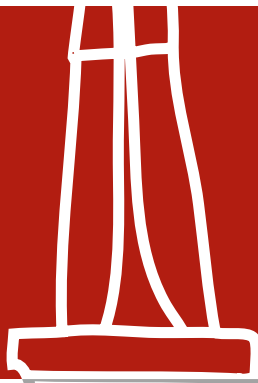




General Assembly

# **“Volunteering as a route (back) to employment”**

Paris, France | 23 March 2007 | Final Report



EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE



CEV is supported by the European Commission within the Europe for Citizens Programme. Sole responsibility for the website and its content lies with CEV. The European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.



**General Assembly**

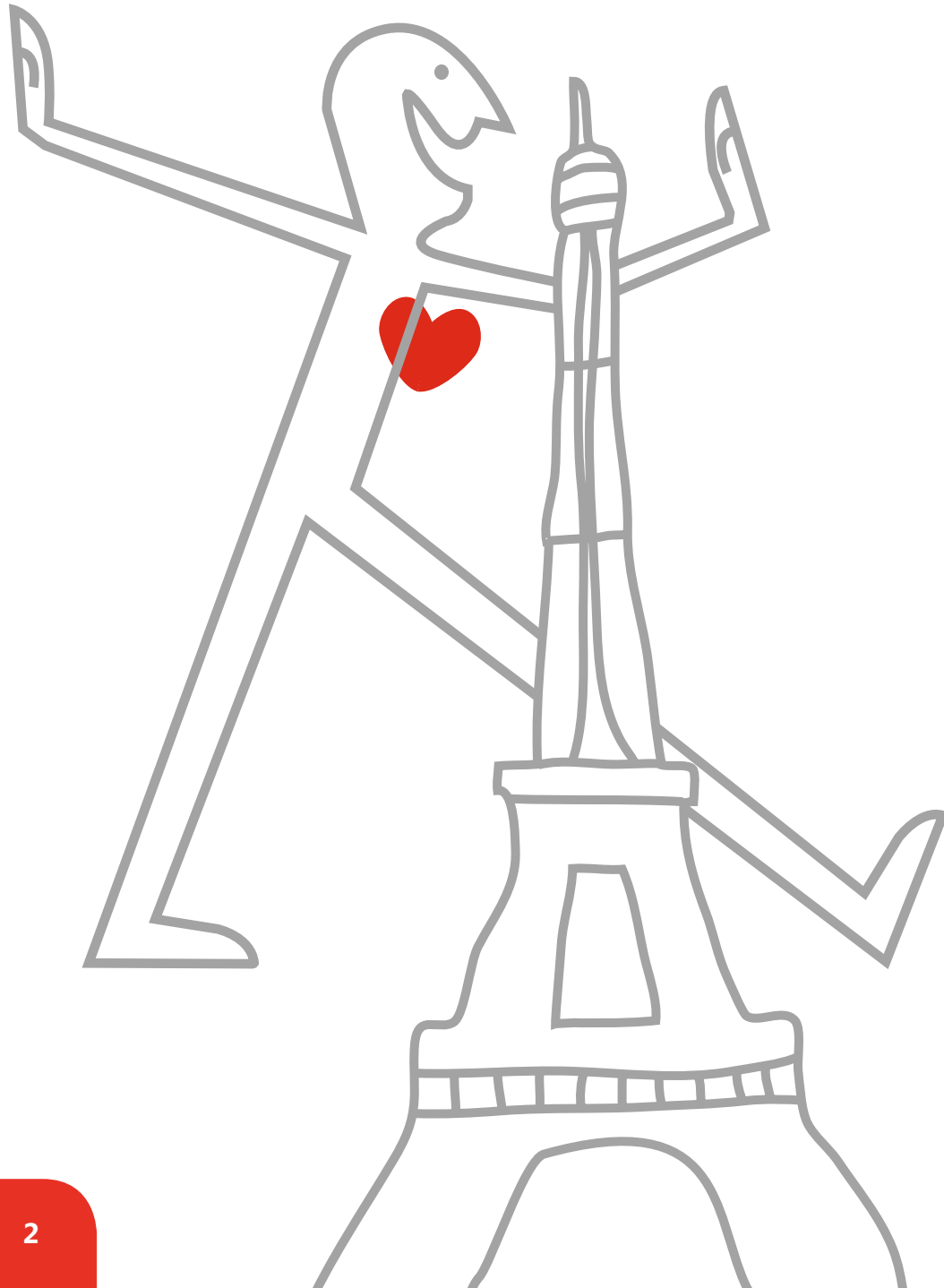
**“Volunteering as a route (back) to  
employment”**

