, the total number of EVS volunteers sent within the EU in 2009 was 3,418. EU states that send and host the highest numbers of EVS volunteers within the EU overlap to some extent. The most active in the EVS exchanges are Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland and the UK and this is not surprising given the size of these countries. However, examples of Hungary that sends more volunteers than the UK or Greece that hosts more than Romania (population size double that of Greece) show that countries with small populations can host and send relatively high numbers as well.

On the other hand, countries are usually more active either in sending or in receiving volunteers. Germany, where young people are very keen to gain intercultural experience and learn foreign languages (see Annex 3 for details), is the leader in sending volunteers within the EU and the number of Germany’s outgoing volunteers is more than double that of hosted ones. France, Italy, Hungary, Latvia and Austria also send significantly more EVS participants than they host.

In terms of hosting, Germany is nearly matched by France and overtaken by Spain and the UK. Young British people are more eager to volunteer in the developing world (see Annex 4 for more details) and thus the UK does not send that many EVS participants to the EU (given the country’s size). However, the

---

313 Youth in Action Head of Unit; Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
state hosts twice as many EVS volunteers as it sends. This is also true of Greece, Portugal, Romania, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Ireland and Malta.

Figure 5. Number of EVS volunteers sent and hosted by EU Member States in 2009 (within the EU only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sent</th>
<th>Hosted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Commission.
Note: Data obtained from the European Commission’s ‘Youthlink’ database and reflects the situation of projects granted in 2009 as of 04-05-2010 (including projects that were later cancelled). Incomplete statistics and projects funded centrally, by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency are not included.
The fact that Romania and Latvia are among the countries hosting quite a lot of volunteers indicates a recent change of pattern in EVS-volunteer mobility. Before 2004, volunteer routes tended to be confined to the EU15, although even then it was possible to go eastwards. Since the Eastern enlargement, there have been more and more people wishing to explore the new MSs\textsuperscript{314}.

Various reasons can be listed as to why EVS volunteers choose one country over another, given such a wide spectrum. The language factor is important – the person’s wish to learn a particular language or to be able to use a language he or she knows already\textsuperscript{315}. This partly explains why countries such as the UK, France, Spain and Germany receive many volunteers – their national languages are the most widely spoken foreign languages in Europe.

When people are not adventurous (and most of them do not actually want to make risky choices) and do not look for the ‘most exotic EVS experience possible’, they are likely to choose neighbouring countries as their destination. Finally, many other reasons can underlie a person’s interest in a certain country: origin of the volunteer’s family, acquaintances gained from a particular country, climatic conditions etc.\textsuperscript{316}. However, the sending organisations should ensure that participants pay attention to the content of the projects as well as finding the right one for them, one they would be interested in and motivated to work at\textsuperscript{317}.

To some extent, the individual choice might be limited by the objective conditions in the hosting countries. Whereas in some countries volunteering is well-developed, in some other places it is still in the process of development. States that are more recent participants of the programme are bound to have fewer accredited and well-funded organisations able to provide comprehensive support, fewer hosting placements and/ or less accommodation arrangements that mass volunteering requires\textsuperscript{318}. Therefore, the EVS experiences are also bound to be diverse despite the single framework they are part of. Volunteers themselves notice that EVS volunteering in Italy, Lithuania or Moldova is not as well-structured as it is in Germany\textsuperscript{319}.

\textsuperscript{314} CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{315} Ibid.; Programme Manager \textit{Youth in Action}, Action 2 (EVS); Youth Policy Officer – Youth Volunteering, Cross-border Mobility & Evidence-based Policy Making, 19-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{316} Programme Manager \textit{Youth in Action}, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{317} CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{318} CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre; Programme Manager \textit{Youth in Action}, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{319} Interview with German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 29-01-2010.
Motivation

Although the EVS entails working for free and often in socially-oriented projects, cross-border volunteering is significantly different from in-country volunteering that volunteers can do in addition to their studies or paid employment. In another language, surrounded by another culture and governed by another set of rules of interaction, the challenges volunteers face are different, even if the activities are the same\textsuperscript{320}.

Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive and accurate research on the motivation of EVS volunteers – the studies that are available often rely on small samples, although the experiences echo one another. In the case of in-country volunteering the driving force is the wish to help others\textsuperscript{321}, whereas the most popular reasons to embark on an EVS project is the wish to gain intercultural experience, to learn a new language or to bring some change and challenge to one’s life\textsuperscript{322}.

The desire for a challenge is often related to the need for a break from normal activities that would allow some time for reflection on what to do next. It can be seen as sabbatical leave in order to test one’s abilities, to try to understand what you would like to do with your life. For example, a Lithuanian school graduate who did not know what studies to choose, among other things, chose to do an EVS in Germany which in turn encouraged her to study German at university level\textsuperscript{323}.

Whereas for many people it is a first-time volunteering experience, for some, it just means a change of environment (which is still a lot) because they want to volunteer in the same area in which they already volunteer in their home country\textsuperscript{324}. In this case, much more attention is paid to the project and its activities when choosing where to go.

\textsuperscript{320} CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{323} Interview with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, 27-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{324} CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
For the majority of participants it is still their **first experience of living abroad alone** which is seen as valuable. Moreover, it is time usefully spent helping others. In fact, even those participants who are motivated by the excitement of going abroad do gain the other components of EVS: they still experience the European dimension by getting closer to other people, they still gain new skills and competences and they still contribute to the hosting society.

**Benefits to the volunteers**

The ‘Youth in Action’ Head of Unit neatly summarised the benefit of participating in EVS for young volunteers in the four following points. Firstly, EVS is an **intercultural experience in a non-formal environment**. It opens their mind to the cultural diversity of Europe and enables them to share their culture with other people, interacting in a different environment the rules of which they have to master. This has an enriching effect on the volunteers which is multiplied when they come back to their home countries and communities and share the experiences or when they meet other people during their voluntary activities.

Secondly, it is an acquisition of **skills that boost their employability**. Experience abroad and foreign language skills may be an advantage in their later careers. Volunteers gain a lot of ‘soft’ skills such as teamwork and communication and become more mobile persons able to take advantage of the internal market. They gain a perception of how (usually) a non-governmental organisation works and they contribute to its activities in a particular field – be it working with children, disabled or elderly people, taking care of the environment or coordinating information campaigns. Space should be given to them to propose activities on their own initiative because it is from facing new challenges that volunteers may gain new skills, too.

Thirdly, it strengthens the feeling of being a **European citizen** and the notion of **solidarity**. Public opinion surveys show that young Europeans are rather sceptical about the EU project. The current young generation does not possess the experience of having lived through the war and thus tends to underestimate

---

325 Ibid.
326 Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
327 Interview with *Youth in Action* Head of Unit, EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
328 CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
330 Interview with *Youth Policy* Head of Unit, EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
331 CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
the EU’s contribution to peace-keeping and peace-building in post-war Europe. According to an EC official, young people mostly voted ‘no’ in the referenda on the Lisbon treaty, for instance, in France and Ireland and hence it is important to bring those people closer to the EU and to give them a very practical and positive experience. Moreover, experiencing other countries, their similarities and differences and realising that nevertheless one can make friends and work together with other young Europeans is a very important feeling for building a common European identity and a sense of belonging to Europe.

Lastly, it gives the volunteers confidence to make friends and survive in another country – this life experience makes young people aware of their abilities, develops their interests, teaches them how to overcome challenges and difficulties in relationships with other people and in daily life. This is especially true given the fact that for most participants EVS is their first experience of living abroad on their own and the staff of the host organisation certainly does not take the place of their parents. According to a former EVS-volunteer now working in the promotion of volunteering opportunities, cross-border volunteering as a ‘gap year’ for reflection and non-paid, usually socially-oriented work is a chance for them to understand themselves better and help them find their place in society.

Impact on society

The benefit to the sending societies comes from the above-mentioned ‘multiplying’ effect. Sending someone to another country, especially from a smaller and more remote locality, abroad opens up the region/ town/ village to Europe, gives it a window to the outside as it helps them to realise that there are other cultures, peoples and languages out there. And if the experience has been a positive one (which is generally the case), it proves that there is something interesting and enriching out there which can further encourage other people to go. So it also facilitates the development of a European citizenship and the understanding that differences do not necessarily impede working and living together.

As for the hosting part, the impact of the EVS depends on how much the volunteer is involved in local activities. A fair integration of the volunteer in the

332 Youth Policy Officer – Youth Volunteering, Cross-border Mobility & Evidence-based Policy Making, EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010. And in fact, the results of a small-scale survey of Lithuanian EVS volunteers would indicate that EVS helps the young people to experience the aims and problems of the EU in real life. See Kėžaitė and Špokevičiūtė, p. 3.
333 Programme Manager Youth in Action, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
334 CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
hosting community is one of the criteria determining the quality of EVS\textsuperscript{335}. Like the volunteers, their hosting environment also experiences an **intercultural learning effect** in the sense that the hosting society learns about the volunteer’s country. Hosting a foreign volunteer helps the organisation staff to open their mind and their views. They realise the superficiality of differences as one can actually live in another culture and communicate with it even when language skills are lacking. It reveals the fact that there are various ways of doing things and that people should not be excluded because of their different ways. For most people, it is easier than usually thought and it helps to break down barriers and stereotypes. Having taken this step, it is much easier to move further and the process itself is rewarding\textsuperscript{336}.

Finally, the beneficiaries of the enhanced competences of young international volunteers are their (future) **employers**. Former EVS volunteers contribute to the activities of NGOs, businesses and public sector institutions with their **self-confidence, social and intercultural competences, foreign language and project management skills**. For some participants, EVS serves as an **internship**, whereas others get **a chance to change their occupation** as a result of volunteering in a specific area\textsuperscript{337}.

**Recognition of skills**

The recognition of skills that EVS volunteers gain actually depends on their future employers. In general, volunteer experience in a non-governmental organisation or youth initiatives are usually valued in the not-for-profit sector, but hardly at all in private business where the EU programmes and the ‘Youth in Action’ or EVS in particular are not so well known. However, it can be argued that it provides a good background for those who later turn to European programmes or youth policy/ exchanges for their employment\textsuperscript{338}.

A great help in this field would be official recognition of EVS volunteers in the MSs showing them a general appreciation of their work\textsuperscript{339}. As mentioned in the description of the operation of an EVS project, a voluntary service thought through by the volunteer and analysed together with his/ her supervisor/ mentor in the host organisation makes a good basis for a document called Youthpass which every EVS volunteer is entitled to\textsuperscript{340}. Most of the EVS volunteers request

\textsuperscript{335} Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{336} CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{337} Interview with former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010. See more on employers' attitudes to volunteering in the UK and German case studies.

\textsuperscript{338} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{339} Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{340} However, Youthpass has not been developed for EVS specifically, but the ‘Youth in Action’ programme. As of February 2010, Youthpass certificates were available for the participants of youth exchanges, EVS and
a Youthpass and, given the first testimonials (because no evaluation has been done yet), it seems to be successful with employers. Having the ‘EU stamp’ also helps\textsuperscript{341}. However, this kind of document is still new (launched in 2007) and needs to acquire more prominence in the labour market\textsuperscript{342}.

This certificate gives the name of the person and of the project she/ he has worked on and the time when it was implemented, along with a short description of what EVS is. The third part describes the volunteer’s role and tasks, training received and outlines the skills gained during the service\textsuperscript{343}. Therefore, Youthpass motivates the young volunteers and their mentors to set objectives or at least to identify the learning interests before the voluntary service starts and encourages regular meetings so as to follow the person’s progress\textsuperscript{344}.

To help them reflect on the non-formal learning path during the EVS, volunteers and their mentors are provided with a framework of the eight key competences of EU education policy\textsuperscript{345}:

- communication in the mother tongue,
- communication in foreign languages,
- mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology,
- digital competence,
- learning to learn,
- social and civic competence,
- sense of initiative and entrepreneurship,
- cultural awareness and expression.

These are the competences that each European person should develop in his or her lifetime. Surprisingly, volunteers tend to cover all of them more or less equally when reflecting on their learning experience\textsuperscript{346}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item training courses (Actions 1, 2, 4, 3.1). Anyway, its acceptance is highest in EVS because it is based on long-term projects where the element of non-formal learning is evident. Interview with Project Coordinator for Youthpass, \textit{SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre}, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
\item Project Coordinator for Youthpass, \textit{SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre}, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
\item CSVnet (Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres) Liaison Officer, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
\item Project Coordinator for Youthpass, \textit{SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre}, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
\item Project Coordinator for Youthpass, \textit{SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre}, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
A survey of German EVS volunteers, however, has previously found that the most obvious changes take place in the field of personal development: volunteers report that they have learned to trust themselves, especially in new situations, and to deal with uncertainty and that they have developed a stronger sense of responsibility and the ability to resolve conflicts and problems and other skills useful in everyday social interaction. Considerable progress was reported in terms of intercultural learning, while professional qualifications such as command of a foreign language, ability to work in a team or flexibility stayed in the background. This suggests that voluntary service really provides people with vital skills that will be useful both in future learning and in their career.

Obstacles to mobility

Obstacles hindering the mobility of young EVS volunteers within Europe are numerous, most of them being of an administrative or legal nature. Hence it is in the hands of the MSs to remove them and the EU cannot do much more than reiterate the importance of it in its documents.

Firstly, in most MSs volunteers do not have an official status (nor do they have this in international law) which would facilitate the bureaucratic procedures in the host country. In Belgium, for example, there are only three legal grounds to be in the country: tourism, study or work. It can thus be complicated for a volunteer to prove he/she is a legal resident in his host country and to get a residence permit. Meanwhile, EVS volunteers from beyond the EU find it even harder to get a visa for the duration of their voluntary service.

In some countries (such as the Netherlands), the status issue and the bureaucratic requirements mean that EVS volunteers are required to obtain private insurance, although they already have the cover paid by the Executive Agency. Sometimes the EVS volunteer allowances (for food, accommodation and their pocket money) seem suspicious to the MSs’ tax authorities.

Although the EVS is a comprehensive scheme with funding to accommodate the main volunteer needs, rates of allowances set for each country may seem inadequate and can be potentially discouraging. As mentioned previously, the lump sums are not always enough to fund the voluntary service appropriately. International bank transfers carried out when sharing the project budget between the sending and host organisations (the coordinating partner is

348 Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
349 Ibid.
350 See more in Germany and Hungary case study reports.
responsible for it) also incur high transaction costs\textsuperscript{351}, reducing the funding further. Given these reasons, organisations might be unwilling to conduct volunteer exchanges for disadvantaged young people as they require even more funding.

A common problem seems to be the loss of social benefits in connection to cross-border volunteering. In France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Sweden and the UK (as well as other MSs), registered jobseekers who choose to go for an EVS lose their unemployment benefit. What is more, the months abroad are subsequently not counted towards their years worked against which their retirement pension is calculated\textsuperscript{352}.

**Lack of recognition** of skills gained or public attitudes not supportive of volunteering may also work as disincentives for individual young people to go on an EVS. On the other hand, civil society organisations may not be very open to foreign volunteers because of the **language barrier**. This may prevent them from establishing more host organisations and developing the required **infrastructure** needed to receive the volunteers. In fact, the network of EVS sending and host organisations is not equally distributed across the EU and within individual MSs. For example, the lack of accredited EVS sending organisations (due to the general shortage of NGOs) in Lithuanian rural areas presents a serious mobility obstacle for young Lithuanians living outside the biggest cities (see more in Annex 5).

Finally, the **lack of information** on volunteering opportunities should not be ruled out as a hindrance either. It is especially acute in the case of people with fewer opportunities who may not have access to the same information channels as other young people. Moreover, the process of finding a suitable EVS placement can be difficult because opportunities that are actually no longer available are still displayed in the databases. One former EVS volunteer complained that the searching phase took 10 months in his case as 90% of the projects he contacted did not reply\textsuperscript{353}.

Lack of adequate information about the project the volunteers choose can also be an issue for them during their service. Descriptions of the activities (as provided in the database) that the volunteer is supposed to carry out might be outdated or not accurate (sometimes because the hosting organisation wants to fit the profile of the projects expected to be funded). Consequently, some EVS volunteers end up being disappointed as their actual work is different from what

\textsuperscript{351} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{352} Programme Manager *Youth in Action*, Action 2 (EVS), EC, DG EAC, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{353} Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.
they expected. According to one study, this mismatch of their expectations and reality is the main cause of frustration, causing volunteers to eventually quit their service earlier than planned\textsuperscript{354}.

This lack of information is another factor contributing to the different quality of EVS experiences: volunteers often do not have full information about the project they are going to join. This could be avoided by closer cooperation between the sending and host organisations, by encouraging the volunteers to get in touch with the host organisation well before departure and fully exploiting the role of the volunteer’s mentor/tutor in the host organisation\textsuperscript{355}.

**Conclusions**

EVS provides several thousands of young Europeans each year with a well-prepared and quality voluntary service abroad. They participate in a comprehensive transnational scheme including various checks and balances aimed to provide a successful intercultural and social experience (focusing particularly on training) that brings young people, including those who cannot use other youth mobility opportunities, closer to Europe and to their contemporaries in other European countries, shaping their European identity and civic engagement.

Being complex in terms of the diversity of the opportunities it offers, the variety of audiences whose needs it caters to and the management structure, it can hardly avoid criticism for its cumbersome operation. The project databases are not updated promptly and do not indicate where volunteers are no longer needed, so many efforts to contact the host organisation and obtain placements are in vain and funding is not secure either. The insurance cover is seen as generous, yet it may take a while to be reimbursed for medical expenses.

However, it is still the most comprehensively funded and thus most accessible truly European cross-border volunteering scheme, which can be replicated in other contexts (national, inter-communal, etc.). Due to its scope, it serves as a litmus test for the ongoing obstacles to youth mobility in Europe and specifically to the mobility of volunteers whose legal status is yet to be established in the legal systems of the MSs and international law. In fact, numerous legal and administrative hurdles can arise, from issues such as getting a residence permit,  

\textsuperscript{355} E-mail consultation with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer, author of a phenomenological study of the Lithuanian EVS volunteers’ intercultural experiences, 17-11-2009.
taxation of the pocket money, having to pay for additional private insurance and giving up social benefits for the duration of the voluntary service.

List of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Geneve</td>
<td>Peggy</td>
<td>Programme Manager <em>Youth in Action</em>, Action 2 (EVS)</td>
<td>European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (thereinafter – EC, DG EAC), Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Bergstein</td>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>Project Coordinator for <em>Youthpass</em></td>
<td>SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>04-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Göddertz</td>
<td>Bernd</td>
<td>Regional Manager (Nord)</td>
<td><em>ijgd – Internationale Jugendgemeinschaft afdienste</em> (Nord), Hildesheim, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>03-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Keenan</td>
<td>Conor</td>
<td>Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg,</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>02-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Kuodytė</td>
<td>Vilija</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer, author of a phenomenologic al study of the Lithuanian EVS volunteers’ intercultural experiences</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>17-11-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Koperdak</td>
<td>Sergej</td>
<td><em>Youth Policy</em> Head of Unit</td>
<td>EC, DG EAC, Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Lejeune</td>
<td>Pascal</td>
<td><em>Youth in Action</em> Head of Unit</td>
<td>EC, DG EAC, Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>Lopatta-Loibl</td>
<td>Karin</td>
<td>Youth Policy Officer – Youth Volunteering.</td>
<td>EC, DG EAC, Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>Macchioni</td>
<td>European Liaison Officer</td>
<td>CSVnet - Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres, c/o European Volunteer Centre (CEV), Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-01-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Peil</td>
<td>Public Relations Officer</td>
<td>JUGEND für Europa – German National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>05-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Ruškytė</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>27-01-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>Bömer</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Splitt</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>20-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of documents**


   *Learning and formation in EVS*

13. Moskwiak, Agnieszka, ‘Learning and recognition of voluntary activities’ in Howard Williamson and Bryony Hoskins with Philipp Boetzel (eds.), Charting the landscape of European youth voluntary activities. Strasbourg,


Case study: Italy

Italy’s volunteer workforce is big, but, according to the latest available data from the National Institute of Statistics, the majority of Italian volunteers are employed (52.2%) adults aged 30 to 54 (41.1%), educated to upper secondary school or university level (57.2%)\(^{356}\). Meanwhile, young Italians are depicted as increasingly disengaged both politically and socially\(^{357}\). In the past ten years, this has led to significant attention being paid to the promotion of volunteering and active citizenship among young people\(^{358}\). However, volunteering policies are not yet directly connected to youth policies institutionally.

On the other hand, the cross-border aspect is not entirely integrated into volunteering activities yet, let alone youth activities. Decisive action in this field is hampered by the fact that institutional competences are scattered among many actors (Cabinet for Civic Service, Ministry for Youth, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Regions). It is thus not surprising that in-country volunteering and youth cross-border volunteering exchanges have followed separate paths over the past two decades in Italy, with little interaction between them, until the Volunteer Support Centres (VSC)\(^{359}\) started mainstreaming the European perspective into the policy horizon of voluntary organisations and their national networks in 2007.

Perception of volunteering

Volunteering as an expression of solidarity and a response to the needs of the community is widely recognised and highly valued in Italy, especially because its roots reach back to the societal organisation of medieval communes and its development is strongly linked with the social outreach and care dimension of the


\(^{359}\) Voluntary Support Centres established by Art. 15 of the Framework Law on Volunteering No. 266/191 provide services and consultancy to voluntary organisations and are managed by them. There are now 77 local and regional VSCs in Italy.
Catholic Church. The national Framework Law on Volunteering No. 266/1991 recognises volunteering as an expression of participation, solidarity and pluralism\textsuperscript{360}.

As defined by the above-mentioned law, volunteering is an activity performed of a person’s own free will, through an organisation of which the volunteer is a member, for no direct or indirect profit, exclusively for reasons of solidarity\textsuperscript{361}. Voluntary activity cannot be paid for in any way, especially by the beneficiary. The volunteer can only be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses\textsuperscript{362}. Being a volunteer is not compatible with any form of paid work within the same organisation. Law No. 266/91 strictly determines the essential characteristics of a voluntary organisation: not-for-profit, non-governmental, democratic; activities are for the benefit of others (not members of the organisation) or the common good, commercial revenues must be marginal\textsuperscript{363}.

Other types of third sector organisations also involve volunteers, but they are not voluntary organisations and are thus regulated by other state laws. In particular, many youth, sports, leisure and environment not-for-profit organisations are ‘social promotion’ organisations, regulated by Law No. 383\textsuperscript{364}. The basic differences between these and the voluntary organisations as defined above are the option of generating income through their activities and the provision of services, the option of paying their own members and the option of organising activities (both paid and free of charge) for them. Although the general perception, policymaking attempts and the collection of data regarding volunteering concentrates essentially on voluntary activities as regulated by the Framework Law on Volunteering 266/1991, it is important to keep the social promotion organisations in focus too when analysing cross-border youth volunteering because they involve large numbers of young volunteers, have strong national federations\textsuperscript{365} active in European networking and volunteer exchanges and enjoy public visibility.

Another type of organisation involving young volunteers and known to the general public are development cooperation NGOs\textsuperscript{366}. These are completely distinct from voluntary organisations that are predominantly active at the local

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{360} \textit{Legge 11 agosto 1991, n. 266 ‘Legge quadro sul voluntariato’} - Art. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{361} Ibid., Art. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{362} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{363} \textit{Legge 11 agosto 1991, n. 266 ‘Legge quadro sul voluntariato’} - Art. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{364} \textit{Legge 7 dicembre 2000, n. 383 ‘Disciplina delle associazioni di promozione sociale’}.
\item \textsuperscript{365} Examples of such federations are ARCI (Cultural Education, Promotion and Solidarity), ACLI (Christian Workers), FISH (Disability), CSI and UISP (Sport), CTS (Student Travel) and SCS/CNOS (Salesian Social Commitment).
\item \textsuperscript{366} Regulated by: \textit{Legge 26 febbraio 1987, n. 49, ‘Nuova disciplina della cooperazione dell’italia con i paesi in Via di sviluppo’}.
\end{itemize}
level. However, their values are similar and their national representatives traditionally collaborate in European policy and awareness-raising initiatives\(^{367}\).

**Cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people**

The best-known and largest programme for youth cross-border volunteering in Italy is the European Voluntary Service (EVS). Another significant institutional programme is the Italian National Civic Service that also coordinates some international projects. The latter is managed by the National Bureau for Civic Service (*Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile* – UNSC) that also coordinated the EU pilot project AMICUS, now in its second phase. Other opportunities for cross-border volunteering are offered by third sector organisations that organise short- as well as long-term placements and work camps both within and outside the EU.

EVS projects are run by organisations previously accredited by the National Agency as host, sending and/or coordinating EVS organisations. In Italy, an upward trend is observed in the numbers of applications submitted and approved in the past three years, indicating a growing interest by civil society organisations in international volunteering and increasing awareness of the programme\(^{368}\).

The **National Civic Service** was introduced by Law No. 64/2001 when military service was still compulsory in Italy. It allowed conscientious objectors to substitute it with civilian service in the community. In 2004, military service ceased to be compulsory and the Civic Service (*Servizio Civile*) thus became an opportunity open to all young Italian citizens aged between 18 and 28 years. It enables young people to spend one year enriching their social and professional skills through activities carried out in not-for-profit, voluntary organisations or within the public administration. As in EVS, participating organisations need to be formally accredited\(^{369}\). It is possible to participate in a project in another country, that is, perform a Civic Service Abroad (*Servizio Civile all’estero*), but **international projects involve just 1% of the total number of young people undertaking the National Civic Service** (see ‘Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers’).

The participants of this scheme are customarily called ‘Civic Service volunteers’ (*volontari in Servizio Civile*) because they choose to join the programme of their own free will. Yet they do not really fit the Italian definition of a ‘volunteer’,

---

\(^{367}\) Such as the working group ‘Europe and International Volunteering’ of the National Observatory for Volunteering of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy; working group ‘Europe’ of the National Conference on Volunteering, Naples 2008.

\(^{368}\) Based on the data provided by the *National Youth Agency* – Italian National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ Programme.

\(^{369}\) *Legge 6 marzo 2001, n. 64 ‘Istituzione del servizio civile nazionale’.*
since they receive a monthly allowance (currently EUR 433.80 for committing to about 30 hours a week) and get their National Insurance contributions paid by the UNSC. Those doing Civic Service Abroad get EUR 15 a day on top of the standard monthly allowance and another EUR 20 a day for their food and lodging expenses (if these are not covered by their sending organisation) irrespective of the country of destination. They are also insured for all accidents, illnesses and third party liability by the UNSC.

**AMICUS** (Association of Member States Implementing a Community Universal Service) is a project experimenting with the possibility of a European civic service and financially supported by the EU. The aim of this pilot project is to internationalise national civic services that already exist in some MSs by exchanging volunteers. A call for proposals was announced by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Education and Culture. The Italian UNSC won the first call. The project provided for a stay abroad of 6 months preceded by 10 days training in Italy. From May to November 2009, 21 AMICUS volunteers were placed in 6 participating countries: Cyprus, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain. A second call for proposals was launched at the end of 2009: different Italian organisations were selected, together with the Region of Liguria.

Various opportunities for cross-border volunteering are organised by third sector organisations such as the Italian Association of Catholic Scouts and Guides and the Italian Federation of Evangelical Churches as self-financed initiatives, often within their educational activities. International work camps take place in Europe or in developing countries, in general for a short period (usually two to four weeks), particularly during the summer holidays. Volunteers are not required to have any specific professional skills, although they often need to have some basic knowledge of a foreign language. In addition to travel costs, volunteers of the work camps have to pay a small membership fee to the organisers and another fee that covers food, accommodation and insurance expenses.

---

Italian local authorities\(^{374}\) do not run significant youth cross-border volunteering programmes, but some are starting to show interest and promote existing European volunteer mobility schemes for young people. The municipality of Ferrara has a special office designated for this purpose\(^{375}\), whereas the Campania Region launched a call for proposals for cross-border youth mobility projects for students, workers and volunteers\(^{376}\). Some local authorities are accredited EVS organisations.

**Legal status and guarantees for volunteers**

In general, in-country volunteers do not enjoy any special legal status, but need to be members of an organisation to volunteer for it. In that case, the organisation is obliged to insure them, especially if volunteers are involved in providing services to the public sector.

International **volunteering in developing countries** is regulated by Law No. 49/1987. The law establishes that if a volunteer takes part in a project implemented by a cooperation development NGO recognised by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he/she will have a two-year contract as an international volunteer and will be entitled to social insurance. A monthly living allowance is also paid; its actual amount depends on the cost of living in the destination country. In addition, accommodation or an accommodation allowance is provided\(^{377}\).

