

VOLUNTEERING FOR MORE VALUE



VOLUNTEERING
INSPIRED by **VALUES**



Volunteering for more value



Centro Servizio Volontariato
di Padova e Rovigo

HRVATSKI
CENTAR
ZA RAZVOJ
VOLONTERSTVA
POSREDOVANJE IZMEĐU VOLONTERSTVA



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Volunteering for more value

Publisher:

Centro Servizio Volontariato di Padova e Rovigo

Year of publication:

2023

Authors:

Rita Almeida

Ilaria Ferraro

Marta Hauser

Paula Mendes

Mirna Šostarko

This booklet is a product of the project 'VIV - Volunteering inspired by values' project, funded by the Erasmus + KA2, a small-scale partnership programme. The project coordinator is Centro Servizi Padova Solidale (Italy), while the partners are Croatian Volunteer Development Center (Croatia) and Associação Mais Cidadania (Portugal).



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The content of this guide is the sole responsibility of Centro Servizio Volontariato di Padova e Rovigo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 04** **INTRODUCTION**
- 07** **VOLUNTEERING, MOTIVATION AND VALUES IN A CHANGING CONTEXT**
- 12** **RESEARCH STUDY – VOLUNTEERING FOR MORE VALUE**
- 29** **GOOD PRACTICES (Portugal, Italy, Croatia)**
- 39** **TIPS AND TRICKS**
- 43** **ANNEX 1 - CONTEXT OF VOLUNTEERING IN THE THREE COUNTRIES**
- 49** **REFERENCES**

INTRODUCTION

The booklet you have in your hands is a product of the project 'VIV - Volunteering inspired by values' funded by the Erasmus + KA2, a small-scale partnership programme. The project coordinator is Centro Servizi Volontariato di Padova e Rovigo (Italy), while the partners are Croatian Volunteer Development Center (Croatia) and Associação Mais Cidadania (Portugal).

The motivation for this project is rooted in the aspiration to build an open, democratic and vibrant society based on the active participation and engagement of volunteers and the vision of the VIV project to bring new insights, perspectives and means to strengthen the impact of volunteering on inclusion, diversity, tolerance, solidarity and European rights and values.

Over the past three decades, volunteering has gradually gained prominence around the world. However, although research findings, facts, and figures support the potential that volunteer engagement can have on active civic participation, social inclusion, quality of interpersonal relationships, resilience, and social capital, volunteering is still not recognised and profiled as a powerful energy to promote the value and as a constructive force to meet the challenges of the future. Many European countries, and the European Union itself, are facing long cycles of crisis, weakening trends in democracy, polarised societies, and an ever-shrinking space for civil society. These trends have increased the need for volunteer programmes that bring more dialogue, inclusion, diversity, tolerance, solidarity and European values into community life.

With the project, we aimed to investigate and understand the current state of volunteering and volunteer programmes in the European Union concerning values such as inclusion, diversity, tolerance, solidarity, and European values. Problems and possible solutions were investigated to increase the quality of volunteer programmes with a focus on values while helping to strengthen the capacity of organisations that include young volunteers in their activities.

In the first section of the booklet, you will find a reflection on how volunteering has been changing in recent years. Although the situations in the three countries are different (in Annex 1, you can find an insight into the contexts of volunteering in the three countries), the trend toward more 'liquid,' extemporaneous volunteering with a strong emphasis on values is found almost everywhere in Europe.

The second section presents the results of the research conducted to explore both the attitudes of young people as beneficiaries of volunteer programmes and the attitudes of organisations that implement volunteer programmes.

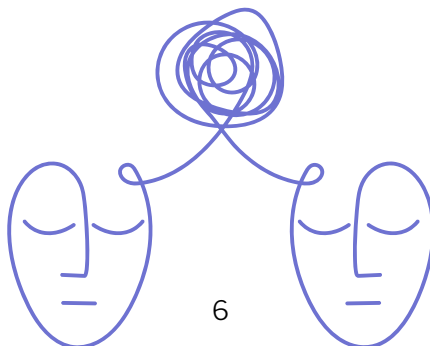
The third section reports some of the best practices of both organisations and events that are particularly interesting for how the values of volunteering are felt, experienced and promoted.

In the fourth section, there are some tips for organisations to improve their volunteer programmes and make them more value-oriented. The section stems from what young people reported during the focus groups but also from the content that emerged during some of the sharing meetings with the associations about the content reported in this text and presented to them beforehand.

VOLUNTEERING, MOTIVATION AND VALUES IN A CHANGING CONTEXT

Volunteering is generally defined as an activity carried out in an organisation, on a nonprofit basis, with the aim of contributing to the common good and helping others. It is a free and conscious commitment by an individual or a group of people who decide to devote part of their time, skills and resources to carry out socially beneficial actions.

Volunteering represents one of the most significant forms of civic participation and solidarity, contributing to the construction of a more equal and inclusive society and can take different forms, depending on the needs of the community and the skills of the volunteers themselves. Among the most common volunteer activities, we find supporting the elderly or sick, caring for the environment, providing emergency relief, organising cultural or sporting events, helping people with disabilities, children, the homeless, victims of violence, and people in economic or social difficulty.



In 2020, a paper published under the Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda proposed a new model for understanding volunteering practices in the 21st century. This new model takes a broad view of volunteering that is defined according to five components, each representing a dimension of volunteer action: structure (formal and/or informal), site (online and/or offline), intensity (episodic and/or regular), aspiration (self-building and/or community-building) and category (service, mutual aid, participation, campaigning and leisure; these are not mutually exclusive).