**Paris, France**  
23 March 2007

Final Report



EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE



## Table of contents

1. Objectives and expected outcomes	5
2. Executive summary and conclusions	6
3. Programme	10
4. PARTICIPANTS	12
5. Welcome session and Expert Plenary	18
6. WORKSHOPS (WS) – GOOD PRACTICE SESSIONS	25
WS 1) Federacio Catalana de Voluntariat Social (Catalonia)	25
WS 2) Volunteering Ireland	30
WS 3) SNC (France)	38
WS 4) Caritas Germany	43
WS 5) Association MI-Split (Croatia)	47
WS 6) Halley Movement (Mauritius)	53
7. VOICES FROM PARTICIPANTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	58

## 1. Objectives and expected outcomes

CEV General Assemblies are a forum for CEV member organisation and partners, volunteer centres, volunteer development agencies, volunteering involving organisations and other interested stakeholders to meet, exchange good practice and discuss recent “hot” topics on the policy agenda concerning volunteering.

This General Assembly was special in that it was a joined event with an IAVE regional conference, bringing together representatives of the International Association for Volunteer Effort of which CEV is a member organisation widening the scope and perspective of our debates.

The General Assembly in Paris focused on the question whether **volunteering is or should be a route (back) to employment**. 102 delegates could attend 6 workshops and one expert panel discussion giving an overview of good practice examples where volunteering proved to be an instrument to promote employability – and discuss the sometimes difficult boundaries between volunteering, the labour market and attempts from the state to “misuse” volunteering as an obligation for the unemployed. The following items have been specifically highlighted:

- **Volunteering as means to enter / re-enter the labour market**
- **Volunteer to raise skills and social capital**
- **Collaboration with other stakeholders such as employment agencies / public or private social services / schools / universities**
- **Volunteering and unemployment benefits**
- **Volunteering as obligation for long-term unemployed?**

## 2. Executive summary and conclusions

The discussions in the panels and the workshops have revealed, that the topic of volunteering as a route (back) to employment is salient, high on the agenda – and controversial with many traps to be avoided. The presentations covered both volunteering **of** job seekers and unemployed persons – and volunteers that work **for** this target group supporting them in their way (back) to the labour market.

The good practice examples presented indicates that volunteering clearly plays an important role to develop **peoples' potential** in general and that it contributes to the **improvement of self-esteem**, including a feeling of usefulness, less solitude and reduction of family tensions, the restoring of identity. Volunteering helps the creation of a **personal network of support** and, thus, of **social capital**. Volunteers **develop competences**, and especially for young people, volunteering contributes to actually clarify the **professional orientation**. All these positive results of a volunteering experience may raise the employability of the volunteer.

These positive benefits of volunteering seem to be more and more taken into account in social and employment policies as mean to support people to find their way (back) to employment – leading to **cooperation between employment agencies and volunteer organisations**. There is indeed potential for raising the employability and the personal potential of job seekers through volunteer assignments and it may be an added value of the efforts of the employment agencies to take into account the possibility of proposing volunteering for job seekers and unemployed.

However, **volunteer centres can and must not become a replacement or appendix to employment agencies**. The role of employment agencies is to bring people to the labour market – the role of volunteer centres to provide good quality volunteer placements. In some cases these two objectives match “accidentally”. But volunteering **must not be exploited as “alternative employment measure”**: If lines between the two missions become blurred, volunteering will lose out on its genuine value and volunteer centres will find themselves serving a purpose which will divert their efforts from their core business, which is the promotion of volunteering as such with all the positive effects it has. And it also shall be **decided on a case-by-case basis whether volunteering**

**can help a person to find its way (back) to employment**. There must not be an automatism bringing job seekers to volunteer centres.

Where volunteer centres do engage with job seekers and unemployed people in order to raise skills and employability, **the state sector needs to provide appropriate means and monetary support to do so**. It cannot be taken for granted that volunteer centres just deliver additional work while temporary work agencies and sometimes even business structures do get substantial funding or monetary incentives to employ the most disadvantaged groups.

While acknowledging the positive effect of volunteering, it needs to be stated that it must remain **a free choice, should not replace social measures to help the unemployed; and must not be an obligation to receive unemployment benefits**. It must not be confused with other forms of work or (obligatory) community service

There seems to be still in many cases a **gap between associations that promote social inclusion** of unemployed and job seekers on the one side and **volunteer centres** on the other. As volunteering can contribute to social inclusion **collaboration** needs to be strong and directly sought.

Job seekers and long-term unemployed people face serious challenges in their lives amongst which, very often, **stigmatisation**. This will prevent many of them to volunteer, as they fear discrimination. Volunteer organisations that want to involve this target group have to find the right balance between developing a targeted recruitment strategy and positive discrimination on the one side and avoiding stigmatisation on the other.

In order to tap into the full potential of volunteering of and for unemployed persons to facilitate access to the labour market, **further research is needed**: Research on the reasons why job seekers and unemployed are still less involved in volunteering and an impact assessment of volunteer experiences for job seekers and unemployed.