On the other hand, **no specific legal status is attributed to cross-border volunteers moving across Europe**. The procedures differ for EU and third country nationals for entering Italy for the purpose of volunteering. As for **non-EU nationals**, Decree-law No. 154/2007 states that a foreign citizen aged 20 to 30 can enter Italy and take up legal residence in the country in order to take part in a volunteering programme promoted by a legally recognised church or religious body, a legally recognised NGO or a social promotion organisation listed in the national register. The volunteer has to apply for a permit through a lengthy procedure and the visa is given for a period not exceeding 18 months. According to this law, only a fixed number of volunteers are eligible to enter the

---

\(^{374}\) The Italian Constitution defines three levels of local government: Regions (in charge of health care, civil protection, environment etc.), Provinces (roads, schools etc.) and Municipalities (catering for the needs of a single town). All of these three levels are involved with volunteering in their competences, especially the Regions which draw up specific Regional laws to regulate voluntary organisations. All three levels have youth departments and social services departments, the latter being those that traditionally interact most with volunteering.

\(^{375}\) Interview with International Youth Exchanges Project Officer at the Department of Policies for Peace and International Solidarity – Ferrara Municipality, 15-04-2010.


\(^{377}\) *Legge 26 febbraio 1987, n. 49 ‘Nuova disciplina della cooperazione dell’italia con i paesi in Via di sviluppo’*. 

147
country each year and this intake has to be established by 30 June of the year before.\textsuperscript{378}

This order is an improvement compared to the previous law (Decree-law No. 286/1998 known as the Immigration Law) which did not include volunteering as a reason for requesting entry to the country.\textsuperscript{379} However, the new rules are still rather restrictive and in particular would make it impossible for non-EU nationals to come to Italy for an EVS (for example, the age requirement does not take into account volunteers aged under 20). Thanks to the involvement of the Italian National Agency, a special visa called missione/V was introduced in 2008 for those who enter the country to take part in an EVS project.\textsuperscript{380} Meanwhile, the procedure is not accessible to other groups of incoming volunteers (non-EVS) who do not hold EU citizenship.

\textbf{EU nationals} can freely enter the country in order to volunteer and take up residence for a period of up to three months without being subjected to any paperwork, in accordance with Council Directive 2004/38/CE.\textsuperscript{381} Until 2009, volunteering did not constitute a legal ground to stay in the country for longer than three months as people who were not employed (or not self-employed) were allowed to stay provided they had sufficient financial resources and health insurance not to become a burden on the social security system.\textsuperscript{382} In 2009, following the European Commission Communication,\textsuperscript{383} the provisions were reviewed, establishing that financial resources could be also provided by a third party and that the lack of those resources did not automatically constitute a basis to deny a residence permit.\textsuperscript{384} Therefore, incoming volunteers now get a temporary residence permit and a fiscal identity number.

An incoming volunteer must have \textbf{insurance cover} from the sending organisation for injury and sickness related to the volunteering activity and for third party

\textsuperscript{379} Decreto legislativo 25 luglio 1998, n. 286 ‘Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell’immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero’.
\textsuperscript{380} Interview with ‘Youth in Action’ Programme Manager, National Youth Agency, Rome, 07-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{382} Decreto legislativo 6 febbraio 2007, n. 30 ‘Attuazione della direttiva 2004/38/CE relativa al diritto dei cittadini dell’Unione e dei loro familiari di circolare e di soggiornare liberamente nel territorio degli Stati membri’.
liability. European citizens moving within the European Economic Area (EEA) are also eligible for the European Health Insurance Card allowing them to receive medical care during their temporary stay in another Member State\textsuperscript{385}. Since all Italian citizens are entitled to both Italian healthcare services and a European Health Insurance Card (regardless of their insurance status), Civic Service and AMICUS volunteers are insured in this way and all report smooth functioning and prompt reimbursement\textsuperscript{386}.

**Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers**

In this section, we present the numbers of volunteers participating in EVS sending and hosting projects in Italy as well as of young Italians doing Civic Service Abroad. For these schemes aggregated data is available, unlike the various third sector initiatives. In addition, we explore the destinations of outgoing Italian volunteers and the countries of origin of Italy’s incoming volunteers. As for the Civic Service Abroad participants, some data is also available on the fields of their voluntary activities.

**Table 5. Number of EVS volunteers in Italy 2007-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>EVS volunteers sent</th>
<th>EVS volunteers hosted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The numbers of young people who participated in the EVS programme in the past three years are presented above (Table 5). There was a significant increase in the number of sent volunteers from 2007 to 2008 (over 48%), but the big gap between those figures may have arisen partly due to the fact that the first deadline of 2007 (1\textsuperscript{st} February) was not run by the Italian NA because of institutional changes. In fact, the transformation from a government body into a NA according to EU regulations took more than three years, with negative consequences also on the funding of host organisations. For hosted volunteers, there was also a very sharp increase from 2007 to 2008 (66%), but the low number of volunteers hosted in 2007 may have been caused by the passage from the programme ‘Youth’ (2000-2006) to ‘Youth in Action’ (2007-2013).

\textsuperscript{385} The European Health Insurance Card is issued to: EU nationals, nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA), Swiss nationals, family members of the above, whatever their nationality, nationals of other countries, who are covered by a social security system in one of the Member States of the EU, the EEA or Switzerland. EURES, ‘Living and working conditions – Italy’. <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=9166&acro=living&lang=en&parentId=7849&countryId=IT&living=> [Accessed 22-04-2010].

\textsuperscript{386} Interview with former AMICUS volunteer in France, Rome, 30-03-2010; Promotion Officer at CESVOV – Varese Volunteer Support Centre, 01-04-2010; Polish EVS volunteer in Italy, 21-04-2010.
The destinations of outgoing Italian EVS volunteers who volunteered in other MSs in 2009 are presented in the graph below (Figure 6). Many Italian EVS volunteers went to Spain, Germany, Poland, France, United Kingdom, Portugal and Romania. Taking both the number of the population and of the available projects in the country into consideration, we can say that Italians prefer other Mediterranean countries where the language is similar to Italian: mainly Portugal, but also Spain and France. Many also show interest in Germany, Poland and Greece. A constant increase in hosted Italian volunteers is recorded in EU10 states like Estonia, Poland and Romania. However, it is not only a general ‘cultural’ interest that must be considered: the capacity and contacts of host organisations, the quality and attractiveness of volunteering programmes and the work of NAs also play a role in determining EVS mobility patterns.

**Figure 6. Number of outgoing Italian EVS volunteers by country of destination in the EU (2009)**

![Graph showing number of outgoing Italian EVS volunteers by country of destination in the EU (2009).](image_url)


Incoming EVS volunteers hosted in Italy in 2009 were also mostly from Germany, Spain, and France. Considering the size of the country in terms of population, we can see that Italy hosted many more volunteers from Portugal, Belgium, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Greece. Meanwhile, the percentage of hosted volunteers, for example, coming from the UK is relatively speaking very low. See the graph below (Figure 7) for exact numbers of hosted EVS volunteers supplied by each of the MSs.

---

In total, 116,317 young people undertook National Civic Service in the three-year period (2006-2008), but only 1377 of them went abroad which makes up 1% of the total number of participants. In 2009, the number of Civic Service Abroad volunteers reached 499, almost equalling the total EVS volunteer turnout in Italy (339 were sent and 229 hosted in 2009).

As for the Civic Service Abroad destinations, relatively few Italian volunteers stay in Europe. Western and Eastern Europe combined (with no distinction between EU and non-EU countries) accounted for 30% of the volunteers sent by this programme in 2006-2008. Most international projects were implemented in the developing world: Africa and South America both received another 30% of the participants, around 8% of Civic Service volunteers chose a country in Asia or the Middle East, 4% volunteered in Central America, while North America and the Pacific received just a few people.

Among the participants of Civic Service Abroad in 2006-2008, almost 46% were involved in either of the two traditional areas of volunteering, namely, care (18% of the participants) or cultural education or promotion (28%). Other known fields of activity included development cooperation organised by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs or local authorities (9.7%), support to Italian communities abroad

---

(4.3%), peacekeeping (0.9%) and post-war reconstruction (0.9%). A detailed picture is provided in the graph below (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Fields of activity of Italian Civic Service Abroad volunteers in 2006-2008, %

Data on third sector volunteer mobility initiatives have never been collected systematically. It is rare for not-for-profit organisations specialising in cross-border mobility to publish the number of exchanges and volunteers involved. However, the NGO ‘Lunaria’, for example, states that 400 Italian volunteers participate in projects abroad each year and 400 incoming volunteers are hosted in Italy in international volunteering camps organised by ‘Lunaria’ together with environmental, cultural, anti-racist organisations, local authorities and youth groups operating in various Italian regions. It must be noted though that this type of mobility, especially the work camps – short-term, causing few bureaucratic problems, with direct support from experienced leaders, – are attractive, well-known and rather more accessible than, for instance, the EVS. Nevertheless, the financial contribution requested from the volunteers presents a barrier.

Although comprehensive data is inaccessible, participation rates of EVS, Civic Service Abroad and work camps organised by ‘Lunaria’ suggest that the total annual cross-border volunteer turnout in Italy should be well over 2,000. Italy

---

seems to send more volunteers than it receives. This is mainly due to the existence of the sending-only Civic Service Abroad programme that alone accounts for almost 600 outgoing volunteers a year, but the EVS figures also confirm this trend.

**Socio-economic profile of the cross-border volunteers**

Having summarised the overall rates and trends of cross-border volunteering in Italy, we explore the socio-economic characteristics of Italy’s cross-border volunteer workforces – its composition in terms of gender, age, level of education and its inclusiveness. Again, the information analysed comes from the EVS and Civic Service Abroad.

Regarding the gender division, Italy confirms the overall trend of **female dominance** in the EVS volunteer workforce. As shown in the graphs below (Figure 9 and Figure 10), 62% of Italy’s outgoing EVS volunteers and 75% of the incoming ones are young women. It follows thus that the percentage of men among Italian outgoing volunteers is higher than among the incoming volunteers.

**Figure 9. Outgoing Italian EVS volunteers by gender, % (2007-2009)**

![Pie chart showing male 38% and female 62%]

**Figure 10. Incoming EVS volunteers to Italy by gender, % (2007-2009)**

![Pie chart showing male 25% and female 75%]


As for age, the **Italian outgoing volunteers are relatively older** than the European average for EVS participants and also than their German counterparts involved in schemes comparable to the National Civic Service. It can be seen from the diagrams below (Figure 11 and Figure 12) that over 40% of Italian outgoing EVS volunteers in 2007-2009 were older than 25 years and over 80% of those participating in Civic Service Abroad were aged 24 or older.

These figures reflect the situation of young people in Italy. Italians usually complete university studies in their late twenties and /or early thirties, stay with their parents till the late thirties as they tend to work under temporary contracts and with little social protection for many years. The Italian labour market undervalues mobility and innovation and the recognition of non-formal learning
is limited. In fact, in the underdeveloped regions of Southern Italy where unemployment is high, National Civic Service participants going abroad are even older than those in the Northern regions – also because the Civic Service monthly allowance is a important form of income to unemployed young people.

Figure 11. Civic Service Abroad volunteers by age group, % (2008)

Figure 12. Italy’s outgoing EVS volunteers by age group, % (2007-2009)

Data regarding the level of education of Italian volunteers is only available for the participants of Civic Service Abroad. Their distribution according to education completed shows that the majority of participants were university graduates. As the graph below (after eight years of schooling).

Figure 13) shows, 97.7% of the young people who took part in the Civic Service Abroad in 2008 were educated to upper secondary (Diploma di scuola superiore) or tertiary level (First Degree or Degree) and only 2.23% held just a school-leaving certificate (Licenza di Scuola Media obtained after eight years of schooling).

---


395 ‘Degree’ signifies the university diploma acquired under the old Italian system (required 5 years of study), while First Degree equals Bachelor’s degree in the new system (takes 3 years of study) introduced in 1999.
The majority of the 21 Italian volunteers who took part in the AMICUS project in 2009 also had a university degree or were in their final years at university and belonged to the middle class. Most of them had already taken part in the National Civic Service or volunteering projects or had studied abroad. Those who had finished their studies were searching for a job and were eager to take this opportunity in the meantime.\textsuperscript{396}

The data analysed above further confirms the general impression that cross-border mobility of young volunteers is largely the domain of well-educated, middle-class young people with sufficient cultural assets to value such an opportunity as a positive investment in their personal and professional future. However, EVS also has the goal of promoting volunteer mobility of young people with fewer opportunities who could potentially gain even more from the

\textsuperscript{396} Interview with AMICUS Tutor and International Civic Service Project Officer at UNSC – National Bureau for Civic Service, Rome, 25-03-2010.
experience. This category is obviously subject to interpretation, but more than one fifth of sent Italian EVS volunteers for the 2007-2009 period were recorded as belonging to the group of people with fewer opportunities (satisfying one or several criteria). Within this category, most volunteers are disadvantaged economically and/or socially (see the diagram above for details – Figure 14).

Figure 15. Disadvantaged participants among incoming EVS volunteers to Italy, % (2007-2009)

Among the EVS volunteers hosted in Italy, a lower percentage of disadvantaged participants was observed in 2007-2009. Again, economic and social issues were the most widespread barriers to inclusion (see the above diagram – Figure 15).

Motivation

The decision to spend time volunteering abroad springs from the wish to do something ‘big’ and different, to test oneself or to enhance one’s CV. Young people want to experiment with another culture – the encounter with a different environment is viewed as contributing to personal growth and independence. Improving existing foreign language skills or learning a new language is a priority for young volunteers. Volunteering abroad thus represents a chance for long-term immersion in the language and country at a much lower price than language training abroad would cost. At the onset, volunteering abroad is seen as an essentially personal challenge and an opportunity linked to one’s personal development (which corresponds to benefits gained in terms of ‘soft’ skills described in the next section).

397 Interview with President of ‘ExisT’ – organization of Italian ex-EVS volunteers, 09-04-2010.
398 Interview with European Projects Officer and CSVnet Coordinator for EVS and European Youth Volunteer Mobility at ‘Celivo’ – Volunteer Support Centre of the Genoa Province, 02-04-2010.
399 Interview with European Liaison Officer (former EVS in Croatia) at CSVnet - Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres, c/o European Volunteer Centre (CEV), Brussels, 14-04-2010.
400 Interview with International Networking and Volunteer Exchanges Programme Manager at the NGO ‘Lunaria’, 09-04-2010.
On the other hand, the idea of volunteering in another country in order to do **something for others or for the community** is rather feeble and vague. However, as a result of involvement in the host organisation, it is often transformed into a strongly embedded value\(^{401}\). Sometimes the period of volunteering abroad precedes the decision to settle permanently in the host country, for professional and sentimental reasons\(^{402}\).

**Benefit gained by the volunteers**
Young cross-border volunteers reap benefits essentially in the form of learning. Firstly, **basic life skills** are boosted in the process of volunteering abroad. Having to live on their own and take care of themselves away from their family, share chores with flatmates, deal with basic bureaucratic matters, manage on a (often tight) budget and keep appointments teaches young people to take responsibility for their lives\(^{403}\).

Just as important is the development of **social competences**: learning to live, work, share and discuss with others\(^{404}\). Volunteering provides many possibilities and in fact necessitates interacting with groups of people: other volunteers, staff of the host organisation and their beneficiaries, other organisations, local community and its young people. This is a favourable environment for learning to deal with diversity and conflict in a non-formal and less stressful manner\(^{405}\). Through volunteering in the organised, value-based and goal-oriented environment of the host organisation, young people also learn about the needs of people and communities they were initially unaware of\(^{406}\). This, as well as the day-to-day **intercultural ‘training’** in a different society, widens their view of the social world.

More tangible results future employers are likely to be interested in are also achieved: **foreign language skills** are boosted; most volunteers acquire experience in **office automation**. Consequently, by the end of their placement, young cross-border volunteers are more **independent, responsible, open and competent**. This makes many of them repeat the experience looking for other possibilities to volunteer abroad again\(^{407}\).

---

\(^{401}\) European Projects Officer and CSVnet Coordinator for EVS and European Youth Volunteer Mobility at ‘Celivo’, 02-04-2010.

\(^{402}\) Polish EVS volunteer in Italy, 21-04-2010; Promotion Officer at CESVOV – Varese Volunteer Support Centre, 01-04-2010.

\(^{403}\) Interview with former Italian EVS volunteer in Sweden, 06-04-2010.

\(^{404}\) Interview with former Italian EVS volunteer in Germany, 06-04-2010.

\(^{405}\) Interview with former Belgian EVS volunteer in Italy, 31-03-2010.

\(^{406}\) Interview with former Amicus volunteer in Spain, Rome, 30-03-2010.

\(^{407}\) Interview with former Italian EVS Volunteer in Denmark, 31-03-2010; Polish EVS volunteer in Italy, 21-04-2010; International Networking and Volunteer Exchanges Programme Manager at the NGO ‘Lunaria’, 09-04-2010.
Impact on society
Personal benefits gained through a cross-border volunteering experience are translated into gains of human capital providing a productive input in any country, profession or civic engagement initiative that volunteers contribute to afterwards. Improved command of foreign languages is an important part of this aspect\textsuperscript{408}. Whatever the specificities of the previous learning and growth experience, it has a positive impact on human capital in terms of enriching understanding and strengthening individual responsibility, solidarity, participation and respect for cultural differences\textsuperscript{409}.

Cross-border volunteering has various effects on the hosting community. Most importantly, international volunteers are not just passive learners - they convey a different culture, too. Through contacts, work and everyday life with the people of the host country, European volunteers allow a glimpse into the traditions and social realities of their country of origin. Their presence makes people realise that Europe is home to all sorts of interesting, curious and approachable people who are very similar beyond their cultural differences\textsuperscript{410}. The same applies to the impact on the sending society. In fact, more could be done to exploit the potential of returned volunteers in terms of active European citizenship and promotion of civic engagement of youth.

The impact on the host and also sending organisations is very positive. Volunteers and staff are enriched by new competences, different ideas and cultures. As a result, organisations become involved in the process of innovation and modernisation. It is important to note that contacts very often pass the test of time and sometimes produce new international collaborations and initiatives\textsuperscript{411}.

Recognition of skills
In Italy, there is no coherent national system that would enable competences acquired through non-formal learning to be validated and recognised by universities or employers\textsuperscript{412}. Youthpass is used exclusively for EVS and little-

\textsuperscript{408} Interview with Officer of the Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile (UNSC), Rome, 22-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{409} Interview with Youth Exchanges Coordinator at NGO ‘Cantiere Giovani’, 08-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{410} European Liaison Officer (former EVS in Croatia) at CSVnet - Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres, c/o European Volunteer Centre (CEV), Brussels, 14-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{411} Interview with AMICUS Tutor and International Civic Service Project Officer at UNSC – National Bureau for Civic Service, Rome, 25-03-2010.
known. At the request of volunteers themselves, it was also used for the pilot project AMICUS\textsuperscript{413}.

UNSC awards the participants of Civic Service Abroad with a \textbf{certificate} attesting the successful completion of the programme, but not validating the competences acquired. Single projects may have an arrangement with a specific university that the competences acquired in the project should be \textbf{recognised as an internship} or awarded credits within the compulsory academic curriculum\textsuperscript{414}.

In terms of non-formal recognition, the period of volunteering abroad is thought to be looked upon favourably by prospective employers\textsuperscript{415}. This is certainly valid for the not-for-profit organisations, where previous experience with EVS is considered an added value, especially in the case of European projects and youth work\textsuperscript{416}.

\textbf{Obstacles}

The most important obstacle is the still \textbf{limited access to information} on cross-border volunteering opportunities and their positive effects. The initiative of taking up volunteering abroad is most frequently prompted by informal contacts and personal experiences: the idea of possibly volunteering abroad most frequently emerges from personal contact with somebody who has done it. This option is open to university students or young people from well-educated urban families or otherwise involved in social, political, cultural or environmental networks, but it leaves out large segments of young people – especially those who have dropped out of school at an early age.

Concerns about one’s \textbf{future employment prospects} may work as a disincentive to join a cross-border volunteering programme. In the Italian context, family is an important factor here. Well-educated urban families support the acquisition of international experience, also financially if required, because they see it as an investment in the professional future of their children\textsuperscript{417}. On the other hand, as the limited access to the Italian labour market is often linked to personal contacts, many young people (and their families) regard a long-term absence as a risk. For this reason, work camps can look more attractive.

\textbf{Lack of funds} can be a barrier: work camps and similar opportunities require a significant amount of money. EVS and AMICUS projects allowances are often

\textsuperscript{413} Interview with former Amicus volunteer in Spain, Rome, 30-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{414} Circolare del 9/07/2004, Prot. 2626 del Ministero dell’Interno ‘Riconoscimento crediti formativi universitari a coloro che svolgono il Servizio Civile Legge 64/2001’.
\textsuperscript{415} European Liaison Officer (former EVS in Croatia) at CSVnet - Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres, c/o European Volunteer Centre (CEV), Brussels, 14-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{416} Interview with former Belgian EVS volunteer in Italy, 31-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{417} Interview with President of Eurodesk Italy, Rome, 09-04-2010.
considered insufficient\textsuperscript{418}. Non-EU nationals also face a **legal hurdle** in Italy: volunteer status is not explicitly recognised as a sufficient legal ground, so a visa cannot be obtained. For EVS volunteers, the Home Office has created a special ‘missione/V’ visa due to NA’s lobbying.

**Frailty of local voluntary organisations** is another barrier to cross-border volunteering becoming more widespread. Taking full responsibility for a young stranger is seen as too much of a burden for small organisations that often have no paid staff, unstable funding, inadequate premises or few volunteers engaged on a daily basis.

**Conclusions**

Voluntary engagement at the local level has a long and strong tradition in Italy. Public recognition of the value of volunteering, the definition of voluntary activity and the rules governing voluntary organisations are provided by a special law (Framework Law 266/91). However, the legal framework leaves out in-country volunteers involved in other organisations than the *strictu sensu* voluntary organisations and cross-border volunteers who usually receive an allowance (while according to the law only the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for specific activities is allowed) and are also more likely to be involved in organisations of other types.

Promotion of volunteering among young people is a strong concern in Italy, as only a small portion of the volunteer workforce is under 30. Two major cross-border mobility programmes are available in Italy: EVS and the Civic Service Abroad. In addition, there are work camps and international voluntary placements offered by various third sector organisations.

Volunteering in another country remains an opportunity hardly accessible to large numbers of young people. Participants in major cross-border volunteering schemes – EVS, Civic Service Abroad, AMICUS projects, work camps, third sector organisations’ volunteering projects – are mostly university-educated urban young people from upper-class backgrounds. They are often led by the wish to grow personally and acquire confidence and competences useful for their future professional life. They tend to be over 24 and usually take up the opportunity through personal initiative and contacts. EVS is the only programme that attempts to ensure the inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities.

Accessibility is hampered by the unavailability of information – large territories (especially the Southern regions, small towns and rural areas) lack sending/host

\textsuperscript{418} Former AMICUS volunteer in France, Rome, 30-03-2010; Former Amicus volunteer in Spain, Rome, 30-03-2010.
organisations and information points. In addition, no institutional policy mentions cross-border volunteering as a valuable asset for youth. Skills acquired through non-formal learning are not officially recognised. But once a person becomes a European volunteer, things run rather smoothly. Programmes are generally well-organised; there are no significant barriers for EU nationals to come to Italy to volunteer, only the allowances are considered insufficient in some cases. The evaluation of the experience by the young people involved is immensely positive. It is a powerful source of personal growth and a boost to life, language and intercultural skills.

List of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Borgogno</td>
<td>Roberta</td>
<td>European Project Officer and CSVnet coordinator for EVS and European youth volunteer mobility</td>
<td>‘Celivo’ – Volunteer Support Centre of the Genoa Province, Genoa, Italy</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>02-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cortese</td>
<td>Vanessa</td>
<td>Former Italian EVS volunteer in Denmark</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>06-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>De Cicco</td>
<td>Raffaele</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>UNSC – National Bureau for Civic Service, Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>22-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Di Pietro</td>
<td>Davide</td>
<td>International Networking and Volunteer Exchanges Programme Manager</td>
<td>NGO ‘Lunaria’, Rome, Italy</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>09-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gazzoli</td>
<td>Tiziano</td>
<td>Former Italian EVS volunteer in Sweden</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>06-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hoh</td>
<td>Chee-Mei</td>
<td>EVS Project Officer (former EVS volunteer from Belgium)</td>
<td>CESVOV – Varese Volunteer Support Centre, Varese, Italy</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>31-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kowalska</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Polish EVS volunteer in Italy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>21-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Lupo</td>
<td>Francesca</td>
<td>AMICUS Tutor and International Civic Service Project Officer</td>
<td>UNSC – National Bureau for Civic Service, Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>25-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Lupoli</td>
<td>Mario</td>
<td>Youth Exchanges Coordinator</td>
<td>NGO ‘Cantiere Giovani’, Naples, Italy</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>08-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Macchioni</td>
<td>Stefania</td>
<td>European Liaison Officer (former Italian EVS volunteer in Croatia)</td>
<td>CSVnet - Italian National Federation of Voluntary Support Centres, c/o European Volunteer Centre (CEV), Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>14-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Magi</td>
<td>Ramon</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Eurodesk Italy, Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>09-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Marchiale</td>
<td>Diego</td>
<td>Former Italian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>06-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Pavanello</td>
<td>Massimiliano</td>
<td>Promotion Officer</td>
<td>CESVOV – Volunteer Support Centre, Varese, Italy</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>01-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Piganti</td>
<td>Alessandra</td>
<td>International Youth Exchanges Project Officer</td>
<td>Department of Policies for Peace and International Solidarity – Ferrara Municipality, Ferrara, Italy</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>15-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Trifoni</td>
<td>Paola</td>
<td>‘Youth in Action’ Programme Manager</td>
<td>National Youth Agency – Italian National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ Programme, Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>07-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Valentini</td>
<td>Valentina</td>
<td>Former Italian AMICUS volunteer in Spain</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>30-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Vinzi</td>
<td>Mattia</td>
<td>President and founder</td>
<td>‘ExisT’ – organization of Italian ex-EVS volunteers, Trieste, Italy</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>09-04-2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of publications


List of legal documents


8. Legge 26 febbraio 1987, n. 49 ‘Nuova disciplina della cooperazione dell'Italia con i paesi in Via di sviluppo’. [Law ‘New Rules for Italy’s cooperation with developing countries’]


List of websites


Case study: Germany

In Germany, youth cross-border volunteering is well-developed as stays abroad at a young age are considered desirable, especially because of the foreign language skills. On the other hand, young Germans are used to contributing to social initiatives and in-country volunteering has a well-established tradition, too. Voluntary work is socially approved of and encouraged, also on the political level.

In fact, it was during the German presidency of the EU that the idea of founding a European Voluntary service for young people first appeared on the European agenda. However, the German definition of volunteering is quite specific and it is also related to Germany’s other policies, especially defence, education and the labour market.

In this case study, we look more closely at Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen) in the Northwest which is one of the biggest of the 16 German Länder. Interviews were carried out in a sending organisation in Hildesheim and specific data was provided where possible. However, the national perspective prevails as the federal regulation and funding set a common framework for volunteering across Germany.

Perception of volunteering

In a detailed report by a parliamentary enquiry commission on the future of civic engagement submitted to the German Bundestag (federal parliament), voluntary service is defined as a certain form of civic engagement for the public good supported by the state and performed by young people within an organised framework of national or international programmes (see below). The voluntary services have a special legal status guaranteed by the state and their organisers receive public subsidies from the federal children and youth policy

---

budgets. They do not equal paid employment and are not part of professional training or studies.\textsuperscript{420}

Although volunteering is still predominantly perceived as an occupation for young people (while employed people are more likely to contribute to charity by donations), it should be noted, however, that ‘voluntary service’ (Freiwilligendienst) no longer equals ‘youth voluntary service’ (Jugendfreiwilligendienst). Initiatives have been started to support volunteering among people of all generations.\textsuperscript{421} Nevertheless, it will be shown later that the decision to start a voluntary service in the above sense is still strongly motivated by aspirations to enhance one’s chances of further education and career.

The abovementioned definition signals an important feature of the German concept of volunteering, namely, its functional nature. Definitions of voluntary service take its institutional arrangement rather than the free will of the participant as the decisive feature of this type of activity. Moreover, since it is to be conducted within a certain national or international programme, it is a full-time activity of a particular duration (usually one year).