According to the 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report 'Building Equal and Inclusive Societies', Volunteering is a complex social phenomenon that means different things to different people. Cultural and community-based values influence how volunteering is practised, and the spread of new technology has diversified how volunteers contribute and gather. Informal, community-based, episodic and spontaneous volunteering is also increasingly recognised. These forms of volunteering challenge the popular view that volunteering only happens within an organisation. With volunteering often considered 'unpaid', the blurred boundaries between volunteering, skills development and livelihoods - particularly in resource-poor contexts - also challenge the idea of volunteer remuneration.

When discussing volunteering, the focus is most often on the contribution that volunteers make to society. However, the benefits of volunteering for volunteers themselves are also becoming increasingly clear, and it is important to understand how these influence many volunteers' motivations.

The report also emphasises volunteering as civic participation. Not all forms of civic participation are volunteering (and vice versa), but there are overlaps between the two. Civic participation is often defined as collective action undertaken to improve society and civic life. It includes activities such as voluntary service to local communities but also occasional charitable donations, which may not be seen as volunteering. It also includes political participation at the personal (e.g., voting in an election) and collective (e.g., membership of political parties) levels or people volunteering their time to actively participate in government decision-making or co-implementing state programmes.

These trends toward episodic informal volunteering, requiring short-term and sporadic engagement, as opposed to the 'traditional' engagement, characterised by a 'lifelong commitment', are also highlighted in Sirris's paper (2022).

According to the Professor, the possible causes of this change in engagement patterns are connected to the increasingly broad and complex social challenges, the rapid spread of new technologies and online connectivity but also to the willingness to commit to specific causes and outcomes that they personally identify with or that are 'hip' and 'trendy', rather than showing long-term loyalty to specific organisations, as done in the past.

At the European level, Volunteers play a tremendous social and economic role in society, which moves beyond simply being a source of 'people-power' for their tasks in society. Over the last three decades, volunteering has gradually gained importance across Europe, and a lot of resources have been invested in proving its value.

There is enough evidence to support the positive impact that volunteering and volunteers have on social cohesion, democracy, social transformation, personal and collective competencies and its priceless potential to enhance the well-being of individuals and communities.

In the Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 (BEV2030), the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) has set the framework of key milestones for the future of volunteering, reflected in the importance of independent and inclusive engagement, collaborative networking, democratic and transparent state funding, empowerment and inclusion, education and quality of engagement, and a legal and policy framework that is responsive to the changing volunteering ecosystem, enabling more people to volunteer and making the sector more accessible and inclusive to people from different backgrounds and contexts.

Lejla Šehić Relić, President of CEV, said that the best way to motivate all generations to volunteer is to foster a culture of solidarity and communal values, providing volunteers with the opportunities to respond to community challenges and needs. Therefore, it is vital to create an enabling environment for the power of volunteering as a transformative force in a decade of action towards strengthening our democracies, civic engagement, European values, achieving SDGs, crisis response and the recovery process for ensuring resilient and sustainable communities.

Everybody must work together to be able to face these challenges. As statistics show, the average age of volunteers is high, and there is an extreme necessity to commit young people. One of the most important opportunities for young people across the EU to engage in solidarity actions and, at the same time, acquire precious skills is the European Solidarity Corps Programme.

The European Solidarity Corps is an EU funding programme for young people wishing to engage in solidarity activities in a variety of areas. Those range from helping the disadvantaged to providing humanitarian aid, as well as contributing to health and environmental actions across the EU and beyond. The Programme is open to individuals aged 18 to 30 (35 for humanitarian aid) and organisations in the EU and partner countries. Its ambition is to gather young people in order to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop.

RESEARCH STUDY – VOLUNTEERING FOR MORE VALUE

In order to understand the current state of volunteering and volunteer programmes in the European Union in relation to values such as inclusion, diversity, tolerance, solidarity and European values, we have conducted research, which included 98 organisations and 60 young people from Italy, Portugal and Croatia. In the research, we used structured questionnaires and focus group methods. The research is designed as a two-way process, exploring the attitudes of young people as beneficiaries of volunteer programmes and the attitudes of the organisations that implement volunteer programmes.

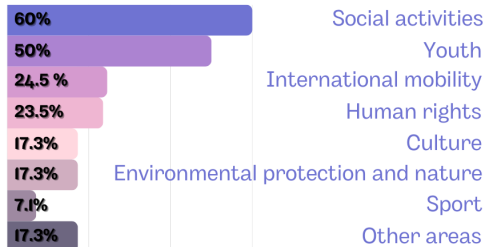


VOLUNTEER INCLUDING ORGANISATIONS

There were 98 organisations participating in this research, 89% of which declared themselves as an association/NGO, while there were also a few public institutions (4%), foundations (2%), religious bodies (1%) and others (4%). When asked about what areas the organisation works in, most of them answered Social activities (60%), then Youth (50%), International mobility (24.5%), Human rights (23.5%), Culture (17.3%), Environmental protection and nature (17.3%), Sport (7.1%) and other areas (17.3%).



All the organisations that participated in the research include volunteers in their work, and the overall percentage of young volunteers out of all volunteers in the organisations in question is 57.5%.