Research and experience suggest that **volunteering might actually be a “trap”** with negative side effects: Long-term unemployed might indeed find volunteering more attractive than going (back) to employment, a world that they very often have experienced to be competitive and hostile. Solidarity, mutual trust, voluntary commitment and voluntary personal development are genuine values of volunteering. While this is positive in a way, volunteering might

be **victim of its own success** and could become detrimental for some, a fact to bear in mind. Thus, volunteer organisations have a **duty and responsibility to prevent job seekers of "installing themselves in volunteering"**, becoming full time volunteers and "forgetting" about or postponing their job search. One way of doing so is proposing tailored **activities to unemployed and job seekers that are actually and primarily contributing to them raising their skills and competences** according to a personal development plan.

Available research data suggests that people that have been involved in volunteering are less likely to be unemployed. Clearly a call for promoting volunteering as such – as it might **be a way not back to employment but a way of avoiding unemployment**.

A potential **concern voiced by participants is that volunteering may be "used" to replace standard jobs** – using "cheap" job seekers as replacement for paid workers, especially in the world of associations and organizations. This is also true in cases where companies attract volunteers offering free training and employment if the training is successful, a practice that can be named "hidden recruitment. In cases the state subsidizes voluntary engagement of job seekers, it might prevent at the same time "regular" jobs being created. There is no clear cut solution nor conclusion to this as on the other hand **voluntary engagement has led in a lot of cases to paid employment of the volunteer**.

In addition, volunteer organisations anticipate and react to social change and detecting needs in society, and are, thus, very often initiator for the creation of new services – **and contributes to the creation of new jobs**.

Volunteering and its learning outcome are still not necessarily recognized. Tools and instruments to **identify skills and competences that volunteers gain** through their engagement may be developed to give official recognition to non-formal and informal learning. Especially for social excluded groups and people outside formal education and training it may prove crucial that learning through volunteering gets a recognized status.

Good practice shows that **employee volunteering within a CSR strategy** can play a significant role: Employees that are committed as volunteers to mentor and advise unemployed people how to raise their skills and to find a job can make a significant difference, corporates can design specific volunteer programmes for their employees to allow them to involve in this kind of activities with their knowledge and expertise.

These different issues show that the way (back) to employment is yet another role volunteering can play – be it through targeted action or, very often, as a positive "side effect" of a volunteer assignment. Raising employability is often an added value of volunteering, but not necessarily the main reason for it.

However, given the risks and pitfalls mentioned, this is an area where volunteer centres have to be alert and cautious and develop clear policies in order to indeed use all the potential volunteering has, but at the same time keeping its genuine value and reason to be.

Markus Held  
Petra Granholm  
CEV

Brussels, March 2007

## 3. Programme

PROGRAMME: Friday, 23 March 2007

VENUE: CDC, Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, 72, avenue Pierre Mendès,  
METRO « Gare d'Austerlitz » or « Quai de la gare », Tel. : +33 1 58 50 00 0

08:45 – Registrations

09:15 – Opening session – Welcome

- **Christopher Spence** CEV President
- **Jean Bastide** President, France Bénévolat
- **Patrick Baquin** Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, CDC

09:30 – **Keynote speeches / Round table, Chair: Markus Held, CEV**

- **Dominique Thierry, Vice-President France Bénévolat:**  
*Volunteering as an instrument towards employment*
- **Jean-Baptiste de Foucault, President SNC** (Solidarités nouvelles face au chômage):  
*Public Employment policies and the challenge of volunteering*
- **John Lee, Reseacher, PhD Reseacher, University of Paisley, Scotland**  
*Volunteering, employability and long-term illness in the UK*
- **Marta Medlinska, Council of Europe**  
*The contribution of the Council of Europe to enhancing voluntary service for young people in Europe*

11:00 – Coffee Break

11:30 – **Workshops (WS) – Good practice session I**

- **WS 1) Federacio Catalana de Voluntariat Social (Catalonia):**  
*A new Field for volunteering: "Helping people to gain access to the labour market"*
- **WS 2) Volunteering Ireland:**  
*Vol4All - Inclusive Volunteering*
- **WS 3) SNC (France):**  
*Renewed solidarity to tackle unemployment*

13:30 – LUNCH

14:30 – **Workshop – Good practice session II**

- **WS 4) Caritas Germany:**  
*Tutoring of unemployed youths by volunteers*
- **WS 5) Association MI-Split (Croatia):**  
*Volunteering as a route (back) to employment in Croatia*
- **WS 6) Halley Movement (Mauritius):**  
*Volunteer Mentorship Programme for young entrepreneurs*

16:30 – Coffee Break

17:00 – 17.45 **Final plenary: Conclusions of the day, Chair: Christopher Spence**