Meanwhile, the same arrangements can be used by young men for whom it is compulsory as a civilian service so the component of free will might be missing in some cases. In Germany, men aged 18 to 23 years of age are conscripted to the armed forces for a nine-month compulsory military service (Wehrpflicht), but it is possible to abstain for reasons of conscience. Conscientious objectors (Kriegsdienstverweigerer) are required to do a social service (Sozialdienst) of the same duration instead.\textsuperscript{422}

Sozialdienst is not the same as Freiwilligendienst, as the latter can be done by any eligible young person of their own free will, but conscientious objectors can also do a Sozialdienst in the framework of a Freiwilligendienst. In other words, they enjoy the same status as the other participants of certain volunteering programmes, while fulfilling an obligation. Such participants do not fit into our definition of volunteering and yet they are usually included in the numbers of programme participants.


\textsuperscript{422} Interview with Regional Manager of ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
Cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people

As elsewhere in Europe, the development of cross-border voluntary service coincided with the abolition of compulsory military service for young men (before it was eventually reintroduced at the height of the Cold War). Many German organisations setting up and coordinating international youth work camps that were initially intended to help the reconstruction, increase mutual understanding of European people and develop democratic ways were founded in the post-war period.

German cross-border exchange programmes that eventually also came to encompass volunteer exchanges to some extent also sprung up after World War II with the intention of bringing about a rapprochement with neighbouring countries such as France, Poland (from 1990) and the Czech Republic. These bilateral partnerships have a symbolic meaning, although the actual extent of volunteer exchanges within these programmes (separate from EVS or German national programmes) of youth exchanges is small and they exist only in the German-French and German-Czech partnerships.

In general, two broad categories of voluntary service can be distinguished in Germany. Firstly, there are programmes such as the EVS or German national programmes that fall under the jurisdiction of public law and are thus called ‘regulated’. There is a special law governing these voluntary activities (presented below). On the other hand, there are so-called ‘non-regulated’ initiatives that are subject to private law only and, unlike the first type, are not normally subsidised by the state. They are arranged on an individual basis of an agreement between the sending and host organisations rather than within a scheme of mass volunteering.

---

423 Ibid.
425 One of the largest and oldest of these organisations is ijgd – Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste (International Youth Community Services) established in 1949. It offers about 120 international work camps (for people from 16 to 26, for 2-4 weeks) in Germany a year – this covers about 20% of the German ‘market’ of work camps. It also sends German participants to camps abroad organised by partner organisations. International Youth Community Services ijgd, ‘Who we are and what we do’ [flyer], 2007. <http://www.ijgd.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumente/ijgd_englisch_web.pdf> [Accessed 09-02-2010]; Regional Manager of ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
426 Interview with Public Relations Officer, JUGEND für Europa – German National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Bonn, 05-02-2010; Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
Regarding regulated cross-border programmes operating in Europe, young Germans can choose from the following main cross-border options:

- **EVS** for people between 18 to 30 years offered by the European Commission and administered by the German National Agency for Youth in Action – ‘JUGEND für Europa’ in Bonn;
- **Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr** (FSJ – Voluntary Year of Social Service);
- **Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr** (FÖJ – Voluntary Year of Ecological Service).

FSJ and FÖJ are both intended for people aged 16 to 26 who have completed compulsory schooling. Unlike other regulated programmes mentioned below, these are truly exchange and not just sending programmes as they enable foreign volunteers to come to Germany as well. However, they are first of all national programmes. FSJ was legally established in 1964. It has been repeatedly renewed and new fields were later added such as environment (FÖJ, 1987), sports, healthcare, culture, monument care etc. Volunteers usually get a one-year (the shortest possible duration is 6 months, longest – 18 months) placement in a host organisation in Germany, but it is also possible to arrange these placements abroad (although not necessarily in Europe).

However, in order to complete it abroad a substantial financial contribution from the volunteers themselves is required – they are advised to build a network of sponsors to collect a few thousand euros to cover the costs of their service. Therefore this programme is only popular among conscientious objectors as they enjoy higher state funding for their social/voluntary service (see Table 7). In comparison, a ‘proper’ volunteer gets a monthly allowance of EUR 92 a month in FSJ abroad and of EUR 153 a month in FÖJ abroad, whereas a conscientious objector receives up to EUR 421.50 a month, wherever he decides to complete his mandatory service (this rate is fixed by law).

---

429 Regional Manager of ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
430 Interview with Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010. The exact sum of required funding varies from one sending organisation to another, but in ijgd it equals EUR 2,400.
431 Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010. On state funding of voluntary services in 2009 also see Stemmer, p. 26.
432 Regional Manager of ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
433 Verordnung über die Gewährung eines Zuschusses für die Kosten eines anerkannten Kriegsdienstverweigerers. 2002, Teil I Nr. 54, § 3.
Recent years have also seen a rise in overseas or development volunteering in third countries\(^{434}\). Since 2008, there has been a special initiative by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) called »weltwärts« that has the ambitious goal of sending up to 10,000 volunteers a year. The service lasts 6-24 months and is usually completed in Latin America, Africa or Asia\(^ {435}\).

Since 2009, young Germans can use the opportunity of »kulturweit« created by the German UNESCO Commission (supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to volunteer for 6 to 12 months at German culture and education establishments abroad (such as German schools, offices of the Goethe-Institut and the like). Most of the placements are in the developing world, but the neighbouring countries of Eastern, Central and Southern Europe are also accessible. It is recognised as an FSJ abroad, although it might be more attractive because of better funding\(^ {436}\). Both »weltwärts« and »kulturweit« have been modelled after the EVS, especially in terms of the preparation measures, but they are exclusively sending programmes rather than mutual cross-border volunteer exchanges\(^ {437}\).

In addition, there is a special programme confined to young men substituting military service with a social one – Anderer Dienst im Ausland (ADiA – Alternative Service Abroad). At the same time, conscientious objectors can also use FSJ, FÖJ, »weltwärts«, »kulturweit« or the DJiA and MaZ (outlined below) for that purpose as they are all recognised in Germany as a substitute for military service if started by the age of 23.

**Non-regulated** volunteering services that allow people to go to other EU countries include:

- Work camps – short-term volunteering;
- *Diakonisches Jahr im Ausland* (D JiA);
- Other small-scale international voluntary services based in the communities, churches or NGOs.

---

\(^{434}\) Regional Manager of *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.


\(^{437}\) Public Relations Officer, *JUGEND für Europa*, Bonn, 05-02-2010.
Work camps have been briefly introduced already, whereas DJiA is an initiative of youth work implemented by the German Evangelical Church (in fact, its local form inspired the establishment of FSJ\(^{438}\)). Placements for 18-30 year olds can be arranged both in Europe and beyond. Service in the social sphere takes from 9 to 12 months. The DJiA support association may offer some financial help to enable young people to join\(^ {439}\). In some cases, the service can be supported from within the framework of FSJ/ FÖJ, EVS or »weltwärts«. Otherwise, volunteer contribution is needed\(^ {440}\). For Catholics, there is a programme MissionarIn auf Zeit (MaZ – Missionary for a time) enabling voluntary service in the Catholic missions in Germany or the developing world\(^ {441}\).

**Legal status and guarantees for volunteers**

In Germany, there is a special law setting the framework for the national volunteering arrangements FSJ and FÖJ – Law on Support of Youth Voluntary Services (*Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten*)\(^ {442}\). Initially, they were regulated by two different laws as FÖJ was established later but in 2008 they were merged. It summarises the measures of support for volunteering due to which both in-country and cross-border volunteers in Germany enjoy a special status in some respects similar to that of employees\(^ {443}\).

According to § 2 of this law, volunteers (*Freiwillige*) are defined as persons who have completed compulsory schooling but have not yet reached their 27\(^ {\text{th}}\) birthday and are undertaking an unpaid full-time service for a duration of 6-24 months outside their professional education. In spite of doing unpaid service, they may receive accommodation, board, work clothes (or equivalents in cash) and pocket money. These allowances measured in cash cannot be higher than 6% of the earnings ceiling for pension insurance\(^ {444}\).

The service must be organised by an organisation that has been recognised by the respective regional (*Land*) authority as an organiser of FSJ/ FÖJ and, in the case of cross-border volunteering, of FSJ/ FÖJ abroad (§ 10). Young people undergoing training in preparation for an FSJ/ FÖJ abroad are also recognised as volunteers (if they are not involved in any paid activity at the same time) by the law (§ 2) and thus receive the same guarantees and benefits.

\(^{438}\) Stemmer, p. 12.
\(^{440}\) *Internationale Freiwilligendienste*, p. 6.
\(^{443}\) Regional Manager of *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
\(^{444}\) *Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten*. 

172
For social security purposes, full-time volunteers of FSJ/ FÖJ, EVS, »weltwärts« or conscientious objectors undertaking civilian service are defined as dependants up to 25 (or in some cases even 27) years of age. Parents of children up to 18 years receive a monthly child benefit (currently from EUR 184 a month). If, however, an older child is still undergoing professional education or undertaking full-time voluntary service, the allowance is available up to 25 years of age.

Young German cross-border volunteers who have not worked previously, have their insurance easily settled. FSJ/ FÖJ volunteers do not pay health, pension or special German nursing care insurance. Regarding health and nursing care, volunteers who receive no financial reimbursement (pocket money, allowances for accommodation and food) are insured as dependents of their families (family insurance) and their pension insurance is entirely covered by the host organisation. However, the majority of FSJ/ FÖJ volunteers do receive financial reimbursement and in that case all the insurance contributions are deducted from these allowances. As described in the EVS case study, EVS volunteers are insured separately by the Executive Agency. Moreover, Germany has a special agreement with the EC whereby the Executive Agency also pays the care insurance premiums for German ÉVS volunteers so that their participation in the care insurance scheme is not interrupted.

As a support measure, public servants are allowed to take up to 24 months of unpaid holidays in order to complete an FSJ or an FÖJ so they do not have to quit work because of a period of full-time volunteering. However, taking advantage of this legislation may prove difficult for young people who have been previously employed full-time. Volunteering has an impact on their insurance status and they may need to pay the insurance premiums themselves for the duration of the service. Hence in the case of EVS another agreement exists with the EC for the Executive Agency to cover additional insurance for those participants.

448 Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
449 Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
450 Verordnung über Sonderurlaub für Bundesbeamte und Richter im Bundesdienst, 2002, § 3.
451 Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
As mentioned, in other respects full-time volunteers are treated as employees and have the same rights. The same **health and safety standards** apply for volunteers as for paid staff and in case of loss or damage, volunteers are **liable** just like employees of the sending organisation. Full-time volunteers are entitled to the same amount of **holidays** as employed persons\(^{452}\) – at least 24 working days\(^{453}\). If serious disagreements arise between the volunteer and his/her sending or host organisation, the possibility exists in Germany to settle them in a special court for issues of employment (**Arbeitsgericht**\(^{454}\) – just like for any work-related disagreement.

At the same time, full-time volunteers enjoy the same **discounts** as students. They pay 50\% less for city\(^{455}\) and railway transport\(^{456}\), get discounts for museum, cinema tickets and elsewhere. This not only applies to participants in national programmes, but also to EVS volunteers. To prove their right to these benefits, volunteers are issued with an identification card for the duration of their service\(^{457}\).

The German law only covers three national programmes of volunteering (FSJ, FÖJ and »kulturweit« which is recognised as FSJ) so their proliferation has encouraged the German government to think of drafting a comprehensive new law that would define the status of volunteers involved in all voluntary services. Since it would also include EVS (as well as »weltwärts«), the law ultimately needs to be compatible with EU legislation\(^{458}\).

**Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers**

Research shows that around 37\% of young people in Germany are engaged in voluntary activities\(^{459}\). Yet not all of those activities can be counted as volunteering that brings benefit to a third party as it might be involvement in one’s own sports team, school, church etc. Each year, a total of around 30,000 people participate in the national FSJ and FÖJ programmes\(^{460}\). The majority of them complete their voluntary service within Germany.

---

\(^{452}\) *Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten*, § 13.

\(^{453}\) *Mindesturlaubsgesetz für Arbeitnehmer*, 2002, § 3.

\(^{454}\) *Arbeitsgerichtsgesetz*, 2002, § 2.

\(^{455}\) *Verordnung über den Ausgleich gemeinwirtschaftlicher Leistungen im Straßenpersonenverkehr*, 1977, § 1, 45.

\(^{456}\) *Verordnung über den Ausgleich gemeinwirtschaftlicher Leistungen im Eisenbahnverkehr*, 1977, § 1, 6a.

\(^{457}\) Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.

\(^{458}\) Programme Coordinator (EVS), *JUGEND für Europa*, Bonn, 04-02-2010.

\(^{459}\) Regional Manager of *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.

\(^{460}\) Programme Coordinator (EVS), *JUGEND für Europa*, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
Demand by young people for a voluntary service abroad is great and the supply has been growing in recent years, although there is still a mismatch\textsuperscript{461}. Collecting accurate information on cross-border volunteer numbers from an array of sending organisations operating the abovementioned variety of cross-border volunteering programmes is a challenge in itself. As shown in Table 6 where data from 2008 obtained by surveying the sending organisations is given, the total number of cross-border placements of young people from Germany stood at over 8,000 people a year. This number is set to grow, given the emergence of new expanding programmes.

### Table 6. Number of German participants in international voluntary services in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulated</th>
<th>FSJ abroad</th>
<th>FÖJ abroad</th>
<th>EVS</th>
<th>»weltwärter«</th>
<th>ADiA</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>1,986</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>4,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-regulated</td>
<td>Work camps</td>
<td>DJiA</td>
<td>MaZ</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,196</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1,428</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8,210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 7. Number of German and foreign participants in FSJ and FÖJ in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Direction of the exchange</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSJ</td>
<td>outgoing (FSJ abroad)</td>
<td>1,637</td>
<td>1,218 conscientious objectors, 419 other volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>incoming</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>2 major organisations do not collect this data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FÖJ</td>
<td>outgoing (FÖJ abroad)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12 conscientious objectors, 32 other volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>incoming</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3 out of 16 Länder are not included. 8 male participants, 15 female; 5 placements in Lower Saxony: 2 male and 3 female participants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{461} Ibid.
However, it is impossible to say how many of the participants go to another EU country as the scope of all the included programmes is not limited to Europe. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that in any national programme there is a certain percentage of Kriegdienstverweigerer who are rarely accounted for separately. Nevertheless, the more detailed data on FSJ and FÖJ provided by the Coordinating Office of the Youth Voluntary Services and summarised in Table 7 suggest they make up the majority of participants of FSJ abroad.

As for the popularity of certain types of voluntary services, it is obvious from Table 6 that more young Germans chose a shorter service in an international work camp than any long-term volunteering activity in 2008. However, the new development service »weltwärts« with 3,525 volunteers in 2009 must have already surpassed the attendance of work camps. It should also be noted that participation in work camps is not considered volunteering in the legal sense as presented in the previous chapter.

**Figure 16. Number of incoming EVS volunteers to Germany by country of origin in the EU (2009)**

Germany receives a lot of foreign EVS volunteers from its traditional partners – France and Poland. Other MSs sending relatively large numbers of volunteers to Germany are Italy and Hungary. The numbers of incoming EVS volunteers by MSs are shown in the diagram above (Figure 16). From the EU countries, German cross-border volunteers are most likely to choose the UK as their destination because of their wish to improve their foreign language skills. The popularity of France, Spain and Italy is then not surprising either as their national languages are taught in German schools, and the climate is seen as favourable, too⁴⁶². However, neighbouring Poland not only sends a lot of EVS

⁴⁶² Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
volunteers to Germany, but also receives the second-largest number of German EVS volunteers in the EU, as shown in the diagram below (Figure 17).

**Figure 17. Number of outgoing German EVS volunteers by country of destination in the EU (2009)**

![Graph showing the number of outgoing German EVS volunteers by country of destination.]

Source: European Commission.

Apart from the language that might be useful for their future, **interest in a particular country** may also play a role: for instance, the new MSs may seem more interesting. Here their choice can also be encouraged by the **wish to participate and help to complete the transition**. A lot of volunteers are driven by **feelings of social responsibility** which nevertheless are soon qualified as overly idealistic because their help might not be appreciated as they might wish, it might be vague or completely different from what they imagined: a volunteer willing to help those ‘in need’ might end up working in a kindergarten caring for children of rich parents.\(^{463}\) Finally, some people look for specific projects as they are more interested in their content than in a particular country\(^{464}\).

**Socio-economic profile of cross-border volunteers**

All the sources are unanimous about who the typical German volunteer is: a female school-leaver, educated with an *Abitur* (see below) and having plans to study at university\(^ {465}\). Although a representative statistical analysis is hard to come by, **female participants** are said to have made up about 80% of the FSJ and FÖJ participants in 2001-2004 (excluding young men participating as

---

\(^{463}\) Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.

\(^{464}\) Ibid.

\(^{465}\) Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010; Programme Coordinator (EVS), *JUGEND für Europa*, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
conscientious objectors. Young men already do either military or civilian service so they are reluctant to spend one more year on a completely voluntary service. Nevertheless, their interest seems to be increasing in recent years, at least for in-country volunteering. This might have to do with the situation in the German education and labour market.

In the German secondary education system, there are three main types of schools: *Hauptschule* (10 years of schooling), *Realschule* (10 years) and *Gymnasium* (12-13 years). Completion of the latter leads to an *Abitur* – a school-leaving certificate allowing entrance to higher education. Meanwhile, graduation from *Hauptschule* is only suitable for education as a tradesman and the choice of occupations seems to be narrowing, raising debates as to whether *Hauptschule* leavers should be seen as people with fewer opportunities. In 2008, the percentage of those holding an *Abitur* was 90% among German EVS participants. It stood at 83% in the FÖJ abroad, »weltwärts« and ‘other’ voluntary services. Given the additional need for a command of foreign languages and the expenses incurred during the stay abroad, cross-border volunteering is primarily the privilege of the upper social class not only in terms of education, but also of income.

As for the average age of volunteers, it was 20 years in regulated services in 2008 and 21.7 in the non-regulated ones. Incoming foreign volunteers were on average 23.5 years old. It confirms that most of the German participants do voluntary service after school (as is required in the national law for FSJ/ FÖJ) and before entering university. Their choice to do voluntary service might be motivated by the fact that they cannot get a place for further education immediately after school as demand is higher than the supply.

The situation on the labour market is not favourable to young people either – the generation of young Germans is sometimes referred to as *Generation Praktikum* as they are pressured to do unpaid (or grossly underpaid) internships after their studies in order to enhance their chances of eventually getting a paid job. Outgoing cross-border volunteers often confide that it is not just socially

---

467 Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
468 Regional Manager of *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
469 Fachkräfte in der personellen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, p. 10.
470 Ibid.
471 Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
acceptable to volunteer full-time, but is considered almost necessary to spend a year abroad before their studies because, again, this is supposed to increase their employability\textsuperscript{473}. This brings us back to the question of volunteering of one’s own free will as sometimes volunteering may seem the only alternative to unemployment.

Even though a majority of cross-border volunteers in Germany are educated young people from the upper social strata, both EVS and German national programmes have set a goal to involve young people with fewer opportunities (Jugendliche mit besonderem Förderbedarf). The EVS is said to be the most successful at this task because it is better financed than the usual national programmes FSJ/ FÖJ abroad and it plans extra funding for disadvantaged young people, whereas in FSJ/ FÖJ abroad the volunteers need to pay quite a lot of the expenses themselves. Furthermore, as the FSJ/ FÖJ host organisations cover 80-90\% of the placement costs, they are likely to see accepting a person from a severely disadvantaged background as ‘charity’ they cannot afford\textsuperscript{474}. Data on the share of disadvantaged young people among German EVS participants is given in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Percentage of young people with fewer opportunities among German EVS participants, 2000-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, the interviewees agreed that it was difficult to reach this target group and to motivate it to take part in volunteer exchange. \textit{Firstly}, the voluntary activities/projects should be attractive to them and the information provided should be easily accessible. \textit{Secondly}, disadvantaged young people need more attention and the support has to be continuous. Even in EVS, the additional funding cannot be used to finance personnel or the organisation structure to provide the necessary extra pedagogical support or special material in preparation for and during the voluntary service\textsuperscript{475}. \textit{Thirdly}, some administrative hurdles may prevent young people if they are jobless and not

\textsuperscript{473} Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, \textit{ijgd} (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.

\textsuperscript{474} Regional Manager of \textit{ijgd} (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.

\textsuperscript{475} Public Relations Officer, JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 05-02-2010; Regional Manager of \textit{ijgd} (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
enrolled in education and thus registered as unemployed (and can be considered disadvantaged because of that). In this case, national regulations do not allow people to leave the country for more than 3 months or their unemployment benefits are withdrawn which can also affect their families in Germany\textsuperscript{476}.

In spite of all the difficulties, there have been German initiatives targeted at young people with fewer opportunities. In 2007-2010, a programme called \textit{Freiwilligendienste machen kompetent} (‘Voluntary services make competent’) and financed by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the European Social Fund is being implemented. Through voluntary projects within FSJ or FÖJ, this programme aims to enhance the learning abilities, employability, reflection and communication skills, ability to integrate, engagement and participation of disadvantaged young people (about 400 people take part)\textsuperscript{477}. Within the EVS framework, the German NA is running a pilot project \textit{JiVE. Jugendarbeit international – Vielfalt erleben} (‘JiVE. Youth work international – experiencing diversity’) in cooperation with the national body for international youth work (IJAB – \textit{Fachstelle für Internationale Jugendarbeit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V}), one segment of which is oriented at getting more people with a migration background into the EVS by strengthening their competences\textsuperscript{478}.

\textbf{Motivation}

It can be seen already that the motivation of young Germans for joining a voluntary service are complex. Obviously, cross-border volunteering provides an opportunity for an exciting experience and enhances one’s skills and abilities. At the same time, the situation on the education and labour market is difficult and voluntary service can provide a temporary solution\textsuperscript{479}. Furthermore, as a non-tourist stay abroad and a brush-up of foreign language skills, it is believed to increase one’s employability to the extent that young people may feel obliged to do it.

As a German NA officer put it, the voluntary services have a socio-political function. As such, they are part of German youth policy, yet a threat remains that its educational function will be forsaken for cheap labour in unattractive fields such as care\textsuperscript{480}. The presence of such a threat seems to be confirmed by

\textsuperscript{476} Programme Coordinator (EVS), \textit{JUGEND für Europa}, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
\textsuperscript{479} Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
\textsuperscript{480} Programme Coordinator (EVS), \textit{JUGEND für Europa}, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
some volunteers’ disappointing experiences: for instance, a Lithuanian ex-EVS volunteer who joined a project in Germany reported back about hard work taking care of disabled people every day from 6 a.m., with no mentoring or psychological support that volunteers should be entitled to. Alternatively, youth voluntary services might become a measure to tackle youth unemployment by keeping school-leavers out of the unemployment statistics. The fact that the possibility of making a one-year full-time voluntary service an obligation for school-leavers is occasionally discussed also contributes to these fears: such a policy move would change the motivation of young people altogether and thus many non-governmental organisations oppose it.

A comprehensive survey of 270 German EVS volunteers (48% of the then German EVS volunteer workforce) carried out a decade ago established that the most frequent motivation was the desire to know another culture/society (Figure 18). The wish to increase one’s self-confidence and gain life experience came second, while ‘to help other people’, the traditional motivation of (in-country) volunteers was third. Bearing in mind that voluntary service is usually done in Germany between school and higher education, the reason to ‘bridge’ these two life phases is clear. Moreover, the motives of learning a foreign language, deciding about a future occupation and gaining practical work experience seem to be directed towards preparation for this coming stage of life.

Figure 18. Main reasons for participation of German EVS volunteers in 1999, %

---

481 Interview with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010.
482 Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
483 Stemmer, p. 32-33.
German EVS volunteers in Lithuania cite similar grounds for their choice to do an EVS: the wish to know another culture and language (or to strengthen their English skills), to spend a longer time abroad and spend it meaningfully, to take time to decide what to do next, to do something new, to become more independent and to know themselves. An interviewee from an FSJ sending organisation reports that many want to become independent, to test themselves, also specifically in the social field, if they could work there in the future. Altruistic motives always seem to go hand in hand with the concern for one’s future opportunities and career chances in particular.

Expectations can be fulfilled, qualified or disappointed. Serious disappointments result from a strong mismatch between expectations and reality at the host country, organisation or project. According to a German study that surveyed 149 personal files of EVS volunteers in 2000-2002, this mismatch is the main reason for quitting EVS before the designated end of service, although it is usually multiple problems that cause people to eventually withdraw from the project. Other frequently cited reasons are the non-demanding nature of the work or, on the contrary, excessively demanding tasks and lack of mentoring.

**Benefit gained by the volunteers**

The volunteers gain experience unequalled by anything in their daily lives. The website publishing German EVS volunteers’ blogs www.youthreporter.eu (run by the German NA) bursts with their emotions and impressions from the host countries. The number of contributing authors – 40-50 every year – is astonishing and testifies to their excitement, at the same time giving inspiration to others who are still considering or planning to go for an EVS.
The benefit that cross-border volunteers gain is a personal matter and difficult to measure. However, it is not just an experience marking their lives and potentially changing them as many volunteers admit, but also a learning opportunity. The learning aspect in Germany is taken seriously and the national Law on Voluntary Services requires that 25 days of the one-year voluntary service in FSJ/ FÖJ be reserved for training including introduction, mid-service and end of service seminars (§ 5). The most comprehensive data on volunteer learning is provided by the aforementioned EVS survey. Its main findings are shown in Figure 19 below.

Figure 19. Learning outcomes and competences gained by German EVS volunteers in 1999, %

Note: Only the percentages of positive answers for 12 out of the total 24 original categories have been included, selecting those where the percentage of answers ‘learned a lot’ surpassed 40%.

The findings reveal that a lot of learning takes place and the skills gained are diverse. Most importantly, a volunteer’s personal character is being developed: personal autonomy, maturity, broadening of one’s perspective and openness. Secondly, the social competences are being enhanced: communication skills, tolerance, empathy as well as intercultural learning. Thirdly, just as young people expect, cross-border volunteering is useful for their professional future as it helps to clarify their career direction and develop competences applicable in the workplace such as foreign language skills, qualifications in a certain field or
the ability to work in a team. Fourthly, cross-border volunteering encourages political and social engagement. Finally, specifically for EVS, yet arguably applicable to other cross-border voluntary services across the EU, the perception of Europe gains substance, particularly transnational friendships and freedom of movement across the continent.\textsuperscript{490}

However, many interviewees mention that it is impossible to tell what effect cross-border volunteering is going to have on the individual volunteer even at the end of the voluntary service. Volunteers may be unaware of the changes it brings in the longer term. This topic is also rather under-researched as the numbers of participants in such international exchanges have been negligible so far. The only related systematic study on long-term effects of international youth encounters was conducted by German psychologists A. Thomas, C. Chang and H. Abt. Their study is based on in-depth interviews with participants of, among other short-term youth exchange formats, multinational work camps after approximately 10 years. In fact, their findings are similar to those previously given: ex-participants speak about gains in the areas of self-development (self-confidence, independence etc.), intercultural learning, relationship to the host country, foreign language skills, social competence, openness, flexibility and composure, self-knowledge, cultural identity, follow-up activities (participation in other intercultural initiatives/voluntary engagement), and professional development\textsuperscript{491}.

**Recognition of skills**

To acknowledge the skills they gained, all the FSJ/ FÖJ volunteers are given a certificate (Bescheinigung) by their host organisation describing their tasks and evaluating their service\textsuperscript{492}. Former volunteers entering German universities can get voluntary service in a field related to that of their chosen studies recognised as an internship\textsuperscript{493}.

As for the EVS exchanges, Youthpass is issued to about 80\% of the EVS volunteers hosted in Germany (it is up to them whether they want it). Employers seem to be most interested in the social and communication skills developed

\textsuperscript{492} Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, *ijgd* (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.
during the EVS\textsuperscript{494}. Overall, the impression is that voluntary service abroad is seen as useful by employers, but rather ‘in addition’ to other qualifications and not on its own. Therefore, the interviewees thought its value should be emphasised more on the political level and by private companies who should be ready to admit it is just as valuable as a foreign language course\textsuperscript{495}.

**Impact on society**

Effects on the other stakeholders in cross-border volunteering are also under-researched. However, learning takes place at the other end as well, especially in the *host organisations*. Accepting foreign volunteers can be a challenge and requires accommodation measures, but in the end they also gain from the encounter with somebody from a different country and culture as a *lot of enriching interpersonal interaction and intercultural learning* occurs. Meanwhile, *sending organisations* also broaden their own horizons through their volunteers abroad who spread the organisation’s values. Through participation in volunteer exchanges, organisations stabilise their cross-border partnerships\textsuperscript{496}.