The activities in which organisations involve young volunteers are numerous and diverse and can be classified into several categories:

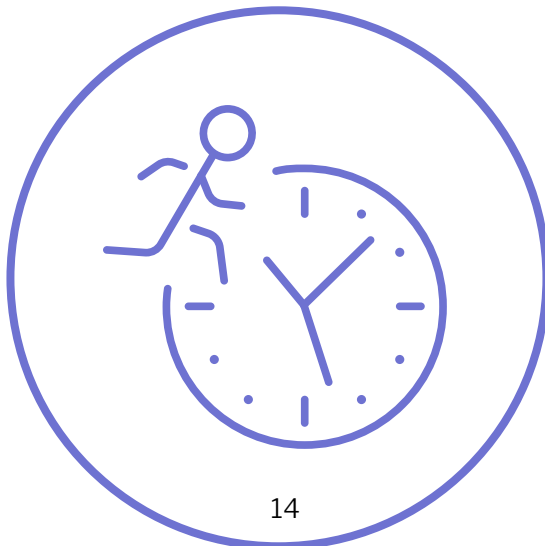


Since there were a few organisations that do not include young volunteers in their work, we tried to find out the reasons for that, and the answers include the following:

- We do not know how to bring young people to our organisation (50%).
- We do not know how to identify, engage and manage young people (33%).
- We do not have the logistical capacity to accept volunteers or organise their activities (16%).
- Young people change interests/lifestyle too often (16%).
- Young people do not want to volunteer (16%).

Volunteer management

The volunteer management cycle looks similar in all surveyed countries, with some organisational differences based on different volunteering positions. Recruitment is usually done through social media, online forms or personal visits to schools, universities or other institutions. After that, most of the time, there is an interview, especially when we talk about long-term volunteering. Organisations choose their volunteers based on their interests, knowledge, skills and previous experience. Some volunteer positions require additional training for volunteers, often when the position refers to working with vulnerable groups. Some organisations are implementing training for all of their volunteers, and they use that time to welcome volunteers and to pass on their entire organisational culture, mission and purpose. Monitoring and evaluation are mostly done through frequent conversations, documentation monitoring, interviews and evaluation questionnaires.



Values

91% of surveyed organisations said that they, when looking for volunteers, communicate clearly and precisely what values their organisation is guided by. The values they think are most important for their young volunteers to have are:

Solidarity – 71%

Inclusion – 47%

Tolerance – 32%







Equality – 30%

Dignity – 20%

Justice – 18%

Freedom – 15%





There is no unified way in which organisations check whether their volunteers have the mentioned values, but most of their methods can be reduced to:

-  Through the daily behavior of volunteers;
-  Through frequent conversations with volunteers about values;
-  Through an initial interview;
-  Through additional training for volunteers;
-  Through the analysis of volunteer motivation;
-  Through the volunteer mentoring process.

Although these are the most common ways to check values in volunteers, most organisations agree that values are something that is learnt through the volunteering process, and it is not necessary for volunteers to come already having values.

Organisations typically communicate their values to potential volunteers in the following parts of the volunteer management cycle: finding and selection, preparation and introduction into the organisation and monitoring and support.

The methods by which organisations communicate their values to young volunteers can be divided into several categories:

-  **Written word** – it is written in the Statute, on flyers, posters and booklets, on webpages or in the agreement.
-  **Verbally** – meetings, dialogues, interviews, speeches, creating strong relationships with volunteers, etc.
-  **Education and training** – organising additional training sessions, presentations or education for volunteers in relation to the organisational values.
-  **Learning by example** – through activities, everyday behaviour, setting a good example for volunteers, organisational culture, etc.

For research purposes, the organisations were asked what their biggest problems are when involving young people in volunteer activities, and the most common answer we received was a lack of commitment and responsibility among young volunteers, as well as discontinuity and unpredictability of their engagement.

The second problem that was mentioned is related to the motivation of volunteers, which is initially very high but decreases over time because young people tend to look for quick results, which they cannot always achieve. There is also a great attitude among organisations about the disinterest of young people today in volunteering in general. Several organisations expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of time, resources and employees to be able to deal with young volunteers in a quality manner.



Lack of time, resources

Disinterest of young people today in volunteering in general

The motivation of volunteers decreases over time







Non-continuity and unpredictability

Lack of commitment and responsibility

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

There were 63 participants aged from 16 to 30 involved in the research. All of them had some experience in volunteering, whether they volunteered in different NGOs or informal youth groups. The participants have different experiences in volunteering - most of them have been involved in long-term volunteering, while some have only recently started volunteering. The age range in which young people most often start volunteering is between the ages of 16 and 24, with the vast majority already involved in volunteer engagements during high school.

Young people most often choose the following activities for their volunteer engagements:

-  Human rights;
-  Eco activities (cleaning and planting actions, as well as other sustainable activities);
-  Animal protection;
-  Artistic and creative activities for children or youth, as well as volunteering at festivals;
-  Intercultural activities such as youth exchanges, international camps and workshops;
-  Volunteering with vulnerable groups (hospitals, elderly homes, schools etc.).

Motivation for volunteering

When asked what their primary motivation for volunteering was, the answers of most of the participants can fit into the following few categories:

Supporting others – the desire to help and support others, especially volunteering with vulnerable groups of people and people in need, sometimes helping people who have similar life stories as them;

Building the community – the desire to improve the community and to be the change they want to see in their environment, the desire to create something new for the community;

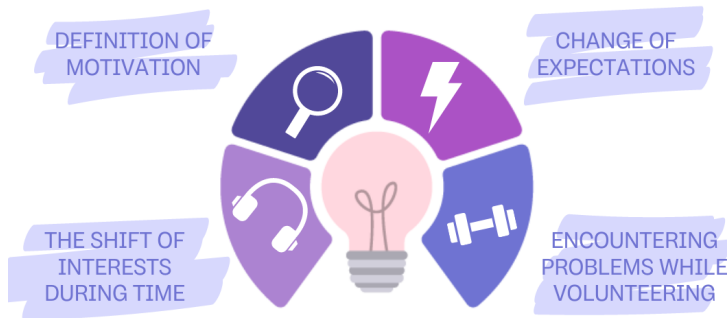
Networking and connection – the desire to make new contacts, social ties and friendships, to get to know people with one's own, or similar, interests and values, to feel more connected to the community;