## 4. PARTICIPANTS

Name	Organisation	Email address
1. Sergey ALESHCHENOK	Russian Volunteer Development Center, Russian Federation	alesenok@rinet.ru
2. Vitalis ANOPIE	IAVE, Nigeria	cussonsvit@yahoo.com
3. Paul E. ATKINSON	Groupe d'Économie Mondiale de Sciences Po, France	Paul.Atkinson@sciences-po.org
4. Geneviève BAR	France Bénévolat, France	
5. Jean BASTIDE	France Bénévolat, France	
6. Kylee BATES	Volunteering Australia, Australia	Kylee.Bates@facsia.gov.au
7. Nicole BEAU REGER	Agence du benevolat, Luxembourg	agence.benevolat@pt.lu
8. Patrick BAQUIN	Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, France	
9. Michelle BELLET	France Bénévolat, France	
10. Basma ben ALAYA	France Bénévolat, France	
11. Galina BODRENKOVA	Russian Volunteer Development Centre Russian Federation	gbodrenkova@yandex.ru
12. Gérard BONNEFON	France Bénévolat, France	
13. Catherine BERANGER	France Bénévolat, France	
14. Françoise BETERMIER	VMEH	
15. Vincent BLYWEERT	SECOURS CATHOLIQUE	
16. Lucie BROCHTER	Touiza Solidarite	
17. Mahendranath BUSGOPAUL	Halley Movement, Mauritius	halley@intnet.mu
18. Branka CICAČAK	The European Volunteer Centre, Belgium	communication@cev.be

Name	Organisation	Email address
19. Mabel Ann (Mae) CHAO	United Nation Volunteers, Germany	Mae.chao@unvolunteers.org
20. Elza Maria CHAMBEL	CNPV, Portugal	ELZA.m.chambel@seg-social.pt
21. Thérèse CHEINEY	SECOURS CATHOLIQUE	
22. Alexandru Catalin CODREANU	ProVobis National Volunteer Centre, Romania	pr@provobis.ro
23. Jacqueline COUSTE	France Bénévolat, France	
24. Györgyi CSERI	National Volunteer Centre, Hungary	cseri.gyorgyi@onkentes.hu
25. Kamila CZERVINSKA		
26. Raphaële DE ZUTTER	Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk vzw, Belgium	r.de.zutter@skynet.be
27. Monique FERARD	France Bénévolat, France	
28. Ester FONFRIA	Fundar, Spain	efonfria@fundar.es
29. András Tibor F. TÓTH	National Volunteer Centre, Hungary	ftoth.andras@onkentes.hu
30. Ksenija FONOVIC	SPES, Italy	ksfonovic@spes.lazio.it
31. Jean-Baptiste DE FOUCAULT	SNC, France	
32. Jean-Claude DEMAY	France Bénévolat, France	
33. Brigitte DUAULT	France Bénévolat, France	
34. Marie DUROS	CERPHI	
35. Katja Andrea EICHHORN	Deutscher Caritasverband, Germany	Katja.eichhorn@web.de
36. Mark GIBSON	BTCV, UK	m.Gibson@btcv.org.uk
37. Nadine GLAD	France Bénévolat, France	
38. Eliane GOUDET	France Bénévolat, France	
39. Bernard GOUSSET	France Bénévolat, France	

Name	Organisation	Email address
40. Petra GRANHOLM	The European Volunteer Centre, Belgium	intern@cev.be
41. Randolph GRANZER	Mentoring-Europe, France	Randolf.graenzer@mentoring-europe.net
42. Jenny GREEN	Volunteering England, UK	Jenny.green@st-catherineshospice.org.uk
43. Karin GRUHLKE	Bürgerkomitee Sudstadt e. V. Parchim and Netzwerk freiwilliges Engagement M-V e.V., Germany	buergerkomitee-parchim@t-online.de
44. Eva HAMBACH	Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk vzw, Belgium	Eva.Hambach@vsvw.be
45. Markus HELD	The European Volunteer Centre, Belgium	cev@cev.be
46. Maria HERTING	Deutscher Caritasverband, Germany	maria.herting@caritas.de
47. André HOCHBERG	France Bénévolat, France	
48. Jessica HOLC	SNC, France	
49. Arthur HOSTE	Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk vzw, Belgium	tuur.hoste@rodekruis.be
50. Vahilda HUZEJROVIC	Osmijeh, Bosnia and Herzegovina	osmijeh@bih.net.ba
51. Nives IVELJA	Association "MI", Croatia	nives@udrugami.hr
52. Catherine JACKSON	North West network, UK	Catherine.Jackson@oldham.gov.uk
53. Maria JOSE SUBIELA	Business in the Community, UK	Maria-jose.subiela@bitc.org.uk
54. Viola KREBS	ICVolontaires, Switzerland	viola@icvolontaires.org
55. Geneviève Le CALENNEC	France Bénévolat, France	
56. John LEE	University of Paisley, UK	lee--em0@wpmail.paisley.ac.uk
57. Robert LEIGH	United Nation Volunteers, Germany	Robert.leigh@unv.org