As for the impact on *host societies*, it depends on the size of the locality: the bigger the town/ city is, the more attractive it is to the volunteer, but in big cities volunteers have less personal contact with the local population and a wider impact on society is much less likely. The smaller the place, the more difficult it is for the volunteer, but the wider the ‘radiation’ of the intercultural encounter. For example, young foreigners volunteering in small towns may get an official greeting at the town hall, yet in Berlin nobody would be interested\textsuperscript{497}.

However, the impact does depend on other factors as well: one ex-EVS volunteer reports of little contact with the world outside her host organisation altogether as she was placed in a remote care institution\textsuperscript{498}. Obviously, if not enough effort is given to overcoming the barrier of language, hardly any intercultural sharing or friendships can happen. And, judging from the EVS volunteers’ interviews, the closest connection appears to be formed with fellow volunteers rather than with the locals.

Finally, ex-volunteer employees enrich the German (or international) workforce. Research shows that *German employers* attach the highest importance to internships, knowledge of foreign languages and specialisation chosen while studying among their selection criteria when hiring people. International

\textsuperscript{494} Interview with Project Coordinator for Youthpass, *SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre*, Bonn, 04-02-2010.

\textsuperscript{495} Editor of www.youthreporter.eu, private public relations agency, Bonn, 05-02-2010.

\textsuperscript{496} Programme Coordinator (EVS), *JUGEND für Europa*, Bonn, 04-02-2010.

\textsuperscript{497} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{498} Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, Vilnius, 04-02-2010.
volunteering experience enhances the young people’s CV regarding the first two aspects and may help to choose the future area of specialisation if volunteering abroad is done before entering university.  

Obstacles

The German interviewees felt that the greatest challenge to cross-border volunteering within the EU is posed by discrepancies between the different national systems of insurance (social, health, liability etc.) being applied to the volunteers and the different schemes they participate in. Within Germany, the situation could be improved by promulgating a new law consolidating the status of full-time volunteers. However, a wish was expressed for a special volunteer status to be established legally on the EU level as well. The interviewees realised that the EU does not have competence in the field of social security, but a suggestion was made to approach the status of volunteers from the perspective of residence legislation and to draft a directive on the residence of volunteers.

Having an EU-wide volunteer status would remove such obstacles as volunteers having to register as employees or trainees in other European countries, for instance Spain and Denmark. In some cases this has meant facing the consequences of respective employment legislation such as that on the minimum wage (which their pocket money obviously does not satisfy even if the financial equivalent is added of their income in kind, that is, free board and lodging). Even in Germany itself, there have been issues with the tax authorities demanding tax revenue from the EVS volunteer income, though they were resolved when the German NA intervened.

Conclusions

Germany is a country favourable to volunteering: it has established traditions of its own, there is an increasing variety of cross-border opportunities and participant numbers are growing, specifically in cross-border volunteering. Volunteering, how to encourage it and how to use it for the public good are topics discussed in political discourse and there are continuous new developments in this field.

---


500 Regional Manager of ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010; Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.

501 Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, ijgd (Nord), Hildesheim, 03-02-2010.

502 Programme Coordinator (EVS), JUGEND für Europa, Bonn, 04-02-2010.
Although initiatives have recently been introduced to support volunteering by all generations, it is still predominantly seen as a preoccupation of young people and primarily of school-leavers. International voluntary service is traditionally a one-year full-time activity within a designated programme, although multinational work camps in Germany and abroad are also popular. National programmes exist alongside EVS and they are just as focused on learning and training. However, volunteering overseas in developing countries rather than within the EU seems to be in vogue at the moment.

There is a special law governing the most established national programmes – FSJ and FÖJ (and by extension also »kulturweit«) – which outlines all the supporting measures for those undertaking voluntary services: volunteers enjoy social guarantees similar to those of employees and discounts given to students. A comprehensive new law on volunteer status may be drafted covering all the different national programmes and EVS and clarifying insurance issues.

Efforts are being made to involve people with fewer opportunities, but the social characteristics of German cross-border volunteers are still skewed. As one interviewee put it, it is a ‘luxury thing’, since, despite the abundance of opportunities and the interest of young Germans in stays abroad and foreign language practice, many of the national programmes are costly. As a result, German cross-border volunteers are well-educated and from relatively well-to-do families. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of the participants in voluntary services who do them of their own choice are women (about 80%). Men mostly take part only as conscientious objectors who are legally allowed to do a social service to avoid conscription. Kriegdiensverweigerer are better financed by the state and thus more likely to choose to volunteer abroad.

### List of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>Becker</td>
<td>Karoline</td>
<td>Editor of <a href="http://www.youth">www.youth</a></td>
<td>Private Public Relations Agency (hired by JUGEND für Europa), Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>05-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reporter.eu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>Beckers</td>
<td>Ulrich</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
<td>JUGEND für Europa – German National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>04-02-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(EVS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>Bergstein Rita</td>
<td>Project Coordinator for Youthpass</td>
<td>SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>04-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>Göddertz Bernd</td>
<td>Regional Manager (Nord)</td>
<td>ijgd – Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste (Nord), Hildesheim, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>03-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td>Peil Frank</td>
<td>Public Relations Officer</td>
<td>JUGEND für Europa – German National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>05-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.</td>
<td>Thürnau Kerstin</td>
<td>Officer for Training and Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr</td>
<td>ijgd – Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste (Nord), Hildesheim, Germany</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>03-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td>Urbonavičiūtė Vaida</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Face-to-face, Vilnius</td>
<td>04-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.</td>
<td>Bömer Julia</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td>Pischel Sabrina</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>Salmann Andrea</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>04-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>Vossenberg Katja</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>10-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of publications**

1. Personnel in individual development work. Volunteers in international voluntary services. Statistical review of recruitment 2008


**List of legal documents**


11. *Verordnung über die Gewährung eines Zuschusses für die Kosten eines anerkannten Kriegsdienstverweigerers, 2002, Teil I Nr. 54*. [Regulation on the Granting of Subsidy for the Cost of Conscientious Objection]


**List of websites**


Case study: UK

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has a long-standing tradition of volunteering as a way of providing public services which the state originally did not guarantee to its citizens. For centuries, volunteering has been informal, unregulated and managed by the non-governmental sector alone. The situation has changed a lot in the last few decades. The national and regional governments are promoting and supporting local volunteering as a way of boosting social trust, binding increasingly diverse communities together and empowering disadvantaged groups. However, this has yet to bring about major changes in legislation.

Since volunteering is an issue devolved to the UK’s national authorities, below we explore the British youth cross-border volunteering framework, focusing mainly on the example of Scotland, the government of which enjoys the widest powers in the asymmetrical UK settlement. It is also interesting that Scotland has a dense network of charities compared to other regions of the UK: according to 2002 data, although it had only 8.43% of the UK’s population, the percentage of Scottish charitable organisations is almost double that, reaching 16%.

Perception of volunteering

Historically, the ‘small’ British state where the tenets of liberal capitalism were formed has been intertwined with a lively non-governmental sector catering for many of the social needs. Volunteering in the 19th century was part of the philanthropy of the upper classes to those in need and poverty: it was the preoccupation of “genteel middle-class ladies” who visited prisoners and the homeless in workhouses set up for them. Hence it can be seen as a kind of

---


504 Sara Graziani and Chiara Piva, ‘United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’ in Spes – Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio, Volunteering across Europe: Organisations, promotion, participation. Vol. 1: Spain, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic, Italy. Rome: Spes, 2008, p. 120 (111-148).

individually-organised redistribution in a country with unequal wealth distribution and limited social services.

The state became more involved in the provision of social services towards the end of the 19th century and the sector was transformed by the late 1970s when the Conservatives came to power. The consecutive governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major (1979-1997) tried to bring the private sector into this sphere, but with the return of the Labour party voluntary organisations reasserted their role\textsuperscript{506}. Unlike the 1980s, volunteering is now much more prevalent, well-known and supported and even private companies recognise it as a measure of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies\textsuperscript{507}.

The British tradition has been to keep volunteering informal – away from the involvement of the state\textsuperscript{508} (see ‘Legal status and guarantees for volunteers’) and distinct from paid employment. The official definition, however, concerns only volunteering within an organised setting as the Scottish Volunteering Strategy adopted in 2004 states:

\textit{Volunteering is the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one’s own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage and salary}\textsuperscript{509}.

Although comprehensive research has yet to examine the social benefits of volunteering, it is widely believed in the UK that volunteering is beneficial in terms of community cohesion (developing social capital and nurturing good, active citizens), improving volunteer health, tackling exclusion, low education and unemployment. This explains the recent heavy government spending over the past decade on promoting and supporting volunteering, especially youth volunteering\textsuperscript{510}.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that it only affects local or community-based volunteering, whereas cross-border volunteering is seen as a matter of individual choice and awareness of its benefits is rather low\textsuperscript{511}. Given the high levels of

\textsuperscript{506} Graziani and Piva, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{507} Interview with Programme Manager at \textit{International Voluntary Service – Great Britain (IVS GB)}, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{508} Interview with Policy and Practice Adviser at \textit{Volunteer Development Scotland}, Stirling, 30-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{510} Interview with Policy Manager – Youth Volunteering & Charitable Giving at Office of the Third Sector, \textit{Cabinet Office}, London, 26-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{511} Interview with Head of Third Sector Division at Public Sector Reform Directorate of \textit{The Scottish Government}, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010; Head of ‘Youth in Action’ at \textit{British Council – UK National Agency for
disconnection among British youth\textsuperscript{512}, the interest of the UK authorities in promoting volunteering as a way to local community development (which includes integration in the multicultural UK context) is understandable. However, it means they do not really have a stake in investing in cross-border exchanges.

However, the situation differs across parts of the UK. Community-based volunteering is especially promoted in England, whereas youth policy documents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland mention cross-border volunteering\textsuperscript{513}. In Scotland, the national youth work strategy admits that “[i]nternational contacts, exchanges and involvement in volunteer projects abroad” increase young people’s motivation, self-confidence and life-skills\textsuperscript{514}. In Northern Ireland, international volunteering has additional saliency as foreign volunteers are brought in to ease the persisting inter-community tensions\textsuperscript{515} (see ‘Impact on society’).

\textbf{Cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people}

A mix of volunteering opportunities exists in the UK, although they are usually not perceived as cross-border ones. Some sending schemes are seen as too commercialised to be called volunteering, whereas some hosting ones are not styled as cross-border as they are simply part of local volunteering programmes at charities which invite both UK and EU participants. Unlike the EVS, many of the other opportunities are self-funded, although food and accommodation might be offered. A good working command of conversational English is also a prerequisite for foreign volunteers.

Cross-border volunteering is currently \textbf{not a priority} for the authorities of the different regions of the UK\textsuperscript{516}. The fact that many young people choose to go volunteering abroad as a way of spending their gap year, career break or a


\textsuperscript{513} Head of ‘Youth in Action’ at \textit{British Council}, London, 31-03-2010. International contacts, exchanges and involvement in volunteer projects abroad also excite the commitment of young people, and increase their motivation, self-confidence and life-skills.


\textsuperscript{515} Interview with Project Officer for European Voluntary Service, Contracts and Projects at \textit{British Council}, London, 31-03-2010; Volunteer Officer EVS/PLUS at \textit{Bryson Charitable Group}, Belfast, 08-04-2010; Italian EVS volunteer in the UK, 02-04-2010.

holiday is regarded as an individual matter. Unlike the case of in-country volunteering, the opportunities on offer are shaped almost exclusively by the organisations active in the field, some of which are for profit and some not for profit.

The number of organisations offering and managing cross-border volunteer exchanges with other European countries has grown significantly in the past decade. Thus young people wishing to go abroad to volunteer do not have to look very far. However, options beyond Europe and specifically in the developing countries are far more popular, although in most cases participants are charged high fees and have to cover the long-haul travel costs themselves.

Not surprisingly, the pan-European European Voluntary Service (EVS) scheme enjoys less popularity here compared to some other European countries. The UK receives more EVS volunteers than it sends (see ‘Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers’). It is also likely to be one of the few truly exchange programmes, that is, active in both sending and hosting volunteers. Due to secured European Commission funding, it is being used by the British Red Cross to exchange young volunteers with the Finnish, German and Armenian Red Cross societies.

Volunteer exchange opportunities outside EVS are created by organisations arranging placements at their partner organisations in the UK or abroad. For instance, Edinburgh-based International Voluntary Service (IVS) that is the Great Britain branch of Service Civil International (SCI) offers both short- and long-term placements in projects abroad run by other members of SCI. Unlike the many gap year organisers charging GBP 2,000-3,000, IVS’s participation fee for projects abroad is between GBP 150 and 245 depending on the duration of the placement and the employment status of the participant as the organisation’s aim is to keep international volunteering accessible. Although there are opportunities on other continents (and these may require higher contributions), IVS GB offers lots of projects within Europe as well. Accommodation and food is provided and volunteers are insured for the work, although they have to cover the travel costs themselves.

517 Head of Third Sector Division at Public Sector Reform Directorate of The Scottish Government, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
518 Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
519 The Great Britain office does not include Northern Ireland in its activities as this region is being catered for by IVS Ireland – Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
521 Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
Organisations such as IVS operate on a smaller scale than mainly sending-only establishments matching adventurous young British people with opportunities around the world. Critics say many of them are just money-making schemes. Some even style their offers as ‘volunteer vacations’. Few projects are offered within the EU\(^\text{523}\) and when there are, participation costs are higher than for more remote developing countries as they naturally include more expensive accommodation than in Asia or Africa\(^\text{524}\).

However, volunteering in the world’s poorer countries is seen as a measure of the UK’s development cooperation. Therefore, the **UK Department for International Development** supports two schemes funding volunteering placements abroad combined with awareness-raising against poverty. These are aimed at people who are under-represented among British international volunteers – people from diaspora backgrounds and disadvantaged youth:

- **Diaspora Volunteers** are run by the independent development organisation Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) and enable skilled individuals of Asian or African heritage to volunteer in the continents of their roots\(^\text{525}\). So it is not a scheme designed specifically for young people, unlike the next programme.

- **Platform2** is run by a partnership of Christian Aid and BUNAC and tailored for 18-25 year olds who can demonstrate they would not otherwise be able to afford a gap year. The destinations are limited to South Africa, Ghana, India, Peru, Kenya and Nepal and uniform group placements take 10 weeks\(^\text{526}\).

Finally, many organisations across the UK run **hosting-only** volunteer programmes and the big ones also have arrangements to take foreigners. **The National Trust**, a large independent conservation charity taking care of places of historic and natural heritage in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, runs various volunteering schemes. It welcomes non-UK residents from across the European Economic Area and offers working holidays and full-time volunteering options. Working holidays take up to a week and cost from GBP 90

---


a week including food and accommodation\textsuperscript{527}. Full-time placements last at least three months, on-the-job transport expenses are reimbursed, sometimes rent-free accommodation can be provided\textsuperscript{528}. However, the participants are themselves responsible for covering the travel costs from abroad and no living allowance is provided once in the country\textsuperscript{529}.

More inclusive conditions are offered to European volunteers at ‘Vitalise’, an English charity organising residential breaks (respite care) for disabled people. The duration of volunteering placements vary from two weeks to one year. Volunteer roles typically entail social and practical support, befriending and companionship to individual service users and carers\textsuperscript{530}. Young Europeans interested in social work and care can find it attractive that both food and accommodation are provided as volunteers usually stay in the same respite centres as the disabled people of whom they take care\textsuperscript{531}. However, being accepted requires more paperwork due to UK legislation on care roles (see ‘Legal status and guarantees for volunteers’).

Some hosting placements in the UK for foreign volunteers (18-35 years old) are available through CSV (Community Service Volunteers), but, as in the case of IVS, only through their partner organisations. Sending organisations charge a placement fee for CSV and volunteers have to bear the travel costs to and from the UK, but accommodation, food and a weekly allowance payment of expenses incurred for volunteering is provided\textsuperscript{532}.

**Legal status and guarantees for volunteers**

Volunteers do not have an explicitly defined status in the UK’s legal system (employment is the area of legislation of the UK government). Unlike Germany, they do not automatically have any official rights such as those of employees (holidays, sickness, discipline etc.) because their status in the organisations using their services is the opposite to that of paid staff employed under a contract.


\textsuperscript{530} Interview with Volunteer Development Manager at ‘Vitalise’, 12-04-2010.


\textsuperscript{532} That are operating in Austria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Honduras, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Taiwan, Turkey or the USA – see Community Service Volunteers, ‘Fact sheet for International volunteers’, London, 2009, p. 1. <http://www.csv.org.uk/sites/default/files/Fact%20Sheet%20for%20International%20Volunteers.pdf> [Accessed 12-04-2010].
The National Minimum Wage Act uses a concept of ‘voluntary workers’ to denote one of the groups who are exempt from the otherwise compulsory universal minimum wage. Voluntary workers are defined as people who work for free for a voluntary, charitable or statutory organisation. Art. 44 of the Act states that a person employed by a charity, a voluntary organisation, an associated fund-raising body or a statutory body does not qualify for the national minimum wage if he/she receives no “monetary payments” or “benefits in kind”. Nevertheless, reasonable reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of his/her duties is allowed and so are allowances for food and accommodation. On the other hand, any training which is not directly related to fulfilling the voluntary worker’s duties in the organisation or improving his/her ability to do the agreed job is treated as benefit in kind and would therefore imply a change of the volunteer’s status.533

UK employment law basically applies to those who have a ‘contract’ with their employer to exchange their work for some return (‘consideration’). This contract can be either a written or oral agreement – if in doubt, its presence may be established by court whenever payment in return for work and an intention to create a binding relationship can be proved.534 Therefore, volunteers who receive higher income in money or in kind than a reimbursement for suitable expenses or reasonable allowances for board and lodging may be considered employees (and liable to pay taxes from their income).

If the above is proved in court, volunteers may be able to challenge their employer in cases such as unfair dismissal or discrimination in the workplace. Otherwise volunteers are exempt from the jurisdiction of the Employment Act and likewise the Employment Rights Act which guarantee employees’ rights such as the right not to be unfairly dismissed or right to receive compensation if they show they have been treated unfairly.535 Moreover, the UK anti-discrimination law currently covering grounds of race, sex and disability but due to incorporate age and sexual orientation as well applies in the fields of employment, education and provision of goods and services.536

533 Art. 44 of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 (c. 39).
536 See Parts II and III of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (c. 65), the Race Relations Act 1976 (c. 74) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (c. 50). From October 2010, provisions will be started to implement the newly adopted single Equality Act 2010 (c. 15).
volunteers can prove in court that these acts apply to them regarding ‘provision of services’, they cannot be considered to be covered by this legislation. Normally they are considered as outside its scope.

Consequently, volunteers do not have a set of formal rights and responsibilities defined by the law. Since they are normally not considered as having a contract with their organisation, they are not obliged to work and the organisation is not obliged to provide them with work (no mutuality of obligation). However, they are still affected by regulations that imply certain legal duties for their host organisations. These concern issues such as health and safety, protection of minors and other vulnerable groups, and liability.

Any organisation employing paid staff is required to follow the Health and Safety at Work Act. Art. 3 of this Act states that it is a “duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety”, hence it also applies to volunteers. Organisations that are run by volunteers are not obliged to implement the Act, but they still have a general ‘duty of care’ to anyone working with them.

Likewise, all employers must carry liability insurance covering all their employees for accidents, disease or injury to an employee due to negligence or breach of health and safety law by the employer. Again, although there is no duty to insure volunteers, it is advised as good practice to do so in order to avoid financial liability in case of litigation and most organisations do not discriminate between volunteers and paid staff.

More likely to cause problems for incoming volunteers is the UK legislation safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The law requires that persons working with children or vulnerable adults (or having access to their records) such as patients, inmates, the elderly in residential care or anybody in need of

---

537 AVSO & CEV, p. 3.
540 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (c. 37).
541 Restall, p. 28.
543 Policy and Practice Adviser at VDS, Stirling, 30-03-2010; Head of Third Sector Division at Public Sector Reform Directorate of The Scottish Government, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
assistance in their own affairs obtain clearance for such activity (whether it is in education, health or social care or some other field) – a criminal record check proving there is no reason to ban them from this activity. Those planning to volunteer in care or similar roles have to be given disclosure before they can start – in the same way that any paid worker must. British citizens get it in 2-3 weeks and volunteers are not charged for it. Foreign volunteers are requested to bring equivalent proof from their national police obtained at their own expense. UK nationals who have lived abroad also need to get certificates of good conduct from the respective countries for the time spent there.

In terms of immigration, EU nationals do not face any restrictions regarding volunteering. They do not need a visa and they are not obliged to work during their stay in the UK, provided they are self-sufficient and have adequate funds to support themselves whilst in the country to avoid becoming a burden on the British social security system. Meanwhile, British citizens receiving state benefits such as jobseeker’s allowance or incapacity benefit are allowed to volunteer. Even the official time restrictions (max. 16 hours a week) for the unemployed were lifted in 2001. Although jobseekers used to be discouraged from volunteering in the past, the job centres now realise the benefits of gaining new skills through volunteering and volunteering is thus advised as long as the person continues to look for employment and is ready to take up job offers. Unfortunately, this means that jobseekers are not able to volunteer abroad as they would not be available for work.

Scotland’s main volunteer lobby organisation Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) emphasises management of volunteers (and promotes good practice regarding this aspect) rather than their rights and yet has never campaigned for a set legal status of volunteer activities. In the UK, special quality standards have

---

544 Art. 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (c. 47).
546 Policy and Practice Adviser at VDS, Stirling, 30-03-2010.
552 Restall, p. 19.
553 Policy and Practice Adviser at VDS, Stirling, 30-03-2010.
been developed that organisations can achieve regarding their involvement of volunteers or promotion of volunteering and lots of training and consultancy opportunities are offered by organisations such as VDS. Nevertheless, it is recognised that, given the current realities when relationships tend to be formalised, with parties’ rights secured, the absence of legislation on volunteering creates some tension.

Hence a movement has arisen on volunteer rights, demanding the same recognition of volunteers as enjoyed by employees in respect the Employment Act. Satisfying these demands would be appropriate for full-time, work-like volunteering such as is carried out in Citizen’s Advice Bureaux (CAB) where volunteers provide advice for 5 days a week. However, formalisation may prove unfeasible in the case of informal, community-based, ad hoc volunteering or too much of a burden for small organisations that would then be required to do a lot more record-keeping and thus be discouraged from involving any volunteers. From the point of view of private companies eager to participate in employee volunteering projects, it is vital to ensure that limited paperwork is associated with volunteering.

Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers

Surveys show about a quarter of the population volunteers in the UK. The annual Citizenship Survey conducted in England reveals 41% of respondents were involved in formal volunteering at least once during the period April 2008-March 2009. 26% participated in formal volunteering activities at least once a month, and 35% in informal ones. Meanwhile, the annual Scottish Household Survey found in 2009 that 31% of respondents had provided unpaid help to organisations or individuals in the last year. The most popular ways of providing such help were working with youth and children organisations.

As for the rates of youth cross-border volunteering, there are no official aggregated statistics. Many organisers operate in this field and young British people going abroad to volunteer number in the thousands. This can be

554 For more information see http://www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/.
555 Policy and Practice Adviser at VDS, Stirling, 30-03-2010.
557 Interview with Head of Influencer Relations at Institute of Directors, London, 26-03-2010.
560 Scottish Household Survey, p. 150-151.
inferred from the fact that the only government-funded youth cross-border volunteering programme ‘Platform2’ alone plans to have sent roughly 2,000 young Britons by the end of a two-year period (2008-2010)\textsuperscript{561} and this is just an initiative aimed at supplementing the offer of private organisations.

However, most young people (including all those participating in ‘Platform2’) go outside the EU and thus EVS seems less attractive as the majority of projects are within Europe. As a result, the UK sends significantly fewer volunteers through EVS than it receives, the difference being about 40\%, according to 2009 data presented in Table 9 below.

**Table 9. UK statistics of EVS volunteers (2009)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVS volunteers</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>Non-EU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sent</strong></td>
<td>202</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hosted</strong></td>
<td>345</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: British Council - UK National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme.*

Even within EVS, it is more popular among British participants to go to the so-called Neighbouring countries rather than the Programme Countries, that is, other MSs\textsuperscript{562}. This trend is clearly visible from the graph below (Figure 20) that shows the destinations of outgoing British EVS volunteers and their proportions in 2009. On the left, the MSs that hosted British volunteers are listed and the non-EU destinations are shown on the right. Although the number of participants who volunteered within the EU was more than double the total of those who went to third countries, it is striking that the two states leading in the respective lists – Germany and Belarus – received the same number of British volunteers – 21. In the EU, runners-up were France, Poland and Spain.


\textsuperscript{562} Project Officer for European Voluntary Service, Contracts and Projects at *British Council*, London, 31-03-2010.
However, the UK is a sought-after destination among European volunteers: 91% of the UK’s incoming EVS volunteer workforce comes from other MSs. A third of them are from Germany, whereas the other biggest ‘suppliers’ (Poland, France, Italy and Spain) each provide about a third of the participants. The proportions by country are given in the graph below (Figure 21), with MSs on the left and third country destinations on the right.

Source: British Council - UK National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme.
Given the variety of cross-border volunteering opportunities available in the UK, EVS statistics obviously do not show the full picture, but similar trends can be observed. IVS arranges placements for about 200 incoming and around the same number of outgoing full-time volunteers a year. IVS European volunteers often come from Poland, Germany and Slovenia. The outgoing British participants most frequently choose projects in Germany as those often deal with the legacy of the Second World War (concentration camps) – it is highly symbolic for the youth of the former rival of Nazi Germany. Iceland is also a popular destination as it is so exotic and expensive to visit otherwise. Projects in the Palestinian Territories appeal to young people preoccupied with political issues.\textsuperscript{563}

Data shared by the English care charity ‘Vitalise’ display a corresponding pattern. In total, 149 young volunteers from other EU countries helped at residential ‘Vitalise’ centres for the disabled. The interest of young British people in Germany is reciprocated by their German counterparts: 50 of the ‘Vitalise’ volunteers were from Germany where young people are used to volunteering in care roles. Poles and Czechs came a distant second (see Figure 22 below). In CSV, foreign European volunteers are from Austria, France and Germany as that is where they have partner organisations through which participants can apply to volunteer in the UK.\textsuperscript{564}

\textbf{Figure 22. Number of young EU volunteers at ‘Vitalise’ by country of origin (2009)}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{Number of young EU volunteers at ‘Vitalise’ by country of origin (2009)}
\end{figure}

\textit{Source: ‘Vitalise’}.

\textsuperscript{563} Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
Therefore, although comprehensive statistics of incoming and outgoing UK volunteers are unavailable, it is possible to infer the dominant trends from the ‘Platform2’, EVS, IVS and ‘Vitalise’ data and in-country volunteering surveys. The claim of all interviewees that British people volunteer more often locally or beyond the borders of the EU is well-founded: volunteers bound for the other MSs comprise only a fraction of the total outgoing volunteer workforce. The UK is thus rather inactive as a volunteer-sending country in the framework of EVS as other formats are used for gap years. On the other hand, even EVS is often used for volunteering in the European Neighbourhood states, the Balkans, Turkey, Russia etc. At the same time, the UK hosts a lot of incoming volunteers and they seem to come mostly from the EU, notably Germany and Poland, although they are scattered across different schemes.