Feeling of usefulness – the desire to feel useful and to do something meaningful, the desire to spend some quality free time;

Personal growth – gaining new experiences, developing a stronger sense of self, developing their skills, gaining new skills and knowledge which will help them in their future life, leaving the comfort zone;

Intercultural aspect – the desire to meet and interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Although motivation can be fluid when young people volunteer for a long time, most of the participants expressed that their motivation has stayed the same over time. Some of them even said that their motivation rises the longer they are engaged. There are several reasons why motivation changes over time:



The shift of interests during time – sometimes, when young people volunteer for some period, they realise that their interests have become more specific and, therefore, their motivation has changed regarding the volunteer position or the beneficiary group.

Definition of motivation – their motivation at the beginning was maybe not so well defined, and over time, they are more aware of their impact, so their motivation rises.

Change of expectations – the reduction of motivation can happen when the results of volunteer activity do not meet the expectations of volunteers. In that situation, many volunteers can bring back their motivation if they change their expectations.

Encountering problems while volunteering – the motivation can change over time due to cultural misunderstandings, the weight of heavy expectations or a general lack of knowledge and training.

The volunteers who are aware of their decreased motivation are usually looking for ways to bring it back. Few volunteers think at this point that their motivation is irreversible, and they are thinking of leaving the organisation. The overall conclusion from all of the volunteers is that internal motivation is easier to keep and lasts much longer than external motivation.

Whether we are talking about decreased or increased motivation, the factors that affect the fluidity of motivation among young volunteers can be reduced to several categories:

Factors affecting change in motivation



- 1 Values
- 2 Organisational culture
- 3 Scope of responsibility
- 4 A sense of belonging and acceptance
- 5 Impact visibility
- 6 Peer role models
- 7 Personal commitments

Values -for young participants, it is easier to maintain motivation if their personal values match the values promoted by the organisation.

Organisational culture -good working conditions, good structure of the organisation, and good communication are very important factors for maintaining the level of their motivation.

Scope of responsibility - new challenges and opportunities for learning and personal development often motivate volunteers. However, if they do not have enough responsibilities or are burdened with too many tasks that do not provide any learning aspect, their motivation will decrease.

A sense of belonging and acceptance - motivation remains high when the volunteer operates in a stimulating and welcoming environment, which helps the volunteer to get into the spirit of the organisation, make him or her feel like a part of the whole - in a safe, open, welcoming and understanding environment.

Impact visibility - when youngsters don't see the results for a long time or become overwhelmed by the feeling of powerlessness to solve the problems in the community, they can feel a bit demotivated to continue volunteering.

Peer role models - mostly younger volunteers (aged 16 to 18) express the importance of peers who volunteer with them or older volunteers who serve as role models.

Personal commitments - it is not always easy to be able to combine volunteering with private life / personal commitments. Hence, the motivation to volunteer reduces as the time at one's disposal to devote to it decreases.

Although leaving the organisation is the last step, and volunteers would not do it recklessly, some factors appear more often when we talk about ending volunteer engagement. The most common reason for ending a volunteer engagement is definitely of an external nature and relates to a big 'life' change. Young people will leave their organisations due to studying, moving, finding a job or other private reasons that make them struggle with distance or lack of time.

Other situations that can lead volunteers to leave the organisation are not being able to meet their needs and expectations during volunteering and a hostile organisation environment.

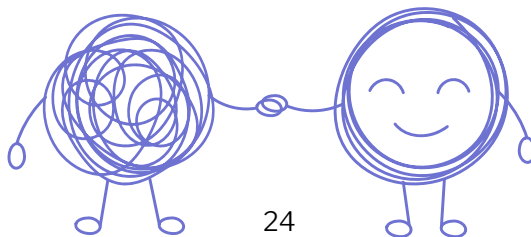


Volunteer programme management

During the discussion, the following stages of the volunteering process were mentioned: application/recruitment, interview and meeting with the organisation, training for volunteers, supervision or mentorship and evaluation.

Mentorship and supervision are something volunteers find very helpful, and they wish there were more of those in the volunteering process.

The vast majority of young people agree that a coordinator or a youth worker facilitates the volunteering process and provides them with support and encouragement in the learning process. All agree that the absence of such person can threaten the quality of volunteering and negatively affect the volunteering experience of young people.