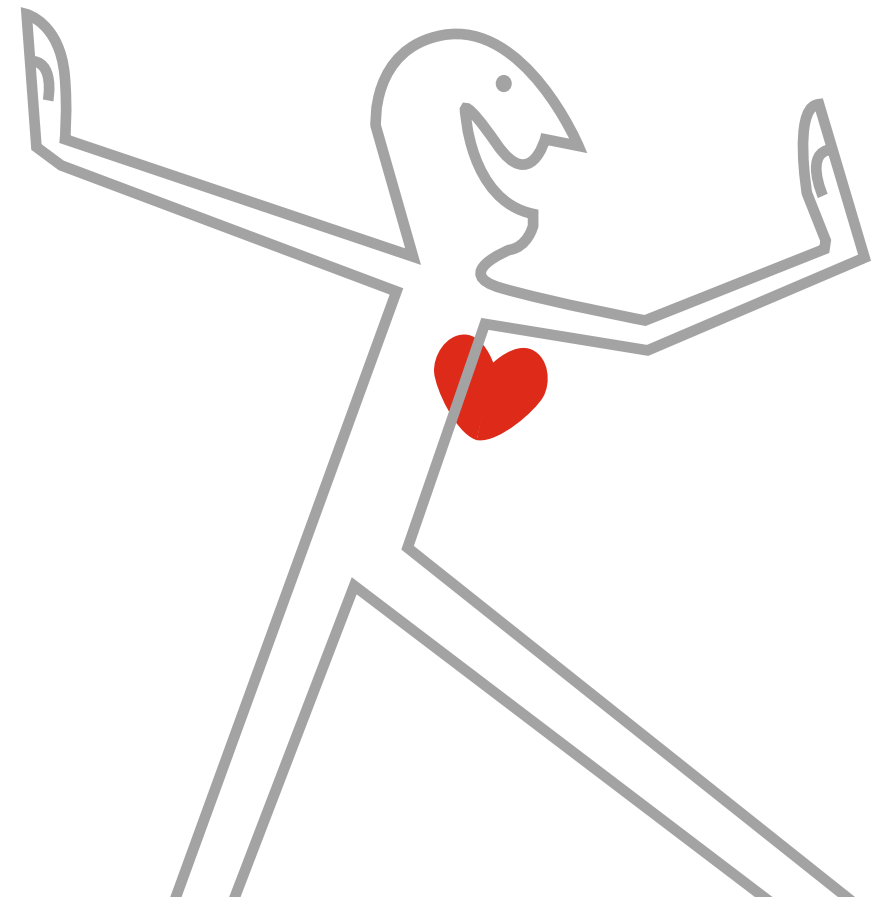
Name	Organisation	Email address
58. Veerle LEROY	Het Punt vzw, Belgium	hetpunt@busmail.net
59. Gisela LUCKE	ARBES, Germany	jogi.lucke@t-online.de
60. Glória MARTINS	Tavira Council, Portugal	
61. Chiara MAGINI	Volunteering Ireland	chiara@volunteeringireland.ie
62. Lluç MARTÍ PE	Barcelona Voluntaria, Spain	projectes@barcelonavoluntaria.org
63. Andrée MAUGER	France Bénévolat, France	
64. Yvonne MCKENNA	Volunteer Centres Ireland	yvonne@volunteer.ie
65. Marta MEDLINSKA	Council of Europe, France	marta.medlinska@coe.int
66. Bertilde MICHE	France Bénévolat, France	
67. Ariane MOULIN	France Bénévolat, France	
68. Alzbeta MRACKOVA	C.A.R.D.O., Slovakia	a.mrackova@cardo-eu.net
69. Dr. Mike NAFTALI	National Council for Volunteering in Israel, Israel	naftalim@post.tau.ac.il
70. Christina NICOLESCU	ProVobis National Volunteer Centre, Romania	provobis@provobis.ro
71. Tereza NOVAK	Slovene Philanthropy, Slovenia	tereza.novak@filantropija.org
72. Dominique PICARD	Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations	
73. Emile PINEL	North West Network, UK	emile@nwnetwork.org.uk
74. Anne POITRENAUD	France Bénévolat, France	
75. Juan POYATOS	Fundar, Spain	jpoyatos@fundar.es
76. Élia Cristina PUGA RAMOS MARTINIS	Tavira Council, Portugal	emartins@cm-tavira.pt
77. Renzo RAZZANO	SPES, Italy	presidenza@spes.lazio.it
78. Sophie RICHARDSON	ICVolontaires, Switzerland	sophie.Richardson@icvolontaires.org