**Socio-economic profile of the cross-border volunteers**

Given Britain’s imperial past, overseas travel is not new to its residents. Historically, it was usually the rich who could go to the faraway colonies and become involved in their development without being paid. A few decades ago, cross-border volunteering was something that was done in defiance of capitalist logic. Now many business-like organisations exist that offer gap years and often charge high participation fees so volunteering abroad is costly.\(^{565}\)

**EVS volunteers** whose options are more likely to be confined to Europe do not need to pay their way so this programme is more inclusive. In 2009, 21.7% of the outgoing and 18.5% of the incoming EVS volunteers could be considered as **people with fewer opportunities**. Disadvantaged young people more frequently take part in short-term projects rather than long-term ones: the NA is seen as a more manageable format. However, host organisations may be less willing to accept volunteers from a disadvantaged background.\(^{566}\)

**IVS**, which is also a more affordable option due to its own fundraising, report they mostly deal with students or people who are currently unemployed. IVS volunteers’ average age is 26 years\(^{567}\), although the actual upper age limit set by the organisation is 70\(^{568}\). However, the average age of British people taking gap years must be lower than 26. European volunteers hosted at ‘**Vitalise**’ also mostly fit into the ‘youth’ range (18-30) and are undertaking further or higher education. About 60% of ‘**Vitalise**’ volunteers are female.\(^{569}\)

---

565 Programme Manager at *IVS GB*, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
567 Programme Manager at *IVS GB*, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
569 Volunteer Development Manager at ‘**Vitalise**’, 12-04-2010.
Data that would allow the construction of a profile of a typical UK cross-border volunteer is scarce, but the fact that the UK Department for International Development saw a reason to establish the programmes ‘Platform2’ and ‘Diaspora Volunteers’ confirms that volunteering overseas is not accessible to all: low-income groups and ethnic minorities are under-represented in the UK volunteer workforce abroad. Observations from the more inclusive schemes of EVS and IVS (both sending and hosting projects) as well as ‘Vitalise’ (hosting only) suggest that **young female students** are the most usual participants.

**Motivation**

For young British people, the motivation for joining a **short-term EVS project** is the opportunity to **get away from their parents and problems and redefine themselves.** Meanwhile, EVS projects featuring **long-term** stays abroad are an opportunity to **try out something new and exciting, to test a possible future career** (according to the project activities volunteers help out with), to **acquire or improve language skills** and to **enhance their CV.** Furthermore, this experience of having lived abroad on your own can serve as a certain rite of passage into adulthood\(^{570}\) – usually, however, performed by British school leavers, students or graduates as a gap year in more exotic third countries.

The **IVS** programme manager pointed out that, given the abundance of gap year organisers offering adventures, people who choose to volunteer with IVS do so because of the organisation’s **values** – promoting intercultural peace and understanding. IVS participants first of all look for **meaningful work.** This motivation is strengthened by the wish to spend time in another country, in a real community rather than as a tourist. The international environment at the project, allowing them to mix with people of different nationalities, can also act as an additional incentive\(^{571}\).

For foreign incoming volunteers, the main motivation is the aim to improve their **English language skills**, whereas other considerations may include gaining **specific work experience.** Skills-based volunteering is more frequently done through specialised host organisations such as The National Trust, ‘Vitalise’ and the like. In fact, some ‘Vitalise’ European volunteers are enrolled in care courses in their home countries and aim to gain hands-on experience and insight into the British system of working with disabled people\(^{572}\). As is shown in the next


\(^{571}\) Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.

\(^{572}\) Volunteer Development Manager at ‘Vitalise’, 12-04-2010.
section, all these volunteers’ expectations regarding participation in cross-border programmes can be satisfied.

**Benefit gained by the volunteers**

To many young people, volunteering abroad is a *life-changing experience* that teaches them a lot about others and themselves. In many cases, they will have faced the *challenges* of communal living, compromise and dealing with other people. These challenges make them more mature and enhance their *self-confidence*. The interviewed EVS volunteers are happy to have made lots of *new friends*. The time spent abroad in a different cultural, linguistic and social environment enriches their understanding, puts a lot of things into perspective and makes people reflect on their identity, including in terms of their relationship with their homeland.

Once they are back in the UK, individual volunteers are in high spirits after so many changes in a relatively short period. Eventually, as they return to normality, they may become disappointed because others around them are unable to appreciate their outstanding experience. Nevertheless, substantial benefits can be reaped from it in due course – it is becoming usual to have done some volunteering before starting a career.

A representative of British business leaders acknowledged that volunteers had an opportunity to gain brilliant *teamwork*, *leadership* and *time management* skills as well as a practical understanding of team and role dynamics and *budgeting*. They practise working towards a set budget, time limit and an end goal which constitute the basis of project management encountered anywhere in the world of employment now, be it public, private or a third sector organisation. Volunteers learn to liaise with different groups of people. All these ‘soft’ skills and hands-on experience are crucial to UK businesses and thus strongly increase the ex-volunteers’ employability as they cannot be gained through the formal education avenues. Once employed, ex-volunteers tend to exhibit a more dynamic approach to problem-solving.

Even the *foreign language skills* associated specifically with cross-border volunteering are becoming more relevant for UK companies trying to cope with
the financial downturn as companies are looking overseas for new markets. Understanding their language and culture increases their business potential. Therefore, volunteering experience abroad should also start playing a part in the recruitment process. As was mentioned in the previous section, the language aspect is even more important to incoming volunteers. They may be discouraged by the encounter with the various native speakers’ accents at first, but later gain proficiency and confidence in their spoken English. It gives them an advantage in their career.

The abovementioned competences and experiences are largely independent of the type of project volunteers get to work with. However, **skills-based volunteering** can potentially have an even greater impact on the participants’ future career. As pointed out before, volunteering enables the volunteer to confirm whether a certain career suits him/her, gain professional experience in a particular field of study (care, conservation, education etc.) or even change his/her occupation. An example of a successful switch was provided by a former EVS volunteer from the UK who had studied IT but was able to get a job in the field of culture after working at the European Capital of Culture project in Luxembourg for one year.

**Recognition of skills**

If we agree that both informal and formal recognition of achievements counts, the former being public approval and the latter certification of skills gained, both types are well developed in the UK. Although this applies mainly to in-country volunteering where government spending and attention has brought a lot of publicity lately and many accreditation tools have been developed over time, some arrangements are possible for cross-border volunteering as well.

As mentioned previously, both the authorities and employers realise the positive impact of volunteering on one’s personality and abilities. As a result, skills-based volunteering has become more prominent in recruitment and companies are undertaking employee-supported volunteering with the aim of boosting their image. Moreover, volunteering is established as one of the options open to school leavers or graduates – a legitimate alternative to further education or employment: the Scottish authorities have adjusted their statistical surveys accordingly.

---

580 Ibid.
581 Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
582 Italian EVS volunteer in the UK, 02-04-2010.
583 Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.
584 Head of Influencer Relations at Institute of Directors, London, 26-03-2010.
In many cases, volunteers can get a certificate proving their achievement and ask their organisation for references. Nationwide and internal organisation **award schemes**\(^{586}\) are used to celebrate youth volunteering. In Scotland, the most well-known national scheme specifically for volunteers is the **Millennium Volunteers** (MV) awards, culminating in a ceremony where certificates are presented to young people from 16 to 25 who have done 50, 100 or 200 hours of voluntary work\(^{587}\). For this purpose, young volunteers can record their hours and keep a journal to reflect on and plan their activities online, on the MV Volunteering Passport website\(^{588}\). The scheme is administered through the Scottish Volunteer Centre Network and backed by the Scottish Executive as certificates are signed by Scottish ministers\(^{589}\).

MV and similar awards are based on the amount of time served, but accreditation options to certify skills gained also exist for local volunteering. For instance, volunteers in the UK are eligible for the **National Vocational Qualifications** (NVQ) known as **Scottish Vocational Qualifications in Scotland**. Five different levels of qualifications comparable to knowledge levels up to higher education degrees (in formal learning) are groups of ‘elements of competence’ given certain numbers of credits. NVQs/ SVQs can be gained at work and proved through demonstration, previous education and evidence\(^{590}\). There are even qualifications developed specifically for volunteers: the non-formal education recognition body ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) awarding qualifications up to university entry level now offers **Community Volunteering Qualifications** (CVQs)\(^ {591}\). Volunteers engaged in host organisations (whether in the UK or abroad) accredited by ASDAN are eligible for these qualifications, regardless of their citizenship\(^ {592}\).

---

586 For instance, ‘Vitalise’ has an internal award scheme and some European volunteers have received the award. Volunteer Development Manager at ‘Vitalise’, 12-04-2010. The British NA is also planning a celebratory event for EVS volunteers on the occasion of European Year of Volunteering 2011. Project Officer for EVS, Contracts and Projects at British Council, London, 31-03-2010.
587 The outdated awards name may soon change, probably into ‘Soltire’, the name of the Scottish national flag. Head of Third Sector Division at Public Sector Reform Directorate of The Scottish Government, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
592 Interview with Director of Inclusive Education at ASDAN, 05-05-2010.
However, the charity ‘Volunteering England’ warns the organisers of voluntary activities that “accreditation can bring assessment and possible success or failure into volunteering”\(^{593}\). This is a potential risk because many people enjoy volunteering itself and are happy to be rewarded by the personal satisfaction they get from the activity. In fact, some volunteer to escape the pressures they face in formal education or working life. This is true of IVS volunteers: although organisers of placements abroad can issue them with certificates upon request, participants rarely ask for them as they feel they have been rewarded by the experience itself\(^{594}\). On the other hand, the abundance of certificates for all sorts of achievements in the UK means that sometimes young people are not even interested in getting another ‘sheet of paper’, be it Youthpass or something else\(^{595}\).

**Impact on society**

The most obvious beneficiaries of cross-border voluntary activity apart from the volunteers themselves are the organisations organising volunteer exchanges, local communities and volunteer employers. For sending organisations, volunteer exchanges are a service to their youth audience and one of the *measures of their youth work that help to achieve their aims*\(^{596}\). For instance, IVS uses sending and hosting projects to let people of different cultures, backgrounds and nationalities mix in order to fulfil the organisation’s mission, namely, promoting intercultural peace and understanding\(^{597}\).

In their turn, host organisations in the UK are able to achieve their aims thanks to volunteer contributions. Volunteers provide them with a larger *workforce than they would be able to support* if it consisted of paid workers only and thus they would not be able to develop the same range of activities: The National Trust which manages a huge infrastructure in England had only 4,938 employees in 2009 but relies on the work of 55,000 volunteers\(^{598}\); 2,500 volunteers help The City of Edinburgh Council to deliver health and social services\(^{599}\); ‘Vitalise’ requires over 5,000 volunteers a year in order to run their residential centres and a quarter of the charity’s paid staff originally started as

---

594 Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
597 Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
volunteers\textsuperscript{600}. Although only a fraction of the volunteers come from overseas in organisations like this, staff and local volunteers of the host organisation also benefit from the international aspect of their work. In addition to increasing tolerance and understanding towards other people\textsuperscript{601}, meeting foreigners who come to work with the organisation brings new ideas and boosts their spirits\textsuperscript{602}.

If the volunteers are in contact with the local community, this impact is wider. Just like the volunteers themselves, their hosts gain insights into their home country and culture. In cases where volunteers work in care, youth education or childminding, their clients are the direct beneficiaries of their service and their link to the host community. For example, ‘Vitalise’ services are enhanced by the participation of foreign volunteers as they stimulate additional interest among their clients\textsuperscript{603}.

In the UK context, the intercultural experience that foreign volunteers bring is especially important in Northern Ireland as their presence questions the established notions of what it means to be ‘different’\textsuperscript{604}. It opens up a new dimension in people’s understanding – beyond the boundaries of Catholic and Protestant communities. An Italian EVS volunteer in Belfast told us there was a big community of international volunteers in the capital of Northern Ireland: their energy and different point of view help to reduce the ingrained tension\textsuperscript{605}. Since it is still a touchy issue, locals usually do not talk about it and the host organisations find the international volunteers can ask questions that local people would not. Especially when working with children or youth, foreigners can challenge the assumptions learnt from the closed community or family background and broaden their horizons, contributing to the establishment of a more tolerant society\textsuperscript{606}.

Finally, the benefits reaped by international volunteers in terms of enhanced skills and improved employability are transformed into gains for their employers who profit from a skilled workforce. Usually only the not-for-profit employers have been interested in their job candidates’ volunteering experience as it is normally gained in a similar environment and not-for-profit sectors such as

\textsuperscript{601} Volunteer Development Manager at ‘Vitalise’, 12-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{602} Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{603} Volunteer Development Manager at ‘Vitalise’, 12-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{604} Project Officer for European Voluntary Service, Contracts and Projects at British Council, London, 31-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{605} Italian EVS volunteer in the UK, 02-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{606} Volunteer Officer EVS/PLUS at Bryson Charitable Group, Belfast, 08-04-2010.
social care, healthcare, environment etc. Until recently, volunteering experience was rarely described in CVs when applying for jobs in business. However, given the government and media attention and promotion volunteering has recently been enjoying in the UK and the increasing competition in the British labour market, volunteering as a pre-trial of full-time employment is becoming a competitive advantage for those candidates whose other credentials are equal. Moreover, while out of the labour market, volunteering instead of doing nothing is seen as characteristic of a proactive personality eager to learn\textsuperscript{607}.

**Obstacles**

Given the UK volunteers’ preferences to go further away, the first issue they face is the costs of volunteering overseas (usually in the developing world). Many sending organisations charge high fees and the long-haul travel costs can be considerable. However, as described in the Opportunities section, cheaper options exist and they are more relevant for this study as the not-for-profit organisations offer more activities in Europe. Unfortunately, these are still unsuitable for young people registered as jobseekers as only in-country volunteering is allowed. Other costs may be hard to predict at first: it is not unheard of that international volunteers face tax issues after their return\textsuperscript{608}. As for the incoming volunteers, although they often find the UK standards of living attractive, the price level (especially of accommodation and transport) can be substantially higher than in their home countries.

The most inclusive option for both inbound and outbound volunteers is EVS, although many young British people are not so interested in volunteering within the EU. For those who choose EVS, finding a hosting project may prove an ordeal: one ex-volunteer complained of having searched and contacted the projects listed in the database for 10 months before receiving the first response\textsuperscript{609}. In the UK itself, the network of EVS organisations is not spread equally: many more EVS projects are organised in England where the population is bigger than in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland\textsuperscript{610}. Furthermore, the popularity of the EVS is rather low in the country: for instance, a 2003 youth survey in Scotland revealed that only 6% of 17-25 year olds knew of EVS as a volunteering opportunity, whereas 10% had heard of International Voluntary Service (IVS) and 24% of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)\textsuperscript{611}.

\textsuperscript{607} Head of Influencer Relations at Institute of Directors, London, 26-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{608} Head of ‘Youth in Action’ at British Council, London, 31-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{609} Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{610} Information provided by the British Council – the UK’s National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’.
\textsuperscript{611} Diane Machin, ‘Young people in Scotland: those who volunteer and those who do not’ in Howard Williamson and Bryony Hoskins with Philipp Boetzel (eds.), Charting the landscape of European youth voluntary activities. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2005, p. 76 (69-80). Available online at: <http://youth-
Incoming volunteers are likely to benefit from the developed volunteer management culture found in the British host organisations which in most cases compensates for the lack of legal regulation of voluntary activities. In fact, the Head of the ‘Youth in Action’ programme in the British NA cited the discrepancy of standards and definitions of voluntary work as the main challenge in ensuring that EVS volunteers have a useful learning experience in their host countries\textsuperscript{612}. In the UK, skills-based volunteering is emphasised and organisations follow the principle that volunteers cannot be used to replace paid labour\textsuperscript{613}, whereas outgoing EVS volunteers sometimes complain of having done little but photocopying\textsuperscript{614}.

The quality of the volunteering experience relies heavily on the level of mentoring available to the volunteers. If mentoring volunteers is just an add-on to the individual’s responsibilities or if the mentor does not attend to his/her duties, volunteers can face various inconveniences starting from issues with accommodation to certification of their skills. Active mentoring could also help tackle integration difficulties\textsuperscript{615}.

Working with children may be the most popular form of volunteering among locals, but foreigners may find their choice of types of projects restricted by the issues and costs of the clearance they must get to work in the social sphere. Prices of the enhanced police check vary considerably: from free of charge in Belgium, Denmark and France to EUR 95 for a Polish citizen (if applying from the UK)\textsuperscript{616}. And in some countries it may be difficult to find an equivalent for this procedure of disclosure\textsuperscript{617}. Moreover, the cost of translating the obtained document might also be an issue\textsuperscript{618}.

Consequently, IVS GB finds the recent changes in the legislation too time-consuming to comply with and now organises only environmental projects to

\textsuperscript{612} Head of ‘Youth in Action’ at \textit{British Council}, London, 31-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{614} Project Officer for European Voluntary Service, Contracts and Projects at \textit{British Council}, London, 31-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{615} Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg, 02-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{617} Volunteer Development Officer at Volunteers Development Team, Health and Social care, \textit{The City of Edinburgh Council}, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{618} Volunteer Development Manager at ‘Vitalise’, 12-04-2010.
host international volunteers. However, in some cases environmental projects require just the same amount of paperwork: an EVS volunteer officer from a charity in Northern Ireland said their organisation asked all incoming EVS volunteers to undergo a police check in their home countries regardless of the type of host project. Meanwhile, ‘Vitalise’ whose EEA volunteers need a police check does not see it as a hindrance to admitting foreign volunteers.

Conclusions

The UK has a lot to offer as a volunteer-hosting society. In-country volunteering is well-developed which means organisations are experienced in managing volunteers, standards and good practice are established and a network of support organisations exists. The third sector is strong and active, offering many volunteering opportunities in various fields.

On the other hand, volunteering overseas is very popular among young British people, but other MSs do not seem to be very attractive – whereas the UK is very attractive to young Europeans wishing to improve their English. There seems to be a lack of stakeholders who would see volunteering in the EU as beneficial because young British volunteers are not so strongly motivated to learn foreign languages. As a result, the UK hosts more EVS volunteers than it sends and even British people who choose to participate in EVS are often eager to go to the more exotic third countries.

While voluntary engagement in one’s own local area is encouraged and heavily supported by government-funded schemes as community-building, volunteering abroad is to some extent seen as a measure of sensitising young people to the issues of poverty and development. The sole financial support from the government in this field is used to administer young British people’s volunteering in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

The British legal tradition poses a two-fold challenge to volunteer exchanges. At first glance, the legal system hardly addresses volunteering as such in particular and precedents are thus indispensable to the interpretation of the legal framework. Volunteers cannot be considered employees and do not automatically qualify for any employment rights (safeguards against discrimination, unfair dismissal, sick and annual leave etc.). Nevertheless, good treatment of volunteers is indirectly ensured through the legal duties their organisations have to fulfil and the spread of good practice and standards (in all policies affecting volunteers: health and safety, liability etc.). However,

---

619 Programme Manager at IVS GB, Edinburgh, 29-03-2010.
620 Interview with Volunteer Officer EVS/PLUS at Bryson Charitable Group, Belfast, 15-04-2010.
621 Volunteer Development Manager at ‘Vitalise’, 12-04-2010.
volunteers are not exempt from the strict UK regulations aimed at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and obtaining a certificate of good conduct to prove one’s eligibility for care roles can sometimes be a costly process.

**List of interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>Clough</td>
<td>Dave</td>
<td>Volunteer Development Manager</td>
<td>‘Vitalise’, Kendal, UK</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>12-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.</td>
<td>Fisichella</td>
<td>Simona</td>
<td>Italian EVS volunteer in the UK</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>02-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.</td>
<td>Fry</td>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>Director of Inclusive Education</td>
<td><em>ASDAN</em> (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), London, UK</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>05-05-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.</td>
<td>Grebe</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in the UK</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>02-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.</td>
<td>Hegarty</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Volunteer Officer EVS-PLUS</td>
<td><em>Bryson Charitable Group</em>, Belfast, UK</td>
<td>E-mail, phone</td>
<td>08-04-2010; 15-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.</td>
<td>Keenan</td>
<td>Conor</td>
<td>Former British EVS volunteer in Luxembourg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>02-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Meeting Type</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Policy and Practice Adviser</td>
<td>Volunteer Development Scotland, Stirling, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>30-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Miscioscia</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Head of ‘Youth in Action’</td>
<td>British Council – UK National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, London, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>31-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Head of Influencer Relations</td>
<td>Institute of Directors, London, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>26-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>Geoff</td>
<td>Head of Third Sector Division</td>
<td>Public Sector Reform Directorate, The Scottish Government, Edinburgh, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>29-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Purves</td>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>International Voluntary Service – Great Britain, Edinburgh, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>29-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Project Officer - European Voluntary Service, Contracts and Projects</td>
<td>British Council – UK National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, London, UK</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>31-03-2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of publications**

1: Spain, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic, Italy. Rome: Spes, 2008, 111-148.


List of legal documents

1. Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (c. 50).
2. Employment Rights Act 1996 (c. 18).
3. Equality Act 2010 (c. 15).
6. Race Relations Act 1976 (c. 74).
8. Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (c. 65).

List of websites


Case study: Lithuania

Volunteering does not have a long-lasting and deeply-rooted tradition in Lithuania in comparison with the older MSs. On the political level, no special policy for promoting and enhancing volunteering is in place, although voluntary activities do get mentioned in the context of NGO development or youth policy. Legally, volunteering is not regulated either but new legislation could be adopted in 2011.

The local volunteering situation is improving as more Lithuanians start to become involved in voluntary activities that have become more visible. As people become acquainted with the idea of volunteering in general, they find out about cross-border volunteering as well. Although both local and cross-border volunteering still has to be developed in Lithuania, EVS is the most established scheme for volunteering in Europe, and the least problematic in terms of participation. EVS volunteers are in a better situation than local volunteers because of taking part in a programme and being a part of a system: their volunteering tends to be more organised, fully-financed and coordinated.

Perception of volunteering

Volunteering and organising of voluntary work was defined and regulated by Resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania from 2001 to 2006\(^{622}\). However, the Resolutions have been revoked owing to fears of misuse of voluntary work status for other activities and that has led to the situation where no common definition of volunteering exists that could be used by authorities, NGOs and society.

In the revoked regulations, volunteers were defined as people who work for the benefit of society of their own free will without compulsion and without

\(^{622}\) Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės nutarimas „Dėl savanoriškų darbų atliekančių asmenų išlaidų kompensavimo tvarkos patvirtinimo“. Valstybės žinios, 2002, Nr. 53-2077 [revoked]; Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės nutarimas „Dėl Savanoriškų darbų organizavimo tvarkos patvirtinimo“. Valstybės žinios, 2001, Nr. 106-3801 [revoked]. Note: please see the English translations of the titles of Lithuanian sources in the bibliography at the end of the case study report.
monetary reward. In fact, this definition is still acceptable to those dealing with voluntary activities in practice: volunteers themselves, NGOs and experts. However, even the organisations based on voluntary work do not always treat their unpaid helpers as volunteers but sometimes identify them as people working on a ‘civic/honorary basis’ (visuomeniniais pagrindais), emphasising their active civic engagement for some cause or in the activities of the organisation rather than the unpaid nature of their service. Awareness of volunteering is much more widespread in the cities, where more NGOs operate and more volunteers participate in their activities, in contrast to peripheral regions.

In 2008, the public opinion survey ‘Volunteering in Lithuania’ confirmed that the concept of a volunteer was still not commonly accepted and related to different meanings among society members. Firstly, volunteering was still often confused with voluntary military service, as was revealed by the survey. ‘Volunteer’ and ‘volunteer serviceman’ is translated by the same Lithuanian word ‘savanoris’ which comes from the interwar period and is older than the Lithuanian concept of a ‘volunteer’ as someone who works without remuneration in fields other than defence.

Secondly, as in other post-Communist countries, volunteering in Lithuania carries some negative connotations. This situation is determined by the Soviet past when people were obliged to participate in ‘voluntary’ large-scale works called ‘talka’ where grassroots involvement was the most important element - in order to showcase the socialist solidarity of people. Participation in massive activities was not a question of free will and thus invokes negative memories for many older people.

Thirdly, volunteering (and its perception) is closely related to the situation of NGOs as they are the main promoters and ‘employers’ of volunteers.

---

623 Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės nutarimas „Dėl Savanoriškų darbų organizavimo tvarkos patvirtinimo“. Valstybės žinios, 2001, Nr. 106-3801 [revoked].
625 Interview with former Manager of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, Vilnius, 29-03-2010.
627 The word itself is much older than the 20th century as ‘talkos’ (plural of ‘talka’) were organised both in Lithuanian and Latvian villages to cooperate in large-scale agriculture works such as harvesting. However, people taking part in them were hardly aware of their ‘volunteering’ as these were the social responsibility of a good neighbour.
Nevertheless, the concept of an NGO is itself ambiguous in the Lithuanian context and NGOs’ differences from the public, private and other kind of organisations are not so obvious. Furthermore, it is not clear if NGO members should be treated as volunteers or as ‘civic employees’ (see above). This especially concerns those who are active members and become involved in the governing bodies. They spend much time doing unpaid activities, but are closer to unpaid workers than to volunteers who participate in a non-formal learning process through their activities.  

Finally, volunteering is sometimes understood simply as acts of kindness such as helping older people to cross the street. This is so-called informal volunteering not conducted through an organisation and difficult to research as it looks more like the deeds of a good neighbour or an active citizen. However, this perception prevails among the elderly and makes the definition of volunteering even more complex and blurred.

Regardless of the abovementioned aspects in defining voluntary activities, the concept of youth volunteering is still clearer than that of volunteering of any other age group. To be more precise, senior volunteering is not a part of any political field and initiative. It is not clear which institutions should be suggesting and implementing any initiatives in the field of senior volunteering.

As for cross-border volunteering, volunteering in developing countries is more strongly associated with voluntary activities by Lithuanians than volunteering in other MSs. Instead, a stereotypical example of volunteering abroad is volunteering in African countries through, for instance, ‘Humana People to People’.

Cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people

In Lithuania, there is no national programme designed to enhance local and/ or cross-border volunteering. EVS is the most prominent and developed cross-border volunteering programme functioning in the country. Besides, there are small networks that enable some people to volunteer in other MSs such as

---

630 Interview with Programme Manager of Lithuanian Youth Council, and President of Lithuanian Youth Council, Vilnius, 18-03-2010.
631 Interview with the Member of the Head Office of European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
632 Interview with Programme Manager of Lithuanian Youth Council and President of Lithuanian Youth Council, Vilnius, 18-03-2010; Project Manager of Public Organisation Volunteer centre, Vilnius, 16-03-2010.
633 Member of the Head Office of European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
religious communities or monasteries and humanitarian organisations\(^\text{634}\), but these opportunities are much smaller in scope, of limited accessibility or even sporadic.

Young Lithuanians can become involved in international volunteering programmes operating in developing countries such as ‘The Federation for Associations Connected to the International Humana People to People Movement’. The member organisation in Lithuania is ‘Humana People to People Baltic’. It organises a wide range of projects such as fundraising for disadvantaged people in the developing world and volunteering in African countries\(^\text{635}\).

Another quite unknown cross-border volunteering opportunity exists through the ‘Global Education Network of Young Europeans’ (GLEN), a network of EU NGOs. It is represented in Lithuania by the not-for-profit Catholic organisation ‘Lithuanian Kolping Society’ that is part of the International Kolping Society (named after the beatified German Catholic priest Adolph Kolping). Through this network, young people from MSs have an opportunity to take part in voluntary activities in developing countries for 3 months. However, it is not entirely clear if participation in such activities should be considered volunteering as GLEN itself labels them as ‘internships in global education’\(^\text{636}\).

Some students participate in voluntary activities in other MSs as members of The International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES). A member organisation of the IFES in Lithuania has hosted 5 volunteers from the UK. They have joined the Community of Christian students in Lithuania and been involved in the organised activities. Meanwhile, Lithuanians go volunteering to the UK or Norway. However, such exchanges are occasional rather than constant and volunteers have to be members of IFES. The expenses are covered by private sponsors, funds, communities or by volunteers themselves\(^\text{637}\).

Opportunities for Lithuanians as well as other nationals also exist in other MSs and outside the EU through non-centralised schemes such World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF). In this case, there is no sending organisation. For a small membership fee (or even for free in countries that have recently joined the network) payable to the coordinating office in their chosen

\(^{634}\) Interview with Head Officer of Community Affairs Division in Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Vilnius, 25-03-2010; Former Manager of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, Vilnius, 29-03-2010.


\(^{637}\) Interview with Student group coordinator of the Lithuanian community of Christian students, 15-04-2010.
host country would-be volunteers are given access to the contact details of the host organisations (organic farms) and can arrange the placement directly with the owners. Volunteers are provided with food and accommodation in exchange for their help on the farm, but they do not pay or receive any money from the hosts and have to arrange their own transport to the farm and insurance for the duration of their volunteering period.\(^{638}\)

Other cross-border volunteering projects can be called one-off activities because they were organised only a few times without the intention of developing a permanent volunteer exchange. To give an example, a volunteering project was organised as a way to enhance cooperation between the municipalities of the town of Telšiai (Lithuania) and Steinfurt (Germany). Two young Germans came to Lithuania and volunteered there for a year. Even though it was considered to be a successful and highly valuable experience for the local society and the host organisation, this project was not replicated and Lithuanians did not volunteer in Germany. Instead, the hosting organisation sought accreditation and began participating in EVS after the project. As the Coordinator for Youth Affairs in Telšiai explained, this voluntary project required a lot of funding from both the Telšiai and Steinfurt municipalities and so it proved worthwhile to take part in EVS and have it funded.\(^{639}\)

The voluntary opportunities described above are costly and require either involvement in the activities of certain organisations or a considerable amount of effort in order to get information on cross-border voluntary opportunities. This makes EVS much more attractive, accessible and popular among young Lithuanians.