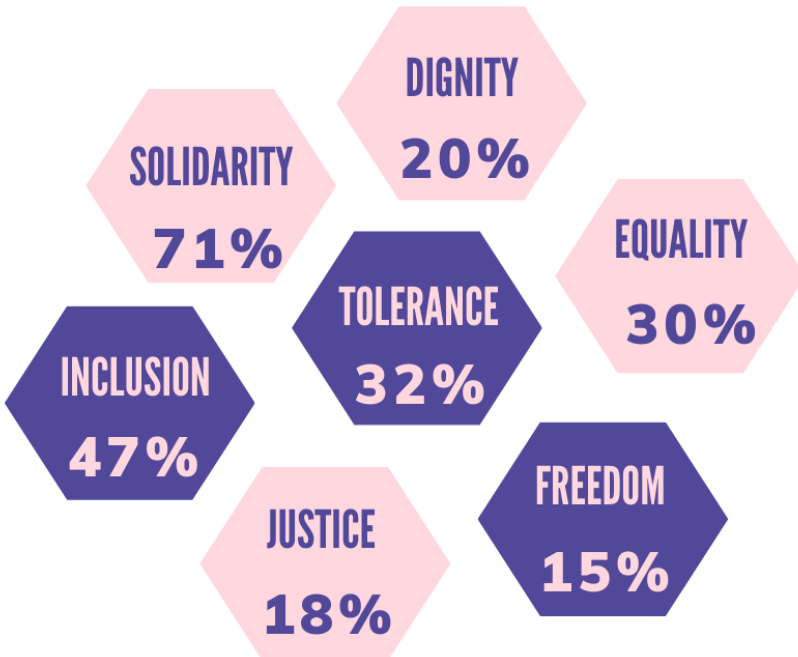


Volunteering and values

Personal values that young people consider very important are: humanity, tolerance, respect, solidarity, inclusiveness, openness, justice and equality, sincerity and honesty, kindness and generosity, integrity, altruism, care for the environment.

Many of those values played a significant role when they were choosing their volunteer engagement, as young people do not want to get involved in projects or actions that go against their principles.

Most important values for volunteers to have, according to the organisations



When young people were asked to define volunteering, most responses consisted of 3 main components of the definition of volunteering: free will, benefiting the community, and not receiving compensation for a task performed.

Young people often define volunteering as a learning process, an opportunity for personal growth and the acquisition of new experiences, knowledge and skills. The values that respondents most often associate with volunteering are: solidarity, sharing and altruism; generosity, empathy, commitment and responsibility, equality, nondiscrimination, integrity, active participation etc.

According to the young participants, most organisations actively communicate their values, which often happens at the very beginning of the engagement, and sometimes during a training session or education for volunteers. However, it seems that volunteers most often read values from everyday life and the activities that organisations implement. The values that organisations most often communicate are: humanity, tolerance, solidarity, dialogue, diversity, democracy, well-being, dignity, equality, inclusion, environmental protection, empathy, altruism, growth and development.

The volunteers generally identify with the values of the organisation in which they are volunteering. They also think that associations should always carefully maintain the values they promote for the community within the team as well as the volunteer group.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, both young volunteers and volunteer organisations think that values are very important when it comes to volunteering. Similar values are recognised as most important in both surveyed groups. Those values are: solidarity, inclusion, tolerance, equality, dignity, justice and equality, humanity and altruism.

Besides the mentioned values, both groups think it is very important to clearly communicate those values to the public but also to 'live' them through the work and activities of the organisation.

Young people are very attached to their personal values, and they will always choose their volunteer positions according to this factor, but they also expect to feel those values in the volunteering process - through the activities and results of the activities. On the other hand, according to organisers, values are something that can be learnt in the process of volunteering, and it is not that important for youngsters to have these values beforehand.

The biggest discrepancy in responses between the two groups was observed in the area of motivation. On the one hand, the organisers are not satisfied with the involvement of young people in volunteer activities and mention problems such as the motivation of volunteers, which is initially very high but decreases over time because young people tend to look for quick results, which they cannot always achieve.

There is also a common attitude among organisations about the disinterest of young people today in volunteering, a lack of commitment and responsibility among young volunteers and non-continuity and unpredictability of their engagement.

Organisations' views on why youngsters don't volunteer



On the other hand, young volunteers have mentioned very different factors that influence their motivation, such as the values of the organisation, organisational culture, feeling of belonging and acceptance, scope of responsibility, impact visibility and personal commitments.

Nonetheless, when youngsters start to volunteer, they tend to stay in their organisations as much as possible, and they try to avoid leaving the organisations if they can find a solution. Leaving happens only when some big life situations occur for youngsters, such as going to university in another city, starting a family or finding employment.

Volunteering as a tool for raising awareness and changing the perception of society

Almost all the surveyed young people are sure that volunteering changed their perception of something and made them aware of a social problem. Volunteering changed their perspective and way of thinking but also made them realise who they are and who they want to be. While some volunteers changed their perception of themselves, many volunteers state that their perception of others changed - especially when working with vulnerable and minority groups. In addition, the volunteers noted that their perception of society has changed and that they now have a better understanding of social problems and needs.

Considering everything mentioned, we conclude that it is necessary to bring the perceptions of young volunteers and volunteering organisers closer, as well as to break the stigma of young people as irresponsible, passive and unpredictable. In order to make volunteer programmes more value-based and open them to young people, we bring you some tips and tricks for improvement.

GOOD PRACTICES (Portugal, Italy, Croatia)



In this section, you will find some of the best practices of both organisations and events that are particularly interesting for the way in which the values of volunteering are felt, experienced and promoted through them. By clicking the QR code below, you can hear the voices of the volunteers who present their organisations' values and how they prompt them.



Clube Safo



CLUBE SAFO

Clube Safo was founded in January 1996 in Aveiro. It started as a dynamic club for a group of lesbian women who felt the need and realised the urgency of creating a space for dialogue, sharing and claiming theirs for them. During the first eight months, bimonthly meetings were held all over the country, until in September (1996), the bulletin 'Zona Livre' was born, thus creating a means of communication and sharing of ideas among all the women who edited it, created its content and read it. Over the years, as Clube Safo grew, different activities were organised - summer camps, meetings, and New Year's Eve parties. It also maintained a presence in the political, claiming and cultural field of the LGBT movement in Portugal. The association was legally registered on 15 February 2002 in Santarém.

Many were the people who, for over 20 years, passed through the Safo Club and who made it the first and only lesbian's rights defence association in Portugal. Today, our goal is to revitalise the association and bring new policy, culture, information, sharing and exchange of ideas with women who have relationships with women, who live in Portugal but are as global and multiple as their origins and experiences.