## 4. Participants

Name	Organisation	Email address
79. Colette ROBERT	France Bénévolat, France	
80. Ariane RODERT	Forum for voluntary social work, Sweden	ariane.rodert@socialforum.se
81. Elodie SABATIER – CHASTANG	ALES BENEVOLAT	
82. Evelyne SAINT MARTIN	ADEMA	
83. Muriel SAGET	France Bénévolat, France	
84. Cyrille SCHMID	ICVolunteers	
85. Olga SOZANSKA	HESTIA, Czech Republic	
86. Christopher Alexander SPENCE	Volunteering England, UK	gilly.glyn@volunteeringengland.org
87. Marijke STEENBERGEN	Movisie, The Netherlands	m.steenbergen@movisie.nl
88. Andrée-Marie STERVINO	France Bénévolat, France	
89. Suzanna SZABO	France Bénévolat, France	
90. Annie TAKARLI	Touiza Solidarite	osozanska@hest.cz
91. Michel de TAPOL	France Bénévolat, France	
92. Dominique THIERRY	France Bénévolat, France	
93. Saskia VAN GRINSVEN	Movisie, The Netherlands	s.vangrinsven@movisie.nl
94. Gwen VAN ROEKEL	Unive Insurance, The Netherlands	g.vanroekel@unive.nl
95. Katrien VAN VAERENBERGH	Het Punt vzw, Belgium	hetpunt_vorming@skynet.be
96. Aina VERA	Federacio Catalana , Spain	laboral@federacio.net
97. Marie-Christine VERGIAT	DIESES	
98. Maria VILÁ MIRAS	Federacio Catalana, Spain	internacional@federacio.net
99. Jacques VOISARD	Institut Paul Delouvrier	

## 4. Participants

Name	Organisation	Email address
100. Mark WILLIAMS	Volunteering England, UK	mark.williams@volunteeringengland.org.uk
101. Elena ZAKHAROVA	Sozidanie Foundation, Russian Federation	sozidanie2000@yandex.ru



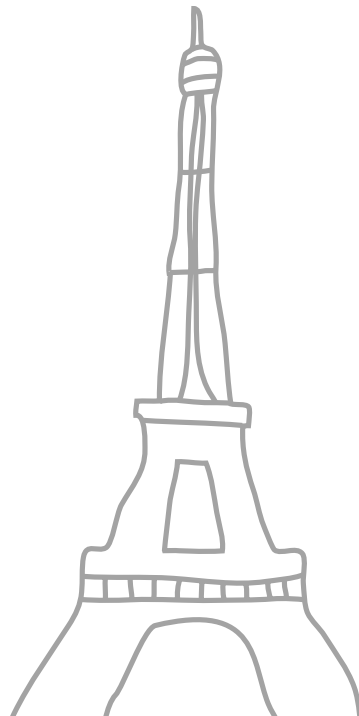
## 5. Welcome session and Expert Plenary

CEV president Christopher Spence opens the conference noting that 2007 does not only see the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, but also the 15th birthday of CEV. CEV's statutes were signed in Paris 1992 by five founding organisations - and he is delighted to welcome 15 years later 51 member organisations from all over Europe. Throughout the years CEV members have realized that they have many things in common in their work to promote, facilitate and support volunteering - and that they have much to learn from each other. This is CEV's mission and 'reason to be', and it will continue to support its members in their work. He heartily welcomes the delegates of IAVE, the International Association for Volunteer Effort, that for the first time attend a joint CEV - IAVE conference. This may well become a model for future collaboration as the exchange of knowledge and inspiration does not stop at the borders of Europe. Finally he expresses his warm thanks to France Bénévolat and CDC, the hosts of the conference that provided the logistical support to make this event happen.

Jean Bastide, president of France Bénévolat, stresses that the theme of this CEV General Assembly, "volunteering as a route back to employment" is currently a hot topic within France Bénévolat. He underlines that

volunteering shall not become in any case an instrument to create unpaid "subjobs" - but that volunteering is about creating opportunities for those who are in great despair. This needs to be recognized if volunteering is to retain its genuine role and value - and this should be borne in mind when discussing this important topic.

Patrick Baquin, Director of Partnerships of the CDC, Caisse de Dépôts et Consignations, is delighted to welcome the delegates to CDC one of whose mission is to promote and support employment in France. He is pleased to see such an impressive wide range of nationalities gathering at his building and wishes fruitful discussions.



### Keynote speeches - Round table, chair: Markus Held

Markus Held, CEV director, opens the round table welcoming and thanking the speakers. CEV has chosen a very interesting but in the meantime challenging topic for its General Assembly - addressing the relationship between volunteering and employment, two "worlds" that are usually strictly and deliberately kept apart from each other. When discussing volunteering as a route (back) to employment, a couple of questions arise:

- What is it exactly that can make volunteering a route to employment?
- Where is the line between volunteering as a useful way of raising employability and it being "misused" for purposes that it is not meant to serve?
- How should collaboration with other stakeholders such as employment agencies, public or private social services and business work?