**Legal status and guarantees for volunteers**

As has already been mentioned, volunteering in Lithuania is currently not regulated or defined by any legal or political document. In 2006, provisions on voluntary work were eliminated from the Labour Code. Consequently, the Resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania that regulated voluntary work were abolished. It implies that volunteering is not subject to labour law (as it cannot be equated to employment). Instead, volunteering is now subject to the Civil Code: general civil law principles apply to contracts of voluntary work and in disputed situations case law is applied.\(^{640}\)


\(^{639}\) Interview with Youth Affairs Coordinator at Telšiai District Municipality, 13-04-2010.

This change to the Labour Code recalled previous regulations and definitions of voluntary work and although volunteering did not become an illegal activity, today it is hardly regulated at all. NGOs’ members claim that not much has changed in practice since then. However, lack of legal regulation leads to an ambiguous situation in case of disagreement or accident: it is not clear who should be liable. Thus contracts or agreements between the volunteer-to-be and the organisation in question concluded before the start of volunteering become more important.

In early 2010, the Government of Lithuania endorsed the Guidelines for NGO Development complete with measures for their implementation. In this document, promulgation of a Law on Voluntary Work is planned as a means to promote NGO development. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is obliged to prepare the bill by early 2011. The law would set a common definition of voluntary work that could be applied to all age groups. It is also intended to provide a legal framework for voluntary activities and encourage wider discussions during the European Year of Volunteering. NGOs and other stakeholders are participating in the preparatory discussions; however, no one clear position on how strictly volunteering should be regulated has yet been crystallised. Some are in favour of a new regulation claiming that there is room for manoeuvre now. Others state that complying with strict legal requirements may possibly pose a burden for the NGOs in terms of administrative costs. It is therefore hard to tell yet what solution will be agreed on.

As for social security, the Lithuanian Law on State Social Insurance or other social insurance legislation do not require local volunteers to have compulsory insurance. A volunteer appears to be in a situation when he/ she is not entitled to either pension social insurance, sickness and maternity social insurance, unemployment insurance, industrial accidents and occupational diseases social security or health insurance. However, outgoing cross-border volunteers have found themselves affected by the recent attempt of the Government to include all citizens in a compulsory health insurance scheme that obliges full-time

---

641 Programme Manager of Lithuanian Youth Council and President of Lithuanian Youth Council, Vilnius, 18-03-2010.
642 Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės nutarimas „Dėl Nevyriausybinių organizacijų plėtros koncepcijos patvirtinimo“. Valstybės žinios, 2010, Nr. 12-566.
643 Ibid.
644 Project Manager of Public Organisation Volunteer centre, Vilnius, 16-03-2010; Programme Manager of Lithuanian Youth Council and President of Lithuanian Youth Council, Vilnius, 18-03-2010.
645 Interview with Vice President of Lithuanian Free Market Institute and author of a study on legal environment for volunteering (see Footnote 373), 21-04-2010.
646 Lietuvos laisvos rinkos institutas, „LLRI analizė: Savanoriškos veiklos teisinės aplinkos vertinimas“.
volunteers as well as unregistered jobseekers to pay monthly contributions (see also ‘Obstacles’).

Voluntary activities are being promoted more actively in the field of youth policy. The Lithuanian government had committed to adopting a long-term strategy for youth policy for 2010-2018. For the implementation of the strategy, measures such as legalising volunteer status, creating a framework for promoting volunteering, and enhancing the image of volunteering are listed. The strategy would lead to volunteering being more organised in the field of youth policy.

Regarding international volunteering, participation in volunteering programmes financed by the EU or other MSs (such as EVS) is recognised as a sufficient legal ground for foreigners to stay in Lithuania. EU citizens coming to Lithuania can stay legally for up to three months (within a period of 6 months) without any paperwork. If they want to stay longer, they must apply for a document certifying their right to stay in the country for up to five years, which will be issued within five working days. Non-EU volunteers can get a visa valid for three months. For a longer stay they are obliged to get a temporary residence permit that is valid for one year. It takes up to four months to issue it and thus the application has to be submitted before the actual arrival.

According to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens, the legal grounds for issuing a temporary residence permit applicable to incoming volunteers from non-EU states are intention to work in Lithuania (in that case, a work permit has to be granted first) or intention to engage in other “lawful activities”. Volunteering through EVS is definitely a lawful activity, since EVS volunteers are explicitly exempt from the obligation to obtain a work permit as participants of “volunteering programmes financed by the European Union or its Member States”. Although they are still obliged to have health insurance and sufficient

---

647 After the recent amendments, Art. 19 of the Lithuanian Law on Health Insurance imposes fines for failure to pay compulsory monthly health insurance premiums, whereas full-time volunteers are not entitled to be insured by the state (unlike students or registered jobseekers). Lietuvos Respublikos Sveikatos draudimo įstatymas. Valstybės žinios, 2010, Nr. 41-1939.
652 Ibid.
653 Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro įsakymas „Dėl Leidimo dirbtį užsieniečiams išdavimo sąlygų ir tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo“. Valstybės žinios, 2009, Nr. 98-4134.
income, the requirements for EU volunteers and EVS volunteers from non-EU countries are simple compared to those that apply to other volunteers\textsuperscript{654}.

As for the implementation of EVS projects, the coordinating, host and sending organisations and the volunteer sign the Activity Agreement and it is the main proof if problems occur with the authorities\textsuperscript{655}. The responsibilities of all parties are defined, and thus the question of liability in the project is not an issue. In addition, EVS volunteers are given health insurance by the European Commission.

To ensure the quality of cross-border volunteering, the Lithuanian National Agency (NA) and the NGOs that participate in EVS have adopted the EVS Quality Guide in Lithuania. It consists of guidelines on how organisations should organise their work and what quality criteria to apply. Criteria are also listed on how organisations are accredited and how their activities are evaluated\textsuperscript{656}. This provides the volunteer with information on what quality measures are applied and which organisation is responsible for what issues.

**Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers**

No national statistics on the rates of cross-border volunteering exist in Lithuania apart from those for EVS. However, given the absence of other comparable opportunities, the trends of participation in EVS portray Lithuania’s cross-border volunteering pattern more or less accurately.

The number of Lithuanians volunteering through EVS has grown since 2000 (see Figure 23 below). The peak was reached in 2006 and in the following two years a drop in the number of outgoing volunteers was observed. At the same time, the numbers of incoming volunteers were constantly rising. As the representative of the Agency for International Youth Cooperation – Lithuanian National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme (NA) explained, this may have been determined by the fact that the funding for the ‘Youth’ programme reached its maximum in 2006 and the whole budget was spent on this particular measure (rather than reallocated for other actions)\textsuperscript{657}. Hence the highest number of people were able to participate in the programme in 2006.

---

\textsuperscript{654} Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas „Dėl užsieniųčių teisinės padėties“; interview with Officer in charge for sending EVS volunteers of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, 20-04-2010.

\textsuperscript{655} Interview with Project Coordinator of Youth Exchange Agency, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.


\textsuperscript{657} Interview with EVS Project Coordinator at Agency for International Youth Cooperation – Lithuanian National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Vilnius, 16-03-2010.
When Lithuania became an EU member in 2004, EVS projects in third countries began. In 2009, the number of young Lithuanians volunteering outside the EU reached a quarter of all outgoing volunteers. This may be explained by the wish to volunteer in an ‘exotic’ rather than in a developed country\textsuperscript{658}. The numbers of volunteers coming to Lithuania from countries outside the EU increased significantly in the last two years, and also comprise one quarter of all incoming volunteers.

**Figure 23. Number of EVS participants in Lithuania (2004-2009)**

As for MSs, the highest rate of Lithuanians volunteering abroad within the EU was observed in 2006 and 2009. It is also worth mentioning that the number of incoming volunteers has exceeded the number of outgoing volunteers since 2007. This can be explained by the fact that the ‘Youth in Action’ Programme introduced in 2007 has made applying for funding easier and it now depends heavily on the initiative and capabilities of the host organisations\textsuperscript{659}. Additional funding is a motivating factor for the host organisations to implement an EVS project. According to the Lithuanian NA, there are 72 accredited organisations that are allowed to host volunteers (both public institutions and NGOs included) and 24 organisations that can send volunteers to other EU countries\textsuperscript{660}. These

\textsuperscript{658} Member of the Head Office of European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.  
\textsuperscript{659} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{660} Data provided by the Agency for International Youth Cooperation – Lithuanian National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme.
may be the reasons why more youngsters are coming to volunteer in Lithuania than Lithuanians going to volunteer in other MSs.

The NA observes that most Lithuanians wish to volunteer in southern countries such as Spain and Portugal, although the majority actually end up volunteering in France, Germany and Italy as the graph below (Figure 24) shows. Along with Spain and Austria, these three states were also the countries of origin of the majority of incoming volunteers to Lithuania in 2009 (see Figure 24). Young Lithuanians often first choose a country where they want to spend a longer period of time and only then look for a project there. Since South European countries are popular with volunteers, it is often difficult to find a project there and this leads to volunteering in other countries.

**Figure 24. Number of incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers for Lithuania in 2009 (EU only)**

![Graph showing incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers for Lithuania in 2009 (EU only)](image)

*Source: European Commission.*

**Socio-economic profile of the cross-border volunteers**

Although it is difficult to describe a typical Lithuanian cross-border volunteer because of the lack of specific data, NGOs identify certain characteristics. **Outgoing Lithuanian EVS volunteers** can be easily divided into age groups defined by the milestones of education completed, that is, school leavers, BA and MA graduates and those taking a career break:

- Participants from the youngest group are **18-19 years old** and have just graduated from school and either did not enter a higher education institution or feel disappointed with their choice. Unlike Germany, volunteering at this age is not so common because Lithuanians usually go to university immediately after finishing school.

---

662 Member of the Head Office of European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
• The second group consists of volunteers about 22 years old who choose EVS as an option to spend some time deciding what to do with their future. They already hold a Bachelor degree (it takes 4 years of study to obtain this in Lithuania) and have decided to take the so-called gap year. Young people of this age make up the biggest part of all young Lithuanians volunteering through EVS\(^663\).

• Those who hold a Masters degree (usually takes another 2 years in Lithuania) and who regard EVS as a possibility to have a break after their studies are about 25 years old\(^664\). This group of outgoing Lithuanian volunteers is the second-largest\(^665\).

• EVS participants at the age of 28-30 years have not only completed higher education but already have 4-5 years work experience and feel disappointed or are looking for changes in their regular life\(^666\). Only a few young people of this age take up EVS and see it as the last possibility to participate in the programme because of the age limit\(^667\).

The NA does not have aggregated statistics on volunteer gender, but it is clear that women are more active both as incoming and outgoing young volunteers\(^668\). Although apparently fewer young men come to Lithuania or go to volunteer in other MSs from Lithuania, there are more male participants among the incoming volunteers than among the outgoing ones\(^669\).

The picture of the economic situation and social status of Lithuanian volunteers is difficult to identify as no statistics are being gathered\(^670\). However, the EVS project coordinator of the Lithuanian NA estimated that young people with fewer opportunities made up around 20% of all young people participating in EVS in Lithuania\(^671\). Short-term group voluntary projects are more suitable for them as long-term individual voluntary service may be too challenging and demanding\(^672\).

However, many Lithuanian volunteers may be considered as people with fewer opportunities according to the criteria listed in the EVS Programme Guide: due to their low standard of living in comparison with volunteers from the older

---

664 Member of the Head Office of European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
665 Kėžaitė and Špokevičiūtė, p. 4.
666 Former Manager of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, Vilnius, 29-03-2010.
667 Member of the Head Office of European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
668 EVS Project Coordinator at Agency for International Youth Cooperation, Vilnius, 16-03-2010.
669 Member of the Head Office of European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
670 Ibid; Project Manager of Public Organisation Volunteer centre, Vilnius, 16-03-2010.
671 EVS Project Coordinator at Agency for International Youth Cooperation, Vilnius, 16-03-2010.
672 Ibid.
MSs, low or even no income. Those who are not from the biggest cities such as Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda also seem to be from remote, rural areas or peripheral regions\textsuperscript{673}. Whereas difficulties arise when trying to define the group of income that typical Lithuanian cross-border volunteers belong to, trends in age, education and gender are much easier to identify.

**Motivation**

A whole range of motivating factors can be relevant in the case of a particular volunteer and every person has a different selection of motives. Research on Lithuanian EVS volunteers has identified the most common motivations of young Lithuanians for volunteering abroad\textsuperscript{674}. Taking interview findings into account as well, the motivating factors at work can be grouped into several clusters.

Motivations assigned to the first group can be called **personal reasons**: young people feel a need for change, challenges and some time to understand themselves\textsuperscript{675}. Volunteering abroad can be seen as an opportunity to escape disappointments in their personal or family life\textsuperscript{676}. The wish to decide about the future – either studies or career – and to have a gap year also prompts them to spend a longer period of time in a foreign country\textsuperscript{677}.

Secondly, volunteering is also seen as a way to **improve or gain skills and competences**. Some of them are generic such as intercultural experience, learning or improving foreign language skills, trying the limits of one’s personality. Some skills aimed for are more specific as some young people choose voluntary service as a way to practise and gain specific knowledge. In such cases, they choose their project according to their profession or field of interest, for example, social work or pedagogy\textsuperscript{678}. Some volunteers may be even determined to wait for a whole year in order to join a specific project\textsuperscript{679}. Others have a professional interest in applying the knowledge gained through formal education: for instance, a volunteer from Spain was looking for a project according to specific characteristics so that the voluntary project could be recognised as a compulsory internship abroad\textsuperscript{680}.

---


\textsuperscript{674} Kėžaitė and Špokevičiūtė, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{675} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{676} Former Manager of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, Vilnius, 29-03-2010; Italian EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 08-04-2010.

\textsuperscript{677} Interview with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, 27-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{678} Former Manager of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, Vilnius, 29-03-2010.

\textsuperscript{679} Interview with Manager of The A. Lipniūnas Cultural Center, 13-04-2010.

\textsuperscript{680} Interview with Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania, Vilnius, 19-03-2010.
Another set of motives is the wish to help others, to undertake a meaningful activity and to do something good. Young people are then motivated by the idea of volunteering in the first place and they perceive their aim as giving their time and effort to contribute to positive changes. In that case, young people choose to spend a longer time abroad because they want to feel useful and to be able to help. However, this motivation seems to be less important in EVS, at least for the outgoing Lithuanian volunteers.

On the other hand, there is also a group of volunteers that NGO representatives identify as volunteer-consumers, adventurers or travellers. Such young people just embrace the available opportunity without reflecting on whether EVS is suitable for them, what exactly they are looking for and if they really need it. They see volunteering simply as a possibility to spend some casual time abroad. They may also have already been to a foreign country through the ‘Erasmus’ programme and consider EVS as an opportunity to travel, have a good time and at the same time earn enough not to worry about making a living. Sometimes EVS may work even as an opportunity to extend their stay in a particular country. In either case, such volunteers-to-be do not look for a project or field of work but for any voluntary activities in a specific country.

Currently, interest in EVS has increased because of the economic downturn. Even though the abovementioned survey ‘Volunteering in Lithuania’ revealed that the economic crisis did not have much influence on the local volunteering pattern in 2008, a high increase in the unemployment rate was observed during the following year. In 2009, the unemployment rate in Lithuania reached 15.8% and, as Eurostat indicates, youth unemployment exceeded 30% at the end of the year. Changes in the overall unemployment and youth (under 25 years) unemployment rates are illustrated in Figure 25 below. Because of the high unemployment rate, spending one year abroad looks like a way of ‘killing time when it is difficult to get a job. Representatives from the sending and host organisations confirmed that more young people wished to take part in EVS than just a few years ago. In this case, volunteers have to be more motivated to find a volunteering project while the number of possible placements is limited.

---

681 Interview with German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 31-03-2010.
682 See Kėžaitė and Špokvičiūtė, p. 7.
683 Former Manager of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, Vilnius, 29-03-2010.
684 Ibid.
686 Officer in charge of sending EVS volunteers of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, 20-04-2010; Member of the Head Office of European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, 17-03-2010; Manager of The A. Lipniūnas Cultural Center, 13-04-2010.
The motivations of participants with fewer opportunities are different in some ways. In extreme cases, EVS is a way to run away from bad living conditions and to have a stable life for at least for a year. In addition, it may even be seen as an opportunity to start everything anew. The motivation of young people with fewer opportunities is much lower and sending and coordinating organisations play a leading role. Some organisations target people with fewer opportunities and mainly recruit volunteers from specific organisations working with the disabled.

**Benefits**

Benefits that are gained during cross-border volunteering projects can be divided into three groups according to the recipient. Below we explore the positive impact cross-border volunteering has on the volunteers, organisations and local communities.
A volunteer gains **personal and social skills**, self-confidence, patience and self-understanding. Young volunteers also improve their existing foreign language skills and/or learn a **new language**, make new **friends** and have an opportunity to **travel**. Depending on the project, they can gain specific **professional experience**. **Intercultural experience** - not only of the host country but also through socialising with volunteers from different countries - leads to an increased level of **tolerance** of other cultures and different people. It may also help to understand the wide variety of countries and their history. To give an example, a Spanish volunteer felt that volunteering in Lithuania allowed her to understand what a dictatorship was and its long-lasting influence on society.

For young people with fewer opportunities, EVS allows them to **feel like ‘a new person’** because of the opportunity to redefine oneself.

**Host organisations** agree that cross-border volunteers are valuable for their activities. Even though it is recognised that volunteers cannot and do not replace paid employees, young people organise **activities that organisations do not have the spare time to manage**. For example, foreign volunteers in the city of Panevėžys organise projects and events and spend time communicating with children. They take up those activities while employees do their usual work.

In addition, foreign volunteers are even called a **‘breath of fresh air’** because they bring a **new point of view, new experience and ideas**. Organisation staff learn new methods on how to work, plan activities and practise tackling problems and conflicts. In addition, they make new contacts with organisations in other MSs during the voluntary project. At the end of the project, foreign volunteers give recommendations for organisations and this enables them to improve their work. Cross-border volunteers bring a taste of another culture to the organisation and enable its employees to improve their **foreign language skills** as well.

Being involved in EVS also means a **financial benefit** and a source of revenue for NGOs as sending and hosting organisations get financial support for

---

690 Former Manager of Public Organisation *Actio Catholica Patria*, Vilnius, 29-03-2010; German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 31-03-2010.
691 Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania, Vilnius, 19-03-2010; Michaela Bauer, German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 09-04-2010.
692 Interview with Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 09-04-2010.
693 Project Coordinator of *Youth Exchange Agency*, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
694 Manager of *The A. Lipniunas Cultural Center*, 13-04-2010.
695 Member of the Head Office of *European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’*, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
697 Member of the Head Office of *European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’*, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
participating in EVS. Additional funding enhances the quality of the organisation’s activities.\textsuperscript{700}

As for the local community, the presence of international volunteers helps to promote volunteering. Cross-border volunteers present a different culture, different points of view and implement new ideas in local communities\textsuperscript{701}. Being from another country, they attract the attention of the local media and community to their events such as those in the libraries of Panevėžys in 2008\textsuperscript{702}. In other cases, EVS volunteers present cross-border volunteering opportunities in schools and universities\textsuperscript{703}. Consequently, local communities also benefit from exposure to other cultures, new ideas and the strengthened image of volunteering.

**Recognition of skills**

Since EVS is the most popular international volunteering programme in Lithuania, the most important measure of recognition of skills gained is the Youthpass certificate. According to one Lithuanian coordinating organisation, Youthpass is becoming popular and better known, but slowly and a lot still has to be done to give the certificate greater importance\textsuperscript{704}. Volunteers may reinforce wider Youthpass recognition as well by showing it to employers as proof of skills gained\textsuperscript{705}.

Youthpass is not widely recognised by Lithuanian employers and especially by those that do not know about cross-border volunteering. Even though personal experience, foreign language, professional and social skills are valued by employers, their perceived importance still depends highly on the particular job role. Voluntary experience is much more valued in the social or public sector while private businesses are more interested in internships\textsuperscript{706}.

**Obstacles**

Since EVS voluntary projects depend heavily on the NGOs and their capabilities, hosting, sending and coordinating activities become complicated
when organisations are not competent enough. The coordinating organisations then not only have to deal with the volunteer, but also pay a lot of attention to the host organisation in order to ensure a proper volunteering experience as host organisations do not always understand how to work with a volunteer or how to involve him/her in the organisation’s activities\textsuperscript{707}. They might not know what kind of work they should give him/her and leave the volunteer without any activities. As a result, volunteer motivation declines and he/she cannot be as helpful as he/she could be.

Furthermore, according to NA’s information, most of the EVS projects are organised in the biggest Lithuanian cities. Few NGOs actually exist in the peripheral regions in general and even less of them are EVS accredited sending organisations. That means there are fewer opportunities for young people from the rural areas to participate in cross-border volunteering. Lithuanian coordinating organisations ‘Actio Catholica Patria’ and the ‘Youth Exchange Agency’ have organised training with the aim of strengthening NGOs in rural areas, but it appeared to be complicated because of the lack of organisations in the first place. Therefore, new coordinating organisations in the regions cannot be easily established\textsuperscript{708}.

Despite the effort to make cross-border volunteering as accessible as possible, lack of information is still an obstacle for cross-border volunteering in Lithuania. There is no coherent scheme for the promotion of volunteering, including cross-border volunteering\textsuperscript{709}. Poor awareness of volunteering possibilities is an obstacle for people with fewer opportunities because they do not always have access to the Internet. Alternatively, as the representative of the EVS association ‘Saltes’ stated, if they had the opportunity to become involved in local volunteering they would sooner or later find out about cross-border opportunities as well. However, there is a small number of NGOs in rural areas and even if there were an intense cross-border volunteering promotion campaign, it would not be possible to send all would-be volunteers because of the limited programme budget\textsuperscript{710}. And as of yet, no significant alternatives exist.

As far as EVS within the EU is concerned, it does not seem to face or cause many problems. Administrative issues can happen to volunteers. Most importantly, the recent political debate surrounding the Law on Health Insurance led to confusion about whether outgoing Lithuanian volunteers were obliged to

\textsuperscript{707} Former Manager of Public Organisation \textit{Actio Catholica Patria}, Vilnius, 29-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{708} Project Coordinator of \textit{Youth Exchange Agency}, Vilnius, 17-03-2010; Former Manager of Public Organisation \textit{Actio Catholica Patria}, Vilnius, 29-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{709} Former Manager of Public Organisation \textit{Actio Catholica Patria}, Vilnius, 29-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{710} Member of the Head Office of \textit{European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’}, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.
pay the insurance premiums themselves, despite already having a different type of health insurance valid in their host country. In fact, they do not need any additional insurance but in order to avoid fines they have to inform the state authorities about their insurance status while volunteering abroad. This can be done by submitting the income tax declaration for the previous year.\footnote{Valstybinė mokesčių inspekcija, „PSD įmokos iš Lietuvos išvykusiems gyventojams“. Vilnius, 26-04-2010. <http://www.vmi.lt/lt/index.aspx?itemId=10816515> [Accessed 04-06-2010].}

In addition to possible legal hurdles, language appears to be quite an important issue in cross-border volunteering. English language knowledge is not required to participate in EVS but almost always necessary for successful volunteering. To begin with, Lithuanian language courses are organised through English for incoming volunteers and those who do not understand English can hardly learn Lithuanian. Secondly, language courses are not always of the best quality and volunteers claim they are too short.\footnote{Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania, Vilnius, 19-03-2010.} When volunteers spend most of their free time together, they do not have a strong incentive to practise Lithuanian.\footnote{Ibid.; interview with Hungarian EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 25-03-2010.} Furthermore, older people in Lithuania rarely speak English and it makes communication even more complicated. Employees of organisations also have many worries and lack self-confidence because of their poor knowledge of English.\footnote{Project Coordinator of Youth Exchange Agency, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.} Outside the host organisation, some services might not be entirely accessible to non-Lithuanian speakers. As one volunteer has said, she had difficulties with healthcare - not because of insurance or other administrative issues, but because doctors were not able to express themselves in English.\footnote{Michaela Bauer, 09-04-2010.}

In addition to the obstacles already mentioned, successful integration of a volunteer may have even more influence on the implementation of the whole project. When young volunteers come for long-term voluntary service in another MS, they experience a sudden cultural, social, and even a climatic change and obviously need time to adapt.\footnote{Interview with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany, 12-02-2010. They may feel afraid, lonely or unhappy with the living conditions and not motivated to take up voluntary activities.\footnote{Interview with Project Coordinator of Youth Exchange Agency, Vilnius, 17-03-2010; German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 29-01-2010.} Integration is easier with people of similar experience and other cross-border volunteers in particular. As many EVS projects are organised in the biggest cities, small volunteer communities cluster there and spend their free time together.\footnote{Project Coordinator of Youth Exchange Agency, Vilnius, 17-03-2010.} However, cross-border volunteers do not then integrate into the local community, barely learn Lithuanian and do not get to know the local culture that
much\textsuperscript{719}. A volunteer from France identified lack of contacts with Lithuanians of the same age as an upsetting aspect of her volunteering project\textsuperscript{720}. Host organisations may then have to play a more proactive role to facilitate the integration of the volunteer.

**Conclusions**

Volunteering is not defined in Lithuania in any documents and various interpretations co-exist in society, although those dealing with voluntary activities in practice agree that it means working for the benefit of society of one’s own free will without compulsion and without monetary reward. Volunteering in Lithuania is not defined by any legal or political document and is regulated only by the Civil Code but voluntary activities are more evident in the context of NGO development or youth policy.

EVS volunteer legal status is clearer in comparison with local volunteering. In fact, few cross-border activities exist beyond its reach. As it is the most popular and accessible cross-border volunteering programme in Lithuania, its developments more or less describe the cross-border volunteering pattern of Lithuania. Most Lithuanians volunteer in France, Germany and Italy. Volunteering abroad is usually pursued after graduation from university as a way to decide what to do in the future or simply take a break. Lithuanian EVS participants are motivated by personal reasons as well as by a wish to improve or gain skills and to help others. However, volunteering can also be seen as a way of spending time when it is difficult to get a job or just to travel around.

Regarding the benefits of cross-border volunteering, young volunteers gain personal and social skills, and professional experience. Due to their intercultural experience, they become more tolerant. To others, cross-border volunteers bring new ideas, new experience and hosting them is also financially beneficial for host organisations. EVS participants promote volunteering and present different cultures to local communities. However, despite competences gained, Youthpass is not yet accepted by employers in Lithuania as sufficient proof of experience.

As for obstacles, incoming volunteers may confront legal and administrative (if they are from outside the EU), linguistic or integration problems even while staying in the biggest Lithuanian cities. Given the recent changes in health insurance legislation, it is important that sending organisations inform volunteers about their legal obligation to notify the state authorities about their

\textsuperscript{719} Ibid.; Former Manager of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, Vilnius, 29-03-2010; German EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 31-03-2010.

\textsuperscript{720} Interview with French EVS volunteer in Lithuania, 31-03-2010.
insurance status while volunteering abroad. On the other hand, voluntary projects are not always successful for different reasons such as the NGOs’ lack of competence in taking care of volunteers. In addition, the loose network of organisations in rural areas restricts the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in cross-border opportunities.