Corpo Nacional de Escutas



In 1923, a new association was born, founded by members of the Catholic Church inspired by the action of catholic scouts from Italy. Since then, CNE – Corpo Nacional de Escutas – has grown and quickly spread across the national territory, offering opportunities for personal growth to several generations of young people in Portuguese society. CNE survived the threats of Estado Novo – a Dictatorship period – strengthening with the implementation of democracy in 1974.

In the same way, training methods and topics of our responsible adults have been subject to constant updates and improvements, being internationally recognised by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement.

CNE is a non-formal movement in youth education. It is nonprofit, non-political and non-governmental. Currently, with over 72.000 scouts in 1.100 local groups on the national territory, the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira, and Geneva and Macau, CNE is the largest Portuguese scout association, as well as the biggest Portuguese youth association.



Renovar a Mouraria



Associação Renovar a Mouraria, an NGOD of public utility, was born on March 19, 2008, from a shared dream of a group of residents committed to contributing to the revitalisation of a neighbourhood through community, educational and cultural initiatives. Today, we are a reference in local development and in work for the integration of migrants in the neighbourhood and in the city.

It is a locally based organisation with comprehensive activities. Along with multidisciplinary projects, sometimes with a European base, its services include legal, social and psychological support, free non-native Portuguese language classes and study support, a community newspaper, guided tours, a community composting network, the production of cultural events, training and awareness workshops, stimulation of local commerce, and community activation.



Gioco e benessere in pediatria



Association Gioco e Benessere In Pediatria ODV (Play and wellness in Pediatrics) carries out activities to support the psychological and relational needs of young children hospitalised at Padua Children's Hospital.

It has been active for more than 20 years in Padua Children's Hospital, offering a programme of activities aimed at preserving the mental health of the child during his or her experience of illness and hospitalisation.

Those activities are coordinated by professional educators and offered with the help of the organisation's volunteer animators.

By creating an environment around the young hospitalised children that is just right for them and proposing activities that interest them and encourage them to overcome the apathy associated with hospitalisation, the children's general state is improved, fostering a better acceptance of treatment and stimulating in them positive energies that help to cope with hospitalisation and illness.



Solidaria

SOLIDARIA

Solidaria is a Festival created by the Centre for Volunteers of Padova and Rovigo that involves the two cities entirely, both in their institutions and in their associations; an opportunity to 'make a Culture of Solidarity' through exchange and suggestions from different worlds that are interacting with each other.

With 'From Theatre to Music', as well as numerous Lectio Magistralis with guests of national importance, Solidaria wants to be a new way of interpreting our space, our actions, and our relationships.

Theatre and music represent a creative language that well expresses the 'vital impetus' of those who 'take care of each other and the others'; urban planning and architecture provide an opportunity to reflect on the opportunity to build urban spaces on a human scale and for interpersonal relations; sport is a fundamental moment of integration and socialisation; active citizenship is a way of functioning that allows us to feel responsible for each other in practice.

That wants to be the leitmotif and incipit of the event: a week of meetings, initiatives and workshops that we believe represent an important opportunity for the cities of Padua and Rovigo - an opportunity to be the centre of privileged interest in these issues.



Popoli Insieme



The association, which has been active since 1990, works to build a more welcoming community by working alongside asylum seekers and refugees in the city of Padua. It welcomes asylum seekers and refugees, accompanying them on the path to inclusion and autonomy in the territory.

In addition to the operators who professionally qualify and specialise in the work carried out by the association, what makes Popoli Insieme's many activities possible are the more than 50 volunteers who are active in reception and training and awareness-raising projects. Their contribution is fundamental in supporting the work of the operators with the newcomers in learning Italian and studying in general, job searching, and organising recreational and sports opportunities and gatherings.

The relationships of friendship that arise between the newcomers and the volunteers are the main characteristic of the association's action: migrant people find in the volunteers valuable help, a friendly face, and a stable presence in a life situation where stability does not exist.



Victim and witness support service



Udruga za podršku
žrtvama i svjedocima

Victim and witness support service was founded with the aim of improving the social position and status of victims and witnesses by providing support aimed at reducing trauma and discomfort during testimony and by advocating for the development and improvement of the legislative and institutional framework for the protection of the rights of victims and witnesses.

The scope of the National Call Center for victims of crimes and misdemeanours includes:

- Informing victims and witnesses of criminal acts and misdemeanours about their rights;
- Providing emotional support;
- Referring them to relevant civil society organisations and institutions;
- Providing various practical information;
- Assisting in filling out the financial compensation request form.

Hardworking volunteers who are the soul of the National Call Center for victims of crimes and misdemeanours are on duty every day. Since the founding of the National Call Centre until today, over 300 volunteers have been trained, and over 42,300 volunteer hours have been invested.



Association for human rights and civil participation PaRiter

UDRUGA
PARiTER

The Association for human rights and civil participation PaRiter was founded in 2014 in Rijeka with the aim of raising awareness of human rights, civil activism and the role and obligations of the individual in and towards society.

Through its activities, the organisation promotes human rights, the culture of nonviolence, tolerance and minority rights.



Are You Syrious



The Association's volunteers at first provided support to people in transit through direct humanitarian aid (clothing, footwear, food), first at the green borders and later in different camps in the Republic of Croatia.

After closing the borders, AYS continued to support people on the move through direct humanitarian aid. They created the first integration programmes implemented by AYS in the Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers in Zagreb and established the Info team, which today includes volunteers from all parts of the world who report daily on the refugee situation, from Turkey to Scandinavian countries.