### Dominique Thierry, vice-president of France Bénévolat, Volunteering as an instrument towards employment".

Mr. Thierry starts the panel presentations by addressing the conditions to be fulfilled in order to use volunteering as an instrument towards employment. France Bénévolat has researched its volunteering population and has come to some interesting results.

Around 30 % of the people that

come to France Bénévolat (FB) are job seekers, which justifies that FB puts a special focus on this group of volunteers and possible implications this has on the work of the National Volunteer Center in France.

FB's Volunteers can be classified into 4 groups according to their attitudes:

- The "driven" volunteers, who come to FB with a precise strategy "I want to volunteer and this will help me find a job" (around 20%)
- The "discoverers" finding out at a later stage "accidentally" about the benefits that volunteering had for them (40%)
- The "usual suspects" that have volunteered for a long time already, and
- The "multiply excluded" for whom sometimes very basic social needs are met through their volunteering experience, such as leaving behind loneliness. These are not always "identifiable" as such as they do not want to get stigmatised yet again when starting their volunteer "career" and keep silent about their disadvantaged situation.

FB has identified 4 potential types of impact of volunteering on the individuals that seek to volunteer.

- The improvement of self-esteem, including a feeling of usefulness, less solitude and reduction of family tensions, the restoring of identity.
- The creation of a personal network of support and of "social capital".
- The clarification of the professional orientation, possibly a "career project" through the volunteering activity.

There were cases where volunteers that were not satisfied with their current job found out what they really wanted to do.

- The development of competence.

However, in some cases volunteering might be seen as too good for the volunteers turning it into a risk: There are cases where volunteers "install" themselves in volunteering, enjoy it so much that it is hard for them (or not desirable) to look for a paid job. The positive and empowering environment that volunteering provides may become a disincentive to go (back) to the labour market where very often harsh and less "enjoyable" working environments prevail.

While volunteer organisations have to be careful not to stigmatise job seekers and unemployed persons when they apply for a volunteer placement, there is the necessity of specifically mentor and accompany these volunteers – only then volunteering can and will have the above-mentioned positive impact for them and does not become a "trap". At the same time, volunteer organisations need to be very cautious not to play the role of employment agencies but remain what they are: centres for the promotion of volunteering with its genuine roles in society. These are major conditions so that volunteering becomes a step on the road (back) to employment.

### **Jean-Baptiste de Foucauld, President SNC: Public Employment policies and the challenge of volunteering**

When talking about volunteering of and for unemployed people their specific life period had to be taken into account: Unemployment may trigger lack of self esteem, loneliness and the feeling that competences are getting lost – inhibiting unemployed persons to look for a decent position. At the same time, public services do very often not have the necessary time or sufficient resources to provide – is this a call for more volunteers, "active citizens", to get involved to support this target group? Or is a call to make these unemployed people "volunteers" to help them escape their situation?

Unemployed persons are still very much underrepresented in the volunteer population. SNC has been working with France Bénévolat on this issues finding that only 20 % of job seekers are involved in volunteering. Studies on reasons for this are scarce, but suggest that the following might contribute to this:

- Lack of time could be one (finding a job being itself a fulltime job). Job seekers may feel stigmatized and do not involve easily in social activities with a risk of stigmatization; in some cases those involved in volunteering might even stop doing so

- Lack of self-esteem when unemployed people might feel that they do not have the competences to involve

in a volunteer assignment

SCN is planning a research project in this together with a temporary work agency to shed light on reasons for unemployed being underrepresented in volunteering – in order to better assess in what way volunteering of and for unemployed can be fruitful.

On the other hand, available data suggest that people that have been involved in volunteering are less likely to be unemployed. Clearly a call for promoting volunteering as such – as it might be a way not back to employment but a way of avoiding unemployment.

Those that are involved in volunteering report that clearly, volunteering has helped them to escape loneliness and to re-create social bonds.

On the other hand, one has to be very careful about possible "negative side effects": Not any volunteering is a priori good! Mr. Thierry has already mentioned that "working" as a volunteer might indeed be more attractive to some than to go back to employment, a world that they very often have experienced to be competitive and hostile. Solidarity, mutual trust, voluntary commitment and voluntary personal development are essential parts of in the volunteering world – and might eventually become a "trap" for people to wanting to back to the labour market reality.

Volunteer organizations clearly have to be aware of potential risks of "using" volunteering as a route (back) to employment: Volunteering has to re-

main voluntary – there cannot be ANY obligation involved, it must under no circumstances be obligatory. That also means that unemployment benefits may not be linked to an obligation of the benefit receiver to volunteer in order to continue receiving the benefits. If volunteering was used in that way it will lose its genuine value and benefit.

Another potential risk is volunteering to be "used" to replace (or to avoid creating) standard jobs – using "cheap" job seekers as replacement for paid workers, especially in the world of associations and organizations. If the state subsidizes voluntary engagement of job seekers, it might prevent at the same time "regular" jobs being created. There is no clear cut solution nor conclusion to this as on the other hand voluntary engagement has led in a lot of cases to paid employment.