List of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bauer</td>
<td>Michaela</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>09-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bömer</td>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Budreckytė</td>
<td>Akvilė</td>
<td>Member of the head office</td>
<td>European Voluntary Service Association ‘Saltes’, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>17-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Bustos</td>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>09-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Csikós</td>
<td>Gábor</td>
<td>Hungarian EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>25-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Dal Lago</td>
<td>Francesco</td>
<td>Italian EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>08-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Daubaraitė</td>
<td>Roberta</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>The A. Lipniūnas Cultural Center, Panevėžys, Lithuania</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>13-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Frolenko</td>
<td>Šarūnas</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Lithuanian Youth Council, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>18-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Gurskytė</td>
<td>Radvilė</td>
<td>Officer in charge of sending EVS volunteers</td>
<td>Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria, Kaunas,</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>20-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Communication Method</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Janin Sophie</td>
<td>French EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>31-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Kadziauskas Giedrius</td>
<td>Vice President, author of a study on legal environment for volunteering</td>
<td>Lithuania Free Market Institute, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>21-04-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Kalytytė Milda</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>12-02-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Kučikas Arūnas</td>
<td>Head Officer</td>
<td>Community Affairs Division, Republic of Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>25-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Lažauninkaitė Bernadeta</td>
<td>Former Manager of Public Organisation Actio Catholica Patria</td>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>29-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Macevičiūtė Laima</td>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
<td>Youth Exchange Agency, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>17-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Marcinkus Arnas</td>
<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>Lithuanian Youth Council, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>18-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Margau Jurgita</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Public Organisation Volunteer centre, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>16-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Organization/Contact Details</td>
<td>Role Type</td>
<td>Date of Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Mincienė</td>
<td>Laima</td>
<td>Head Officer</td>
<td>Registration and Information department of Kaunas Labour Exchange, Kaunas, Lithuania</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>25-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Müller</td>
<td>Frederike</td>
<td>German EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>31-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Pikiotienė</td>
<td>Zenaida</td>
<td>Youth Affairs Coordinator</td>
<td>Telšiai District Municipality, Telšiai, Lithuania</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>13-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Ribokas</td>
<td>Stepas</td>
<td>Student group in Vilnius coordinator</td>
<td>Lithuanian community of Christian students, Lithuania</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>15-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Ruškytė</td>
<td>Simona</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Germany</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>27-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Uceda</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Spanish EVS volunteer in Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Valentinavičius</td>
<td>Saulius</td>
<td>EVS Project Coordinator</td>
<td>Agency for International Youth Cooperation - Lithuanian National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>16-03-2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of publications**


244


List of legal documents
5. Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės nutarimas „Dėl savanoriškų darbų atliekančių asmenų išlaidų kompensavimo tvarkos patvirtinimo“. Valstybės žinios, 2002, Nr. 53-2077 [revoked]. [Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania “Regarding approval of the procedure for reimbursement of expenses for individuals performing voluntary work”]

List of websites


Case study: Hungary

The concept of cross-border volunteering in Hungary is not yet well-established in civil society and it is often considered synonymous with the European Voluntary Service (EVS). There are no other well-known opportunities for cross-border volunteering and it seems that both the public authorities and civil organisations are satisfied with this programme to the extent that they feel no need to develop other types of cross-border volunteer exchanges. There have been a few organisations that aimed to promote international volunteering, but they have now ceased to operate.

Cross-border volunteering is not well-established in Hungary perhaps due to the fact that volunteering itself is not yet well-developed here. In fact, the perception of volunteering has not yet been freed from the stereotypes and negative connotations inherited from the Communist era and trust in civil society organisations is still rather low. From the strategic point of view, volunteering is not considered important and political initiatives on volunteering are lacking. No long-term strategy or action plan on volunteering exists. In particular, nothing has yet been done to promote or facilitate volunteering in education institutions such as schools. Interestingly though, support for both international and in-country volunteering specifically for young people is included in the National Youth Strategy as a means for ‘encouraging intercultural experience’ and social integration and community-building respectively.

However, there have been attempts to improve the present situation. Following the International Year of Volunteering in 2001, five civil organisations set up the Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány) in Budapest. The Foundation’s goal is to support voluntary activities in Hungary and

---

721 Interview with Executive Director of Volunteer Centre Foundation, Budapest, 26-03-2010.
organisations relying on volunteers. It is very active in advancing volunteering on the political agenda. For instance, the Foundation has established that structural funds should be used to support the establishment of regional volunteer centres. It is thus being suggested that once the Foundation has managed to outsource volunteer promotion to the regional centres it could also champion international volunteering in Hungary.

Perception of volunteering

The promulgation of the Law on Association in 1989 gave major impetus to the establishment and development of civil society. Voluntary organisations became an important factor in the process of regime change in Hungary. Nevertheless, the legacy of mistrust towards civil society organisations (that used to be subject to Communist party control in the previous system) and negative connotations of volunteering can still be felt today.

As in many other neighbouring countries, the UN International Year of Volunteering 2001 was a catalyst for the development of Hungarian volunteerism. This event helped to unite stakeholders and eventually led to the establishment of the Volunteer Centre Foundation, the leading organisation in the development of volunteering, and the adoption of the Act LXXXVIII of 2005 on Voluntary Activities in the Public Interest.

The existence of this law also directs general public opinion on the issue. The law defines what can be considered a voluntary activity for the public benefit and makes it possible to reimburse those who undertake it. The definition of volunteering has four elements: it is an activity performed of one’s own free will, without remuneration (although reimbursement is allowed), outside the family or close friends and it serves the public good.

Cross-border volunteering opportunities for youth

Volunteering in Hungary is more established at the national level. EVS is the most popular cross-border volunteering programme, the name of which is Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány, 'Küldetésünk'. Budapest, 2006. <http://www.oka.hu/alap.php?inc=dsp&menu_id=4&almenu_id=1> [Accessed 02-04-2010]. Note: please see the English translations of the titles of Hungarian sources in the bibliography at the end of the case study report.


Interview with Researcher at Kai Consulting, Budapest, 06-04-2010.


practically used as a synonym for cross-border volunteering. The numbers of EVS participants have been growing for the last three years (see ‘Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers’). The EVS volunteers themselves seem to be content with the programme: in a survey of Hungary’s incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers commissioned by the Hungarian National Agency (NA) – ‘Neso-Mobilitás’ – in 2006, 64.3% of respondents thought that volunteer activity had grown more attractive. The impression is that EVS is seen as so satisfactory that it might hinder the development of other cross-border volunteering opportunities.

A Hungarian programme that can be used for the same purpose – youth volunteering in other European countries – is the Voluntary Diaconal Year (Önkéntes Diakóniai Év), a voluntary service of the Hungarian Reformist Church. The programme is open to religious young people aged 18-30. It is said to accept about 90 volunteers each year who complete voluntary service of 10 to 12 months in religious organisations; through the Ecumenical Diaconal Year Network, placements can be arranged not only within Hungary, but also in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Ukraine and the United States. The programme enables young people to acquire useful experience and to learn about the challenges of modern societies as well as showing solidarity with other nations. The scheme functions in a very similar manner to the EVS – accommodation, meals and pocket money are covered during the period of volunteering and training is provided to volunteers. In fact, it can be arranged as an EVS placement as well.

The Voluntary Diaconal Year also coordinates the Roma-Gadje-Dialogue through service Initiative (Roma-Gádzsó Párbeszéd az Önkéntes Szolgálat Által) co-financed by the EU. The initiative aims to bring Roma and non-Roma young people together through voluntary service that would improve the situation of the Roma minority in Hungary as well as in the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. Its target group is young people aged 18-30,

---

730 Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium, Magyarország nemzeti beszámolója a fiatalok önkéntes tevékenységéhez kapcsolódó közösségi célkitűzések megvalósításáról. Budapest, 2007, p. 17. (obtained from Executive Director of Volunteer Centre Foundation)
both of Roma and non-Roma (Gadje) origin. Projects take place in local Roma communities for one or two years.\textsuperscript{735}

Finally, Hungary has a branch of \textbf{Service Civil International}, the biggest international network organising international work camps. In addition to work camps (2-3 weeks) in Hungary and abroad, the Hungarian member of the network – \textit{Útilapu Hálózat} (‘Plantain network’) - offers long-term cross-border volunteering opportunities either through the EVS or through its ‘Long-term Volunteer’ (LTV) programme. LTV is similar to EVS as it also provides volunteering opportunities for a period of 3-12 months which young people can spend working either for another SCI office or for a partner organisation. Project themes vary from education and conflict management to environmental issues. These projects are financed either by the SCI office, the partner organisation or the volunteer. There is no upper age limit to participate in the programme – it only sets the minimum age which is either 18 or 21 depending on the country. Funding for European projects usually covers accommodation, meals, accident insurance and pocket money on some occasions, but does not include travel costs. Volunteers going to developing countries are required to contribute to accommodation and meals.\textsuperscript{736}

Otherwise, there is hardly anything else to choose from. There used to be several organisations (Planet Foundation, ‘Via Pacis’, ‘United Ways’) that were engaged in organising other volunteering placements abroad, but they do not function anymore. It is now difficult to find any alternative cross-border volunteering programme sending to other MSs because organisations active in this field usually are either EVS coordinating organisations or manage paid volunteering programmes sending Hungarians to developing countries.

\textbf{Legal status and guarantees for volunteers}

Volunteers can be legally recognised through the Act LXXXVIII on Voluntary Activities in the Public Interest (2005).\textsuperscript{737} The law equally applies to citizens of the European Economic Area\textsuperscript{738}, therefore, cross-border volunteers can be legally recognised. However, not all volunteers fall within the scope of this law – only persons volunteering for organisations registered as public benefit organisations.

The law recognises “volunteer activities based on solidarity among members of


\textsuperscript{737} 2005. évi LXXXVIII. Törvény a közérdekű önkéntes tevékenységről.

\textsuperscript{738} Ibid., Art. 4.
society”. It aims at legalising activities that are undertaken outside any legal framework and thus encourage volunteering. It does so by creating the opportunity to cover volunteer out-of-pocket expenses and making these payments tax-free.

According to the law, if the voluntary activities (of volunteers of public benefit organisations) are conducted abroad, volunteers can get an allowance to cover the costs incurred, but their monthly income (paid as per diem) in cash cannot exceed 20% of the monthly minimum wage in Hungary. If they do receive more money, the surplus is taxed. Those who volunteer with an organisation in Hungary can get their meals, related travel and other expenses covered. Again, an upper limit is set for volunteers’ ‘bonuses’ or income in cash (but not in kind) – over the course of one year, they are allowed to receive up to 20% of the monthly minimum wage in Hungary. The amount changes, but it is currently around EUR 50 a month.

On the other hand, the EVS pocket money allowance for Hungary is now set at EUR 95 a month. There is no official regulation yet that would create a legal exception for the EVS volunteers and this may be the reason why Hungary is known to the European Commission as a country taxing EVS volunteers’ pocket money. However, there is an (unofficial) opinion from the Tax Authority that accepts the practice of giving pocket money to EVS volunteers. Incoming and outgoing Hungary EVS volunteers who were interviewed did not report having been taxed either.

For fear of abuse, there are also certain checks in place to prevent tax exemptions being claimed for activities not related to volunteering and the public good. Namely, only public benefit organisations fall under the scope of this law. They are defined in the Act CLVI of 1997 on Public Benefit Organisations. In order to gain the status of a public benefit organisation, organisations have to fulfil many requirements that should make them transparent and reliable. Those organisations that have already achieved public benefit status and registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

---

739 Ibid., see preamble.
740 Ibid., Art. 2.
742 Interview with Head of Unit ‘Youth in Action’, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission, Brussels, 19-01-2010.
743 Interview with EVS Programme Coordinator at Neso-Mobilitás – ‘Youth in Action’ National Agency, Budapest, 17-03-2010.
744 Interview with former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Belgium, Budapest, 01-04-2010; Slovenian EVS Volunteer in Hungary, Budapest, 06-04-2010; former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal, Budapest, 07-04-2010.
745 1997. évi CLVI. Törvény a közhhasznú szervezetekről.
undergo rigorous financial monitoring\textsuperscript{746}.

Therefore, although a legal framework for voluntary activities exists, the regulation applies only to certain types of organisations involving volunteers. Non-governmental bodies and other institutions such as municipalities or museums seeking the status of a public benefit organisation have to be ready for extra form-filing and financial controls. Moreover, the collision of the Volunteer Act and the EVS regulations remains officially unsolved so far.

In terms of immigration, EU citizens staying in Hungary for up to three months do not have to fulfil any legal requirements. If they wish to stay for longer than 3 months, they need to refer to the Migration Office and register. They are asked to indicate on the registration form the purpose of their stay by choosing one of four different options: gainful activity, studies, family reunification or other. Voluntary activities fall within the last category\textsuperscript{747}.

Meanwhile, volunteers arriving from a non-EU country need to apply for a D-type visa. When applying, they also need to give the purpose of their entry to the country. It is worth mentioning that the respective list for visitors from outside the EU already includes the category ‘voluntary activities’. Volunteers only need to give the name of their hosting organisation in Hungary\textsuperscript{748}. However, after their arrival in Hungary, non-EU volunteers have to apply for a residence permit at the Migration Office.

**Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers**

Hungary’s cross-border volunteers are usually participants of EVS as there are no other comparable opportunities. The few data available also counts only EVS volunteers. In Table 10 below, we present the statistics of Hungary’s incoming and outgoing volunteers from 2007 to 2009.

**Table 10. Number of EVS volunteers in Hungary 2007-2009 (sent to and hosted from EU countries only)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>EVS volunteers sent</th>
<th>EVS volunteers hosted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: European Commission.*

\textsuperscript{746} Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány, Útmutató az önkéntes törvényhez, p. 8.


When it comes to volunteer exchange within the EU, it is obvious that Hungary is more active in sending volunteers abroad than in receiving foreigners as the number of outgoing EVS volunteers was more than double that of the incoming ones for the past three years.

**Figure 26. Number of outgoing Hungarian EVS volunteers by country of destination in 2009 (EU only)**

![Bar chart showing number of outgoing Hungarian EVS volunteers by country of destination in 2009 (EU only).](chart-image)

*Source: European Commission.*

Figure 26 presents a breakdown of the EU-bound outgoing Hungarian EVS participants by their country of destination. Hungarians seem to favour big European countries whose national languages are popular foreign languages: **Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, France** and **Italy**. Given the fact that Hungary does not have access to the sea, it may not be surprising that about one third of Hungarian volunteers going to other MSs seem to choose Mediterranean countries. This suggests that it is not always the volunteering experience that is the driving force.

**Figure 27. Number of incoming EVS volunteers to Hungary by country of origin in 2009 (EU only)**

![Bar chart showing number of incoming EVS volunteers to Hungary by country of origin in 2009 (EU only).](chart-image)

*Source: European Commission.*

749 Executive Director of **Volunteer Centre Foundation**, Budapest, 26-03-2010.
As for countries of origin of the incoming EVS volunteers, **Germany** is again the biggest partner (see Figure 27). As it is the most active volunteer-sending country in the whole of the EU, this is to be expected, also given Germany’s historic and cultural ties to Hungary. The Spanish, French and Italians or Austrians come in smaller numbers. However, one interviewee suggested that volunteers arriving in Hungary from Western Europe are indifferent regarding the host country as long as it is in Eastern Europe\(^{750}\). Hungary also receives some volunteers from third countries: in 2008, 7 EVS participants came from Turkey, 5 from Armenia and 4 from Ukraine\(^{751}\).

As can be seen in the second diagram, a relatively high number of EVS volunteers is supplied by **Romania**. This can be explained by historical reasons that left big Hungarian minorities living outside the present-day Hungarian state borders, in the neighbouring countries of Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. Young Hungarians may now use the EVS programme as an opportunity to come to their historic motherland\(^{752}\). However, this explanation does not apply to the young **Greeks** who seem to have discovered Hungary lately: whereas only 5 volunteers were hosted in 2007, there were already 19 of them in 2008 and 15 in 2009\(^{753}\).

**Socio-economic profile of the cross-border volunteers**

Little data is available on cross-border volunteer socio-economic characteristics as it is not collected systematically. However, it is possible to state that a **typical Hungarian cross-border volunteer is from the capital Budapest**\(^{754}\). He/she also **speaks a foreign language** and is not afraid of exploring the world outside their own country. Typically, an outgoing volunteer **holds a university degree**. The reason for this is that it is usually educated young people who know foreign languages and thus dare to spend a longer time abroad\(^{755}\).

In a 2006 survey commissioned by the Hungarian NA, 70.9% of the EVS project managers thought that the social background of volunteers had changed\(^{756}\). However, the inclusion of **people with fewer opportunities** in the EVS has been only partly successful. Although the same survey revealed an absolute majority of the respondents agreed that less well-off people could also afford to participate in the programme (54.2%), only 16.7% thought that an

---

\(^{750}\) Interview with Vice-president and EVS Accreditator at the National Civil Fund, Budapest, 18-03-2010.

\(^{751}\) Information provided by EVS Programme Coordinator at Neso-Mobilitás, Budapest, 17-03-2010.

\(^{752}\) Interview with EVS Training and Accreditation Officer at Neso-Mobilitás, 17-03-2010.

\(^{753}\) Data provided by the European Commission.

\(^{754}\) Interview with EVS Coordinator at Cseresznye Youth Office, Budapest, 22-03-2010.

\(^{755}\) Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium, Magyarország nemzeti beszámolója a fiatalok önkéntes tevékenységéhez kapcsolódó közösségi célkitűzések megvalósításáról, p. 16.

\(^{756}\) Ibid., p. 18.
increasing number of young people with fewer opportunities could afford to go abroad as well\textsuperscript{757}. The experience of the NA shows that information about cross-border volunteering programmes does not reach people with fewer opportunities\textsuperscript{758}.

**Motivation**

Since the upper EVS age limit was increased to 30 years in 2007, more volunteers are competent and have clearer ideas and expectations\textsuperscript{759}. On the other hand, this also usually means they are less flexible and adaptable and more demanding. Previously, the focus was more on the organisation and now it has shifted towards the individual development of the volunteer\textsuperscript{760}. The more popular the EVS is, the more young people know about it and the higher expectations they have\textsuperscript{761}

Likewise, a trend can be observed that more and more people engaged in cross-border volunteering are aware of and interested in the non-formal education part of their service. This means cross-border volunteering is not just an altruistic activity, but it is consciously used for individual growth. Yet this development comes in parallel with a more widespread egocentric approach to cross-border volunteering programmes when volunteers demand more but are willing to give less\textsuperscript{762}.

However, the only existing source of statistical data on Hungary’s cross-border volunteers’ motivations is the abovementioned 2006 survey by the NA of both incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers. The summary of its results regarding their motivations for participating in EVS is given in the diagram below (Figure 28). It can be seen that the wish to help others by volunteering one’s time came fourth and it was not much more popular than the aim to learn more about oneself and undergo a ‘pre-trial’ of employment. Meanwhile, the three motivations cited most frequently were all related to personal development: improvement of foreign language skills, exploring new countries and testing one’s character, capabilities and limits in an unknown environment.

In fact, travelling or being specifically interested in a particular country is sometimes mentioned as the driving motivation\textsuperscript{763}. The cross-border

\textsuperscript{757} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{758} EVS Programme Coordinator at Neso-Mobilitás, Budapest, 17-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{759} EVS Coordinator at Cseresznye Youth Office, Budapest, 22-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{760} Interview with Officer for Youth Programmes and Youth Training at Artemisszió Foundation, Budapest, 09-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{761} EVS Training and Accreditation Officer at Neso-Mobilitás, Budapest, 17-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{762} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{763} Interview with Programme Coordinator at Volunteer Centre Foundation, Budapest, 11-03-2010; former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal, Budapest, 02-04-2010.
volunteering programmes (EVS in this case) are attractive to young people seeking opportunities to go abroad\textsuperscript{764}. Some people use the volunteering experience to explore the country of their choice and find some employment during their volunteering\textsuperscript{765}.

**Figure 28. Motivation of incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers for Hungary in 2006 (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To learn languages</td>
<td>88.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To know new countries</td>
<td>86.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To test oneself in a new environment</td>
<td>77.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help others</td>
<td>40.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn more about themselves &amp; work before employment</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To go abroad because of lack of employment at home</td>
<td>11.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Nevertheless, every volunteering project is unique and there can be various motivations for participating. Some others include the wish to undertake voluntary service abroad for the sake of adventure or because of exhaustion at the age of 26 after working for years for a multinational company\textsuperscript{766}. On a few occasions the driving force was to escape family reality as in the case of a girl whose mother had died\textsuperscript{767}.

**Benefits gained by the volunteers**

One of the most tangible benefits for a cross-border volunteer is the acquisition of a foreign language. It is one of the aspects of personal development and growth. Volunteers who adapt to a new environment become more independent, flexible and tolerant. Former volunteers were also happy to see how autonomous they became. Volunteering in a particular field can also help a young person to identify his/ her strengths and weaknesses or find his/ her field of interest\textsuperscript{768}.

Another commonly agreed benefit is the intercultural experience that includes adaptation to a different culture. Former volunteers have a much richer personal network on the international level and this can be useful later. In the course of volunteering abroad, volunteers can develop their own international personal

---

\textsuperscript{764} Former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Belgium, Budapest, 01-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{765} EVS Training and Accreditation Officer at Neso-Mobilitás, Budapest, 17-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{766} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{767} EVS Coordinator at Cseresznye Youth Office, Budapest, 22-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{768} Former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal, Budapest, Budapest, 07-04-2010.
network and by keeping in touch with these people (and visiting them) become more conscious of their European identity as well as opening up new horizons for themselves.\(^{769}\)

**Social and civic competences** are enhanced and strengthened as well. Learning about conflict management through practical experience is very useful. Volunteering abroad is a life-changing experience that usually increases participants’ engagement in the civil sphere and helps to deepen their sense of social responsibility.\(^{770}\)

**Impact on society**

Accepting foreign volunteers can help the host organisations to become more professional as the process of managing cross-border volunteers requires certain capabilities in terms of preparation for the placement and mentoring. It makes the civil organisations more organised.\(^{771}\) Having a foreign volunteer might make the organisation more attractive and thus result in increased volunteer recruitment. So involvement of foreign volunteers may also help to create new opportunities for volunteering.\(^{772}\)

It is not just the volunteers but also their host organisations which benefit from intercultural learning. Hosting volunteers from other countries enables the staff of organisations to learn more about those countries and how things are done there.\(^{773}\) Consequently, staff attitudes can change. Being a third party, volunteers can give valuable feedback and if the organisation is willing to learn, this feedback could help it to improve its work methods. Through their volunteers, organisations can develop international networks and build Europe-wide partnerships.

By managing volunteer exchanges, sending organisations can widen their spectrum of activities. Sending a cross-border volunteer does not require as much investment as hosting does. Yet offering cross-border exchange makes the organisation more attractive and helps recruit more volunteers, members (in the case of associations) or even motivate them to participate in cross-border volunteering.\(^{774}\)

Cross-border volunteering is beneficial for society at large as the presence of foreign volunteers can help to break down prejudices and stereotypes that

---

\(^{769}\) Vice-president and EVS Accreditator at the National Civil Fund, 18-03-2010.

\(^{770}\) EVS Training and Accreditation Officer at Neso-Mobilitás, Budapest, 17-03-2010.

\(^{771}\) Programme Coordinator at Volunteer Centre Foundation, Budapest, 11-03-2010.

\(^{772}\) Vice-president and EVS Accreditator at the National Civil Fund, Budapest, 18-03-2010.

\(^{773}\) Ibid.

\(^{774}\) EVS Coordinator at Cseresznye Youth Office, Budapest, 22-03-2010.
exist in the host community, especially in smaller towns. Most probably this effect is less obvious in the capital\textsuperscript{775}. At EU level, it helps to increase the level of tolerance and respect for EU institutions as well as faith in European integration.

**Recognition of skills**

The situation regarding informal recognition of volunteering and volunteer skills seems to be improving slowly. In a study conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, 94 out of 99 interviewees said that *civic organisations are increasingly recognising the work of volunteers*\textsuperscript{776}. Moreover, since 2005, Volunteer Centre Foundation has been implementing the ‘ÖZLET’ programme that enables jobseekers aged from 18 to 26 years or over 45 years of age to volunteer for 10 months in order to sustain their motivation and to help them gain work experience and remain competent for the labour market\textsuperscript{777}. The existence of such a programme suggests that the perception that volunteering can equip one with certain skills is gaining ground.

However, no common standards yet exist for the recognition of volunteer skills as Hungary is still in the early stage of the development of volunteering, especially when it comes to employers or education institutions. The idea of **accreditation of volunteering experience** is emerging\textsuperscript{778}, but it is still invisible at the policy level. Employers do not yet see the added value of cross-border volunteering experience, but they find it interesting and usually want to find out more about it. This gives the volunteers the chance to explain the skills gained through it\textsuperscript{779}.

Opinions differ regarding recognition tools such as **Youthpass**. Volunteer certificates could satisfy the requirements of the employers, but the certificates are not yet established and well-known\textsuperscript{780}. Furthermore, not everybody agrees that certification of the acquired skills should be pursued in the first place: the more paperwork non-formal education requires, the closer it comes to formal education\textsuperscript{781}.

\textsuperscript{775} Programme Coordinator at Volunteer Centre Foundation, Budapest, 11-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{776} Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium, Magyarország nemzeti beszámolója a fiatalok önkéntes tevékenységéhez kapcsolódó közösségi célkitűzések megvalósításáról, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{778} Interview with Adviser responsible for International Affairs at Department for Children and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Budapest, 25-03-2010.
\textsuperscript{779} Former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Belgium, Budapest, 01-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{780} Researcher at Kai Consulting, Budapest, 06-04-2010.
\textsuperscript{781} Officer for Youth Programmes and Youth Training at Artemisszió Foundation, Budapest, 09-04-2010.
Obstacles
Some volunteers might find the situation concerning the formal recognition of skills discouraging. A greater challenge though is the social recognition of cross-border volunteering and dissemination of information about volunteer exchanges.

Unlike internships, volunteering is not yet seriously promoted in Hungary and many institutions are still unaware of its benefits. More importantly, young people themselves do not always know about the opportunities to volunteer abroad. In particular, this concerns young people with fewer opportunities such as the ethnic Roma minority. In fact, a long-term volunteering programme targeting Roma has recently been introduced but it is too early yet to judge its success.

The legal situation of foreign volunteers staying in Hungary and receiving allowances is ambiguous as they may not satisfy the restrictions on their financial income. Although there are intentions to create a legal exception for EVS volunteers, this collision does not seem to create problems at the practical level.

Foreign volunteers may find integration into Hungarian society difficult. The capital city Budapest is diverse and cosmopolitan, but getting by in English, German or French can be tough outside it. Hungary is among the MSs with the largest share of citizens not able to speak any other language apart from their mother tongue782, whereas Hungarian can prove a very complex language to learn for most Europeans.

Conclusions
Hungarian volunteers and organisations involving volunteers still have to overcome some prejudices against unremunerated services. Nevertheless, major improvements have been achieved in the past decade, triggered by the UN International Year of Volunteers. Developments in this field included the establishment of a strong volunteering lobby organisation (Volunteer Centre Foundation) and the promulgation of the law regulating voluntary activities.

Although the Hungarian Act LXXXVIII on Voluntary Activities in the Public Interest does provide a legal framework for volunteering, contributing to the social recognition of voluntary work and allowing reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses and/ or volunteer allowances, some issues remain. Firstly, regulation only applies to voluntary activities carried out at organisations

---

registered as public benefit organisations, ruling out other types of voluntary work, and subjects these organisations to strict controls.

Secondly, the limits imposed on volunteer allowances in cash formally turn EVS volunteers and host organisations into lawbreakers, even though EVS is the main cross-border volunteering scheme operating in the country. Other opportunities include Voluntary Diaconal Year established by the Hungarian Reformist Church and the Roma-Gadje-Dialogue through service Initiative targeting disadvantaged young Roma people.

Cross-border as well as in-country volunteering opportunities need to be promoted more comprehensively by Hungarian stakeholders. As the National Youth Strategy shows, both types of volunteering are understood as instruments of youth policy. Otherwise, political initiatives on volunteering are lacking and there are no strategies on how to develop it.

**List of interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date of the interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Czike</td>
<td>Klára</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Kai Consulting, Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>06-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Granyák</td>
<td>Gergely</td>
<td>Adviser responsible for International Affairs</td>
<td>Department for Children and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>25-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Hont</td>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Former Hungarian EVS Volunteer in Belgium</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>01-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kovács</td>
<td>Vanda</td>
<td>EVS Coordinator</td>
<td>Cseresznye Youth Office, Budapest</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>22-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lejeune</td>
<td>Pascal</td>
<td>Head of Unit ‘Youth in Action’</td>
<td>Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>19-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Organisation/Details</td>
<td>Contact Method</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Virág</td>
<td>Former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>07-04-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mátyási Mónika</td>
<td>Vice-president, EVS Accradiator</td>
<td>National Civil Fund (Nemzeti Civil Alapprogram), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>18-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nagy Gabriella</td>
<td>Officer for Youth Programmes and Youth Training</td>
<td>Artemisszió Foundation (Artemisszió Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>09-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Salamon</td>
<td>Judit</td>
<td>Officer for EVS training, accreditation</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>17-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Šijanec Mateja</td>
<td>Slovenian EVS Volunteer in Hungary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>06-04-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tornóczy Zsófia</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>11-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tóth András F.</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány), Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>26-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Udvarhelyi Tessza</td>
<td>Former Hungarian EVS volunteer in Portugal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>02-03-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of publications**

   <http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action->


List of legal documents

1. 2005. évi LXXXVIII. Törvény a közérdekű önkéntes tevékenységről [Act LXXXVIII of 2005 on Voluntary Activities in the Public Interest]

List of websites

Case study: Sweden

Sweden is the country with the highest in-country volunteering rates in the EU and a culture which values and promotes volunteering. It is active as a volunteer-sending country, and its population supports the involvement of young people in both domestic and cross-border volunteering. However, there are still significant differences between in-country volunteering (called ideellt arbete, i.e. ‘idealistic work’ in Swedish) and cross-border volunteering (volontärarbete) in terms of activities, participation and public attitudes. In-country volunteering is often focused on local community needs and events, while cross-border volunteering is expected to have a broader humanitarian or environmental mission. People of all age groups participate in voluntary work within local organisations, but cross-border volunteering, as a rule, involves young people of pre-employment age.