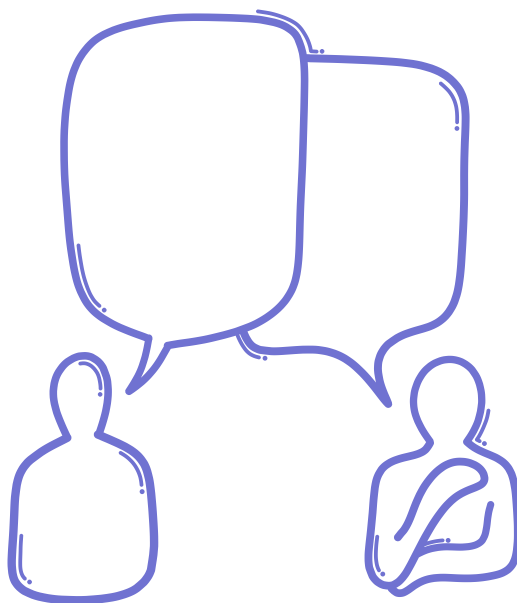
Are You Syrious has positioned itself as one of the key actors in the field of providing direct support to refugees in Croatia, as well as advocating for their human rights. Through the AYS Daily News Digest project, they are recognised as a leading channel of information about the state of human rights along the migrant route, which gives us legitimacy and strengthens us in advocacy activities at the EU and UN levels.

The highest values of their work are solidarity, openness, preservation of the dignity of each person, inclusiveness, cooperation, acceptance of diversity, activism, advocacy, independence of action, volunteer engagement and responsibility towards all stakeholders.



TIPS AND TRICKS

Recommendations and tips on how to improve volunteer programmes to be more oriented towards values



Here are some tips for organisations to improve their volunteer programmes and make them more value-oriented. This section stems from what young people reported during the focus groups but also from the content that emerged during some of the sharing meetings with the associations about the content reported in this text and presented to them beforehand.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR ORGANISATIONS

- 1 The introduction part - more time and effort should be dedicated to introducing the values, goals, tasks and wide range of activities the organisation implements so volunteers can gain a better understanding from the very beginning.
- 2 There is never too many education, training, supervision and team-building activities. These are the great moments in which the values and expectations of the organisation and its volunteers meet.
- 3 More attention should be paid to the evaluation and reflection phases as well, as that is when the volunteers are clearly seeing the impact of the work they have been doing and can connect it with their personal and organisational values.
- 4 Communication is key - this applies to both internal and external communication in the organisation - communicate your organisational values clearly. To attract more young volunteers, try changing the language and media you use to promote your organisation.
- 5 Moments of openness and honesty need to be created for volunteers to be truthful about their personal stances and values.

6 Make sure that the volunteers' time is not wasted - work on time management and the number of volunteers needed for a particular activity.

7 Create more opportunities for active participation of volunteers in the decision-making process and in content creation.

8 A good volunteer coordinator is crucial for the learning process and personal growth of the volunteers.

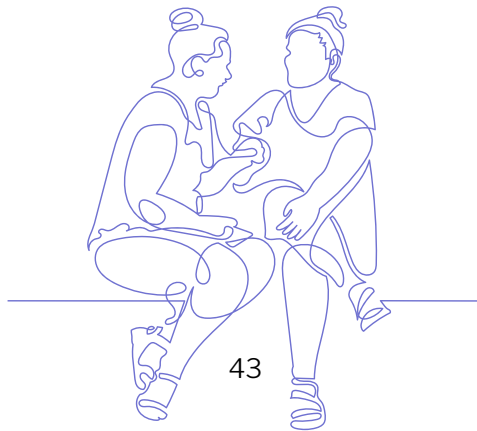
9 Inclusive volunteering - a quality programme of inclusive volunteering could be a great way for an organisation to 'live' its values and to act as a good example for its volunteers.

10 Community work - not only that it makes your organisation visible, but it also connects you with citizens and builds a network of trust and reliance, which greatly affects the impact of the volunteer programme.



TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

- 1** Give yourself time to experience association life; do not lose motivation if you are not immediately involved in the volunteer activity you would most like. All tasks in the association are important, and all of them help the achievement of the organisation's goals.
- 2** Get involved, come up with new ideas, and be patient. Associations need new energy and points of view, even if they sometimes struggle to change the ways they do things.
- 3** Try volunteering in different organisations - the first organisation may not necessarily be the best fit for you.
- 4** Tell your friends about your volunteering experience and invite them to get involved.



ANNEX 1 - CONTEXT OF VOLUNTEERING IN THE THREE COUNTRIES

ITALY

In Italy, volunteering has two great traditions: an ecclesial and Catholic one founded on the concept of Christian pietas and still very much alive, and one developed since the nineteenth century, from the working-class and socialist tradition.

At the normative level, solidarity already finds a place in the Constitution of the Italian Republic in effect since 1948. Articles 2, 3 and 4 assign the function of solidarity to the community - citizens must be aware of their rights and stimulate public administrations to carry out their functions efficiently, and they all must be committed to the betterment of the community in which we live and the world in general.

Since the mid-1970s, there has been an important development of the third sector. Voluntary work and associationism become more aware of their political and cultural role: it is no longer enough only to perform charity actions - interventions aimed at affirming and protecting the rights and duties of all citizens are necessary.

At the legislative level, the first law on volunteering is No. 266 of 1991 (Framework Law on Volunteering), which defines voluntary activity, regulates voluntary organisations and defines their relations with public institutions.

Then, in 2000, Law No. 328 on social policies was drafted, which aims to generate a system of social services based on cooperation among all actors to foster equity and solidarity. It gives the third sector a primary role in the social and economic system by introducing the principle of subsidiarity, which will later be reaffirmed in the amendment of the constitution in 2001.

The latest reform affecting associationism is Legislative Decree No. 117 of 3 July 2017, which repeals the aforementioned laws, introduces seven types of entities that will be able to be defined as third-sector entities (including voluntary organisations and social promotion organisations), defines the 'activities of general interest' that third-sector entities will have to deal with, and creates a registry in which organisations must be registered in order to benefit from tax breaks. More than 97.300 entities are registered in the registry.

The reform has introduced greater transparency and new opportunities but also new bureaucratic requirements that, especially for smaller organisations that base their activities exclusively on volunteering, represent a management burden which, in some cases, even leads to them considering stopping their activities. That is leading to an acceleration of changes that have already been taking place for years and that concern a generational and cultural shift in Italian volunteering and the third sector, with the emergence of new organisational forms that appear better equipped to deal with contemporary complexities and to intercept new needs, but which are sometimes very different from those historically present and rooted in the community.

CROATIA

The first known voluntary associations in Croatia were formed mostly by women during the 19th and early 20th centuries as charitable societies, which were mainly church-based. Following World War I, charities were referred to as 'Red Cross Branches' or operated within city committees. In the period of socialism after World War II, volunteering was not well-known, and citizens participated in state-organised actions. However, the recent Homeland War led to the involvement of many citizens in humanitarian and peacekeeping actions.

Croatia has had a Law on Volunteering since 2007, which was amended by the Croatian Parliament in 2013. The law includes provisions on general principles of volunteering, the scope of responsibilities of the body responsible for implementing the law, the duties and composition of the advisory body, an ethical code, the state voluntary award, contractual relations between volunteers and volunteer involving organisations and the regulation of supervision activities and penalties for violations. The Volunteers' Code of Ethics provides guidelines for the involvement of volunteers in general well-being activities. Volunteering is also recognised as a valuable socially beneficial activity in the school curricula of civic education for primary and secondary schools, and national, regional, and local youth strategies aim to promote active citizenship and youth participation in social processes.

The Law on Volunteering in Croatia outlines the regulations and restrictions for underage volunteers. Children under the age of 15 are only allowed to participate in educational volunteering activities that contribute to their development and socialisation and must have the approval of relevant government bodies, educational institutions, or social welfare institutions. Underage volunteers who are 15 years old are allowed to sign a volunteering contract with the written consent of their legal representative and can volunteer in activities that are appropriate for their age, physical, psychological, and moral stage of development and skills. It is important to note that underage volunteers must not be put at risk and that their health, development, and academic performance should not be compromised while volunteering.

There is currently a lack of longitudinal research projects on volunteerism in Croatia, making it difficult to gather conclusive empirical data about the overall number of volunteers in Croatia. However, according to official statistics and yearly reports from the Ministry of Labor, Pension System, Family, and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia, it is estimated that there were 59 161 volunteers in Croatia in 2021. Since the population in Croatia in 2021 is estimated to be 3 871 833, according to this data, the percentage of people volunteering in Croatia is still extremely low, around 2%. However, it is worth noting that the actual number of volunteers may be higher since not all volunteer involving organisations are required to submit reports.

PORTUGAL

The concept of volunteering is not the same throughout Europe. Different civil society structures can result in different ways for the community to organise itself and contribute to the common good and its local development.

In this sense, different European countries have specific legal frameworks to define volunteering, while others have no specific legislation. That is one of the most relevant issues when analysing the case of Portugal, which falls under the concept of formal volunteering, not recognising informal volunteering in its legislation:

‘The set of actions of social and community interest carried out in a disinterested way by people, within the scope of projects, programmes and other forms of intervention at the service of individuals, families and communities developed on a non-profit basis by public or private entities’ (Law no. 71/98, of November 3).

As such, in Portugal, the only recognised voluntary actions are those that consist of acts of active and participative citizenship in a disinterested and non-monetary way, with the purpose of social inclusion. That leads us to believe that this is one of the main reasons why Portugal, statistically, is among the countries with the lowest rate of volunteering in the European Union - 12%, the EU average being 24%.

In fact, this percentage is insufficient to describe the variety of activities carried out by the Portuguese population in the field of informal volunteering, in which we highlight the involvement of the Portuguese youth in causes such as the fight against climate change, human rights and actions led by their peers. A trend that has been growing and can be seen in studies, such as that of the António Sérgio Cooperative for the Social Economy (CASES), which, by including a broader range of activities and young people from the age of 15 onwards, found a 30% increase in volunteering by 2021.

Regarding formal volunteering, according to the National Statistics Institute - INE (2019, p. 10), 'The largest number of volunteers in social economy entities (nonprofit organisations) was essentially concentrated in social services (39.8%), followed by religious organisations (17.3%) and culture, communication and recreation activities (16.5%)'.

On a general analysis, and according to the study 'Young people in Portugal today' by the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation, during the last year, of the 2.2 million young people consulted who are between 15 and 34 years of age and living in Portugal, 40% signed a petition, 16% did voluntary work, 12% collaborated with an organisation, 10% took part in a demonstration, and 9% gave money to a cause.

REFERENCES

- 2020 - Volunteering Practices in the Twenty-First Century - UN Research, commissioned by the Secretariat of the Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for the Global Technical Meeting on Volunteering in 2020.
- 2022 S. Sirris: Frivillighet og ledelse av frivillige
- 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report Building Equal and Inclusive Societies - United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme



VOLUNTEERING
INSPIRED by **VALUES**