Volunteering within the Swedish welfare model has been built on a solid foundation of associational life and traditions of active citizenship on the one hand, and a strong state on the other. Voluntary organisations with a social emphasis have existed in Sweden for the whole of the 1900s and have gained more and more responsibilities since 1990. The voluntary sector in Sweden has evolved into an independent force of its own, however (or precisely because of this), there is no legal framework or specific governmental policy for volunteering, and volunteers have a rather unclear status in Sweden.  

This case study is based on the analysis of academic literature, national legislation, reports and surveys. Interviews with representatives of municipalities, sending organisations, EVS National Agency and former incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers were carried out. Personal blogs of the volunteers, as well as other relevant Internet sources, were also taken into account.

Perception of volunteering

Although there is no official definition of volunteering in Sweden, it is generally perceived as “[t]he time and effort that is freely given; unforced

---

and unremunerated, by individuals to non-governmental and public organisations.” Voluntary work in Sweden within the not-for-profit sector refers in general to social service delivery. Volunteering in Sweden is understood as taking place within a formal setting, usually a single-issue organisation, and thus is fundamentally different from informal unorganised work. In terms of policymaking, volunteering is seen as part of general national and municipal policies in the areas of well-being and civic participation, especially that of young people.

In Sweden, the concept of full-time cross-border volunteering, as defined in this study, has existed for no more than 15 years and was pioneered by the Red Cross. It usually means going outside Europe, most frequently to Africa or South America. Cross-border volunteering in Sweden is perceived as being:
- separate from the more informal domestic volunteering,
- an integral part of youth policies, with more focus on outgoing Swedish volunteers,
- related to the ‘classical’ or ‘missionary’ sense of volunteering: going to distant countries for humanitarian development aid work.

In recent years, the Swedish perception of cross-border volunteering has gained new dimensions: those of non-formal learning and of Europe. EVS in particular has helped the concept of volunteering as learning to gain ground in Sweden. Young volunteers choose to undertake EVS in order to get to know another culture and be engaged in a new activity, something which would not be possible in the local environment or even their home country. However, parts of Swedish society have not yet adopted the new concept. Some organisations prefer to use the term ‘trainee’ (praktikant) when voluntary work is undertaken with the purpose of learning new skills.

---

786 European Volunteer Centre, p. 5.
787 Interview with Diversity Coordinator of Jönköping municipality, 29-01-2010.
788 Interview with Project Officer of Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs – Swedish National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, 29-01-2010.
789 Ibid.
790 Grosse, p. 13.
Cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the emergence of regional volunteer centres and the establishment of the National Volunteer Agency (Volontärbyrån) have centralised and structured volunteering in Sweden and shifted its focus towards younger people. However, in line with the long tradition of voluntary work, rich organisational life and popular mass movements, cross-border volunteering in Sweden is based on individual organisations rather than on regulated national programmes.

There is a great choice of cross-border volunteer mobility opportunities in Sweden. Young people wishing to volunteer in Europe and worldwide can choose from the following major options.  

- **Short-term volunteering in summer work camps**, 2-4 weeks or 5-8 weeks, organised by ‘Volunteers for Peace’ since 1982 in more than 100 countries. Most projects in Sweden are limited to ages 18+ and are usually from May to September. A USD 300 (EUR 246) per-project registration fee includes accommodation and food. There may be a small additional fee for projects in developing countries. Transportation is arranged and paid for by the volunteer.  

- **Short-and medium-term volunteering in organic farms**, from 2-4 weeks to a few months. Volunteering in Sweden has been organised by ‘Earthway Experience’ since 1993. A USD 250 (EUR 205) participation fee per month includes accommodation and food. The WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) network has been organising worldwide volunteering since 1971 in 50 countries, including 119 active hosts in Sweden. There is no age limit for participants and only a small registration fee.  

- **Short, medium and long-term volunteering in work camps and community projects**, from 2-4 weeks to 3-12 months. ‘Internationella Arbetslag’ (IAL), the Swedish branch of Service Civil International (SCI), arranges volunteering opportunities within Europe and worldwide.

---

for periods longer than a month for anyone older than 18. Volunteers are provided with food, accommodation and pocket money and can be insured by the SCI insurance. Travel costs to the host organisation are generally covered by the volunteer. In order to be involved in volunteering with IAL, volunteers have to pay a fee of SEK 1,000 (EUR 104) and be members of IAL (the membership fee is SEK 150 (EUR 16)).

‘Peace Works Sweden’ (former ‘Internationellt Kulturutbyte’ or IKU) founded in 1973 organises short-and long-term volunteering in Europe and worldwide. There is a registration fee of up to SEK 300 (EUR 31) for all volunteers and then different fees apply depending on the duration of the volunteer placement (work camp, medium or long-term volunteering) and the destination country. For instance, it costs SEK 2,500 (EUR 261) to go on a work camp with ‘Peace Works’ within Europe (and Palestine) and SEK 3,500 (EUR 365) outside Europe. The fee includes food, accommodation and pocket money, volunteer and language courses, full medical and accident insurance. All travel costs are covered by volunteers.

- **Medium-term volunteering in development aid projects** lasting for 6 months has been organised by the Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange (Centrum för internationellt ungdomsutbyte - CIU) since 1993. The exchanges are carried out in cooperation with organisations in Cambodia, India, Zambia and Thailand and are aimed at young people (18-26 years old).

- **Long-term volunteering in development aid projects** organised by ‘Individuell Människohjälp’ (IM) in 15 countries worldwide since 1938. Within Europe IM focuses on the poorest regions, namely, Moldova and Romania. No age limits apply.

- **Medium-and long-term volunteering in social and pastoral work**, from 9-12 weeks to 1-2 years, organised by ‘Time for God’ within Europe and USA since 1965. Participation fee is from USD 2,500 (EUR 2,046), including food, accommodation, pocket money, training and staff support. There are no age limits.

---

• **Long-term missionary work in developing countries**, from 1-2 years to long-term commitments organised by ‘Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen’ (EFS - Evangelical Mission) in Africa and India\(^{803}\).

To summarise, young people in Sweden can choose from a number of short-, medium-and long-term cross-border volunteering opportunities in summer camps, organic farms, community and development aid projects in Europe and worldwide. Young volunteers have to pay registration/ participation fees and cover their travel costs. The participation fee in medium-and long-term projects usually includes pocket money, health insurance and language courses. Most volunteering opportunities are open to those who are older than 18 and seldom have an upper age limit.

Placements within Europe are usually organised within EVS, but there are alternative ways to volunteer in Europe. For example, cross-border volunteering is sometimes part of an educational programme (comparable to an internship), volunteering can be organised as an exchange within transnational NGOs or movements (such as the Scouts), or between affiliated NGOs (such as religious or sports organisations). In addition, cross-border volunteering can be initiated by an individual through direct contact with an NGO\(^{804}\).

**Legal status and guarantees for volunteers**

In Sweden, there has been a reluctance to introduce any legislation in relation to volunteering because this is felt to be contrary to the principles of independence and autonomy, which are promoted for the voluntary sector\(^{805}\). Thus, there are no specific legal provisions in Sweden for individual volunteers, nor any specific law governing not-for-profit organisations. The civil and legal position of not-for-profit organisations and volunteers depend heavily on established practice. Whenever a conflict arises, it is resolved according to case law\(^{806}\).

EU citizens need to get a residence permit if they stay for longer than three months in Sweden, with the exception of Nordic citizens, who can travel and work throughout the Nordic region without special permission. The three-month rule applies to many other countries, and volunteers are often treated as tourists.

---

804 Grosse, p. 64.
806 European Volunteer Centre.
and no work permit is required. In practice, volunteers often have a tourist visa or, alternatively, a student visa.\textsuperscript{807}

Conditions under which a foreigner may enter, stay and work in Sweden are regulated by the Swedish Alien Act\textsuperscript{808}. It does not list volunteering among the grounds for granting a residence permit for EU/EEA citizens, but an EU/EEA national may obtain a residence permit if s/he “has adequate assets to support himself or herself and family members and has comprehensive health insurance for himself or herself and family members that is valid in Sweden”\textsuperscript{809}. This provision might be a problem for non-EU/EEA citizens, who have to prove they have the necessary funds in their account. Since a residence permit “may be granted to an alien with means of support other than employment”\textsuperscript{810}, volunteers applying for a residence permit need to provide a letter from their host organisation showing that it guarantees them accommodation, and proof of medical insurance\textsuperscript{811}. Hence, mediation by the host and coordinating organisations is crucial.

As there is no law defining the legal status of volunteers, they have no legal right to social benefits. Their entitlement is determined on their legal status within other categories, such as that of students or the unemployed, and is regulated by the Unemployment Insurance Act or the Social Insurance Act. The Unemployment Insurance Act provides that unemployment insurance covers employees and the self-employed, and it can only be paid to persons over 20 years of age. Therefore, young volunteers aged 18-20 are not eligible. To be eligible for additional, income-related unemployment insurance, one must have been a member of a fund for at least a year and fulfil the duties required by the fund, such as to accept work offered by employment services and be actively searching for a job\textsuperscript{812}. Since cross-border volunteers are not available for placement in the Swedish labour market, they cannot claim unemployment benefits while abroad. Participation in EVS is regarded as education and has the same legal status as studying; therefore, after completing their volunteer period, Swedish volunteers are entitled to the same benefits as before leaving\textsuperscript{813}.

\textsuperscript{807} Grosse, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{808} Utlänningslag, 2005:716.
\textsuperscript{809} Utlänningslag, Chapter 3, Section 1; Chapter 3a, Section 3 on EU/EEA citizens.
\textsuperscript{810} Utlänningslag, Chapter 5, Section 5.
\textsuperscript{812} Lagen om Arbetslöshetsföräkning, 1997:238.
The Social Insurance Act provides that Swedish volunteers sent abroad by development aid organisations are still considered residents and thus do not lose their health insurance\(^{814}\). Swedish volunteers going abroad for a period not exceeding 12 months remain in the national healthcare system, unless they are regarded as being employed in the project they work in. Even if considered employees, volunteers can easily re-enter the national social security system upon completion of their voluntary service\(^{815}\).

Health insurance for foreigners is available on the basis of their residence (for at least one year) or employment in Sweden. European volunteers are advised to obtain the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which ensures that holders of the card pay the same fees for medical services as Swedish citizens before they are reimbursed\(^{816}\). However, EHIC is usually issued only to those volunteers who already have insurance status in their home country, i.e. to full-time employees, registered unemployed or students. All EVS volunteers are offered AXA insurance, which even covers dental services\(^{817}\).

Although problems with health insurance are solved in the EVS framework by the use of AXA cards, it may prove to be a challenge for participants of independent/ decentralised cross-border volunteering programmes. Therefore, many well-established volunteer exchange organisations provide insurance for volunteers as part of their services. For example, the abovementioned IAL informs volunteers participating in its exchanges that insurance is available from the umbrella organisation\(^{818}\).

A former EVS volunteer testified that she had no administrative, bureaucratic or financial problems in Sweden. Unlike other volunteers sent from her country at the same time, she had many arrangements taken care of: all cross-border EVS volunteers in Sweden even received bank cards and mobile phone cards from the host organisation. The former volunteer adds that she also enjoyed support from her mentors and knew that she could contact both the sending and the coordinating organisation for help\(^{819}\).

\(^{814}\) Socialförsäkringslag, 1999:799.
\(^{815}\) YOUTH Programme, ‘SOS Volunteer Helpdesk. Volunteer Mobility: Leaving from Sweden’.
\(^{818}\) Internationella Arbetsläg.
\(^{819}\) Interview with former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Sweden, 25-03-2010.
Numbers and choices of cross-border volunteers

Numbers of cross-border volunteering in Sweden depend on how strictly we interpret volunteering. If volunteering is defined broadly – as any unpaid non-domestic work, it can be estimated that the total number of both incoming and outgoing young cross-border volunteers in Sweden was between 1400 and 1800 in 2006. If a stricter definition of young volunteers is applied – of people under 30 years who volunteer full-time and without remuneration for a limited period within an organisation abroad, the number of young cross-border volunteers reported by the major voluntary organisations was approximately 890 Swedes and 260 foreign young people in Sweden (in 2006)\(^{820}\).

**Figure 29. Number of incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers for Sweden in 2009 (EU only)**

![Graph showing the number of incoming and outgoing EVS volunteers for Sweden in 2009](image)

*Source: European Commission.*

Within EVS, there were around 65 outgoing and 80 incoming volunteers in Sweden in 2009\(^{821}\). 49 of those sent abroad went to other EU countries and 58 of those hosted arrived from other MSs\(^{822}\). The countries of origin and destination of those who volunteered within the EU are shown in the graph above (Figure 29). As we can see from the graph, EVS in Sweden attracts a disproportionate share of Germans compared to the numbers of incoming EVS volunteers from other MSs, that is, three times more than any other EU country (21). Meanwhile,

---

\(^{820}\) Grosse, p. 20.

\(^{821}\) Data provided by the European Commission (extracted from the ‘Youthlink’ database of EVS volunteers on 03-03-2010).

\(^{822}\) Data provided by the European Commission (extracted from the ‘Youthlink’ database of EVS volunteers on 04-05-2010).
the overall low number of Sweden’s outgoing volunteers is dispersed among different MSs, Germany, Portugal and Greece being the most popular EU destination countries.

The organisations mentioned in the ‘Opportunities’ section usually send and receive volunteers both through EVS and other schemes. In 2006, IAL sent around 150 Swedish volunteers to European countries and beyond, and hosted around 100 young volunteers. IM sent about 50 Swedish volunteers to Africa and India to work with its partner organisations. Around 60 people a year participated in the cross-border exchanges of the Swedish Scout Council. ‘Peace Works Sweden’ annually involved about 50 cross-border volunteers, while the Church of Sweden sent 15-20 volunteers and hosted over 10. The CIU sends about 60 Swedish volunteers to Cambodia, India, Thailand and Zambia each year, while the voluntary programmes of CIU also include hosting 60 volunteers from those countries.

In general, voluntary organisations in Sweden are more focused on sending volunteers abroad, especially outside Europe, than on hosting foreign volunteers. EVS hosting organisations always receive many more requests from foreign volunteers than they have capacity to host. In contrast, relatively few Swedes want to go abroad within the framework of EVS, according to interview data.

Socio-economic profile of cross-border volunteers
In general, the typical Swedish volunteer is an already active man or woman (gender participation being more or less equal) in the middle of his/ her career, well-educated and coming from a rather affluent socio-economic background. Most Swedish volunteers who participate in international exchange programmes are 18-24 years old, high school graduates, and the majority of them are women. Young outgoing Swedish cross-border volunteers, in contrast to their incoming counterparts, usually have little experience of volunteering.

Currently, cross-border volunteering is accessible mainly to young Swedish volunteers in a good socio-economic position, whereas disadvantaged young people have fewer opportunities to participate. Therefore, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (National Agency for EVS) specifically targets disadvantaged young people so that volunteering abroad and learning a new

---

823 Grosse, p. 17-18.
824 Ibid., p. 16-17. Note: all data from 2006.
825 Interview with Officer for Recognition of Informal Learning (ELD) at the Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange (CIU) and author of ELD method, 26-05-2010.
827 European Volunteer Centre, p. 12.
language and skills could help create a level playing field and be a life-changing experience for them. Some organisations are also trying to recruit more young people from less well-off families and from the countryside. However, the major challenges are effective communication and outreach activities, as well as the motivation of this target group to participate in cross-border volunteering projects.

Motivation

Sweden has developed a tradition of cross-border volunteering in a ‘classical’ sense, as going to developing countries and engaging in environmental or development aid work. Many outgoing cross-border volunteers choose distant countries in order to test themselves in a different environment and experience something completely new. Moreover, they are driven by strong motives of making a change and contributing to a cause they believe in.

One of the possible reasons why Swedish volunteers prefer to go to developing countries is their perception that the richer and more developed a hosting country is, the less input a volunteer can make. Therefore, the Swedish National Agency (NA) is currently working to capitalise on this perception and promote Eastern European and European Neighbourhood countries among Swedish EVS volunteers and volunteer-sending organisations as an option to be involved in development aid within Europe. Among EVS volunteers, the dominating motivations are personal development and informal learning, especially the possibility to improve foreign language skills.

Incoming cross-border volunteers are often motivated to volunteer in Sweden by inspiring projects and smooth administrative procedures. The former EVS volunteer remembers that she, previously an active volunteer in her home country, wanted to volunteer in Scandinavia, since she had heard of former volunteers “having problems with documents, permits and communication [with local people] in Southern countries”. Sweden did not disappoint her in this respect. Since Sweden is neither a popular tourist destination in comparison with Southern European countries, nor has a popular language to offer, as opposed to the UK, France or Germany, it has the advantage of inclusive...
projects and well-organised administrative procedures, which motivate incoming volunteers.

Benefits gained by the volunteers
Altruistic motives of helping others and promoting the aims of the hosting organisation, which have traditionally prevailed among cross-border volunteers in Sweden, are changing: people tend to ask not only what they can do as volunteers, but also what volunteering can do for them\textsuperscript{838}. Individual benefits gained by volunteers are personal maturity, improved language skills, professional and cultural experience.

The following benefits for young outgoing cross-border volunteers in Sweden can be identified: \textit{new points of view, new experiences and skills, and increased self-esteem}\textsuperscript{839}. Former volunteers mention that their cultural awareness had increased as a result of meeting people with different cultural backgrounds and dealing with different patterns of daily life, such as \textit{time management and cultural tolerance}\textsuperscript{840}. For example, a former Swedish EVS volunteer in Poland recalls that living with three international volunteers proved to be an issue, yet she was amazed how the young people learned to avoid conflicts\textsuperscript{841}. It is worth noting that increased cultural awareness can consequently \textit{strengthen one’s civic identity}. For instance, a Swedish volunteer from an immigrant background felt as if he had an ethnic label and was different, “not Swedish” while in Sweden, but the volunteering experience abroad made him feel that he came from and represented Sweden\textsuperscript{842}.

Results of the research commissioned by the Swedish NA show that \textit{foreign language skills} were mentioned as the main benefit of cross-border volunteering\textsuperscript{843}. All outgoing volunteers from Sweden improved their English skills and some learned a new language. A former Swedish EVS volunteer in the UK remembers improving her English even while doing agricultural work\textsuperscript{844}. English is usually the \textit{lingua franca} among volunteers from different countries.

\textsuperscript{838} European Volunteer Centre, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{839} Diversity Coordinator of Jönköping municipality, 29-01-2010.
\textsuperscript{843} Ibid, p. 29.
while learning a new language depended on the involvement of local people in the project.

The main benefits gained by incoming volunteers in Sweden are enhanced **social and professional skills, new experience in socially-oriented projects** and **language training**. For example, a former Dutch EVS volunteer remembers working in two youth-related projects in Sweden, and feeling “useful and happy” in both of them, despite difficult integration into the host society. A former Lithuanian EVS volunteer was looking for youth-oriented projects and chose one in Sweden, which proved to be beneficial for her social and professional development. Both volunteers were also offered Swedish language training, but the chances of learning the language depended on the volunteering period and type of work. The 12 months of volunteering were enough for a Lithuanian EVS volunteer to learn Swedish and make it an asset for her future career in the home country.

**Recognition of skills**

The recognition of skills acquired through volunteering is rather **advanced and decentralised** in Sweden. In 2000, before the International Year of Volunteers, the Government commissioned the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs to study methods for enhancing informal learning and non-formal education within youth organisations. The aim was to develop measures for the validation of competences acquired outside formal education. However, a consensus was reached that forcing NGOs into any formal system of validation would be contrary to their working principles and thus potentially disruptive. Therefore, the process of developing mechanisms for recognition was decentralised: instead of leaving the task to the state institutions, grants were given to NGOs so that they could develop tools for the recognition of skills.

The **ELD (Experience, Learning, Description)** method developed by the Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange (CIU) can serve as an example. It was created in 2006 in order to help participants of international youth exchanges bridge their experiences and their competence. So far, it is arguably the most elaborate method for the recognition of skills gained by volunteers in Sweden. ELD is especially adapted for voluntary work, complete

---

846 Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Sweden, 25-03-2010.
847 Ibid.
with a final certificate. ELD is based on the participant’s description (in any form) of situations that occurred during a project, with suggestions of skills, knowledge and/or attitudes that were demonstrated during those situations. The documented situations are regularly discussed with an ELD-trained facilitator. A Template of Conversation with a number of questions was also developed by CIU to frame the discussion. Finally, the facilitator writes the Letter of Competence and describes the activities in which the competence was demonstrated. The ELD method has been used for CIU’s international volunteers as well as schools, for labour market guidance, popular education, international work for development and other organisations. As of May 2010, up to 500 cross-border volunteers have used the ELD method to validate their skills acquired within the voluntary sector and at least 300 persons used it outside the voluntary sector in Sweden.

**Impact on society**
Swedish municipalities and other public bodies see cross-border volunteering as a high-return investment. Personal benefits gained by staff and members, such as identity formation, increased cultural awareness, improved social and professional skills, contribute to the development of organisations and communities as well.

Many young Swedes choose cross-border volunteering as a means of personal development and a gateway to informed decisions about their future. As a result, their choices regarding formal post-school education are more conscious. Thus, educational institutions and society in general benefit from more mature and motivated students.

Individual volunteering experience has the potential to evolve into organisational change and development. For example, 30% of ‘Peace Works’ volunteers remain involved in the activities of the organisation after their exchange period is over. Sometimes individual volunteering experience results in partnership between sending and receiving organisations.

Cross-border volunteering can increase the host country’s “brain gain” and facilitate other forms of cross-border mobility. According to the former EVS volunteer in Sweden, several volunteers were impressed by the convenient

---

850 Officer for Recognition of Informal Learning (ELD) at the Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange (CIU) and author of ELD method, 26-05-2010.
851 The Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange (CIU), ‘Recognition of informal learning’.
852 Data provided by the Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange (CIU).
853 Diversity Coordinator of Jönköping municipality, 29-01-2010.
854 Project Officer of Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, 29-01-2010.
855 Peace Works, p. 4.
conditions for volunteering and considered staying in the country for a longer period. Some of them applied to Swedish universities, while others looked for employment opportunities.\footnote{Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Sweden, 25-03-2010.}

**Obstacles**

Obstacles to cross-border volunteering in Sweden have the same root: **unclear legal status of volunteers**, which means **socio-economic insecurity** for young people.\footnote{Grosse, p. 44.} Outgoing volunteering might be discouraged by ‘falling out’ of the Swedish social security system.\footnote{Project Officer of Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, 29-01-2010.} For an unemployed person, cross-border volunteering may lead to a loss of the right to unemployment benefits, since unemployment legislation requires continuous job searching and the fulfilment of an individual “back to work” plan.\footnote{Lagen om Arbetslöshetsförsäkring.} Persons on long-term sick leave risk losing their benefits if they volunteer, although persons with completely or severely reduced working capacity do not lose their benefits even if they use the remaining capacity to volunteer in any circumstances.\footnote{European Volunteer Centre, p. 22.}

**Disappointing experience** of cross-border volunteering might be an obstacle for further involvement of young people in voluntary activities. For example, a Swedish volunteer remembers that her duties in a project with socially excluded young people did not allow her to make any significant contribution.\footnote{Amanda Holmberg.} Another volunteer had to work for the organisation’s employees’ families, which made her doubt the purpose of the volunteer exchange.\footnote{Sanna Hallgren (former Swedish EVS volunteer in Italy), “Vad är en volontär?”. Blog entry of 23-04-2007. <http://sannahallgren.myevs.net/> [Accessed 03-04-2010].} Although by no means representative of all Swedish volunteers, these accounts reflect different expectations and perceptions of volunteering between young Swedish people and hosting organisations.

Likewise, a **language barrier** in non-English speaking countries and for non-English speaking volunteers is an obstacle to full participation in a project and social life. A former Swedish EVS volunteer recalls that foreign volunteers were frustrated by their inability to communicate with the young people they worked with in Poland.\footnote{Amanda Holmberg.} However, they overcame this problem with the help of a ‘Big Brother’ programme for volunteers. In contrast, the absence of such a programme in Sweden led a former Latvian EVS volunteer to conclude that
inability to communicate in the local language confined him to social exclusion within the host society.\textsuperscript{864}

**Difficult application procedures** to become an EVS organisation may be an obstacle for new organisations to enter the cross-border volunteering sector within Europe, while large and well-established organisations have already accumulated the necessary skills.\textsuperscript{865} Moreover, the **reliance on partnership networks** may create difficult entry situations for new NGOs. The dependence of volunteer-sending and receiving organisations on the local public sector poses a threat to the sustainability of their projects. A former Dutch volunteer in Sweden writes about his frustration over an outreach project for unemployed young people, which was prematurely terminated following a change in government and its priorities.\textsuperscript{866}

**Conclusions**

A decentralised and largely non-regulated in-country and cross-border volunteer sector is a distinctive feature of Sweden. Volunteering is integrated within national policies, and there are no specific laws to define the legal status of volunteers or regulate non-governmental activities. Although left in some socio-economic insecurity, cross-border volunteers are taken care of by the sending and receiving organisations.

The perception of cross-border volunteering as altruistic help for people in need, especially in less developed countries, prevails in Sweden. Therefore, young Swedish volunteers prefer to go to countries outside Europe, if they can afford it. The perception of volunteering as learning – promoted by EVS – is also gaining ground, and young people choose cross-border volunteering with the aim of improving their foreign language skills, gaining social and professional experience, and increasing their cultural understanding. Tools for the recognition of skills and competences acquired through volunteering have been developed to bridge the gap between volunteers’ experiences and their competence.

Sweden is an attractive destination for incoming volunteers due to its inclusiveness and smooth administrative procedures, as well as its socially-oriented projects. Swedish language courses are offered to long-term volunteers, although their integration into the host society depends on the type of work and their English language skills.


\textsuperscript{865} Diversity Coordinator of Jönköping municipality, 29-01-2010.

\textsuperscript{866} Albert Meijer.
The socio-economic profile of young Swedish cross-border volunteers indicates that cross-border volunteering is not yet accessible to disadvantaged young people. Hence, the promotion of European cross-border volunteering among different target groups still requires investment and, most importantly, adequate information about the various projects available.
### List of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ekstam</td>
<td>Pontus</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs - Swedish National Agency for ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Giniotytė</td>
<td>Valdonė</td>
<td>Former Lithuanian EVS volunteer in Sweden</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>25-03-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Modin</td>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>Diversity Coordinator</td>
<td>Jönköping municipality, Jönköping, Sweden</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>29-01-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ferhatovic</td>
<td>Kenan</td>
<td>Former Swedish EVS volunteer in Palestinian Territories</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>20-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Grosse</td>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Ersta Sköndal University College, Sköndal, Sweden</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>28-04-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Terese</td>
<td>Officer for Recognition of Informal Learning (ELD), author of ELD method</td>
<td>The Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange (CIU), Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>26-05-2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### List of publications

5. Kumulus, Europeisk volontärtjänst: Mot nya averntyr. Kalmar: Regionförbundet i Kalmar län. Available online at:  
   <http://www2.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/butiksadmin/showDoc/4028e58a001ca0d101001ccab9b30040/US_skrifter__7__2003.pdf>. [The Swedish National Board for Youth affairs, Three years of the EU programme YOUTH: a study on the programs effects in the years 2000-2003]

List of legal documents
2. Lagen om Arbetslöshetsförsäkring, 1997:238. [Unemployment Insurance Act]

List of websites