Volunteering may and may not be an instrument leading (back) to employment, it has to be tackled with caution and it needs to be decided individually on a case by case basis if and how it used.

### **John Lee, researcher at the University of Paisley, Scotland: Volunteering, employability and long-term illness in the UK**

In the UK there has been a major restructuring of employment policies. Paid employment is now at the centre of social policy and the promotion of

social inclusion, and the UK government has recently acknowledged that fact that volunteering is a mean to enhance employability. At the same time there is some uncertainty about this though, since studies suggest that people who volunteer actually stay longer on unemployment benefits than those who do not volunteer.

In 2005 there were 2,7 million people in the UK claiming incapacity benefits for long-term illness. These people are not included in any unemployment statistics; they represent a share of society in "hidden unemployment". The research findings are based on semi-structured interviews with volunteers that are on incapacity benefits.

What is the motivation for them to volunteer? There are two identifiable narratives regarding their decision to volunteer: Some have reached a "crisis point" that makes them react; others start when things are getting better, volunteering being one of the steps for further change. Very often, a third party is involved to bring them to volunteer: A friend, a family member or, in most cases, a "helping professional" suggesting volunteering; a phenomenon called "social prescription of volunteering". Typically the volunteers interviewed seem to be involved in fairly routine activities with little scope for autonomy, decision-making or customer facing work. A striking feature is that people who have the most serious problems want to use their experience to help other people with similar problems. They describe the main benefits

of their volunteering engagement to be regaining a sense of purpose and responsibility, a structure in their lives, less drug abuse and a feeling of lower stress and pressure compared to what they experienced in their previous work positions.

The research data suggests that motivating persons on long-term illness benefits to volunteer is not the major challenge. It can also be shown that volunteering helps them to address some of the problems and challenges that prevent them from getting back to employment.

On the other hand, the volunteer placements of the interviewed seem to not always specifically address skills development but rather remain a "replacement activity". As getting back to work is only one of the issues to solve for persons on long-term illness benefits this might not be surprising. Volunteering may be seen for them addressing problems such as "fearing a work place" in general, low self-esteem and lack of structure in their lives. Addressing these challenges might, eventually, indirectly enhance their employability but raising skills and employability does not seem to be the major focus for the volunteers and the volunteer organisation.

### **Marta Medlinska, Council of Europe: The contribution of the Council of Europe to enhancing voluntary service for young people in Europe.**

The Council of Europe's interest in volunteering has developed since the early 60's with a series of international seminars, workshops and programmes, and recently the topic has come back on the agenda. The focus of the youth department within the Council of Europe is mainly volunteering abroad, the international dimension.

One has to be careful with the approach to volunteering because it can be culturally and historically sensitive. Post-communism countries are struggling to achieve a change of the perception volunteering has in society. In addition, in many countries of Central, Southern and Eastern Europe, volunteering is still the only way for youngsters to go abroad and have an intercultural experience – a fact that the Council of Europe is underlining. These young people gain language skills, social and intercultural skills, build and extend their network of contacts and gain in personal independence – these are all features that will help them ultimately to raise their chances in finding a job.

The Convention on the Promotion of International Long-term Voluntary Service for young people of the Council of Europe contains a definition of volunteering (e.g. not replacing paid work) and stresses the benefits of vol-

unteering both to the volunteer and society.

The Convention places particular emphasis on the fact that voluntary service is a social learning process of great importance for young people's personal development and the acquisition of experience, but stressed that it should remain a free choice and should not replace social measures to help the unemployed. It could be defined as an alternative path towards working life which gives young people the opportunity to make their personal contribution towards a group project and, in return, acquire new skills facilitating their social integration and making it easier for them to find jobs. While voluntary service is inextricably linked with youth policy, has its own logic and value and, for this reason, should not be confused with other forms of work or service. It is a necessity for society in terms of participation, responsibility and education of the population. It is not a means of making up for social, economic and political shortcomings which are the responsibility of the state and its government

Due to lack of enough signatures of Member States this Convention is not in force yet and does, unfortunately, not seem to be the priority of governments. However, the convention puts emphasis on voluntary service being a learning process of great importance for young people's personal development and experience, and that volunteering always has to be a free choice.

For the International Year of Volunteers 2001, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe contributed with a draft explanatory text stressing the ability of volunteering to detect needs and to respond to societal change, very often before political intervention takes place. In this regard, volunteering is a source of jobs creation by creating new types of service. Volunteering plays a role in the work towards full employment.

**In the discussion with the audience the following issues were addressed:**

Following the keynote speeches, some questions were brought up. The audience wanted to know how France Bénévolat is coping with the risk of people not willing to leave volunteering because they like it so much.

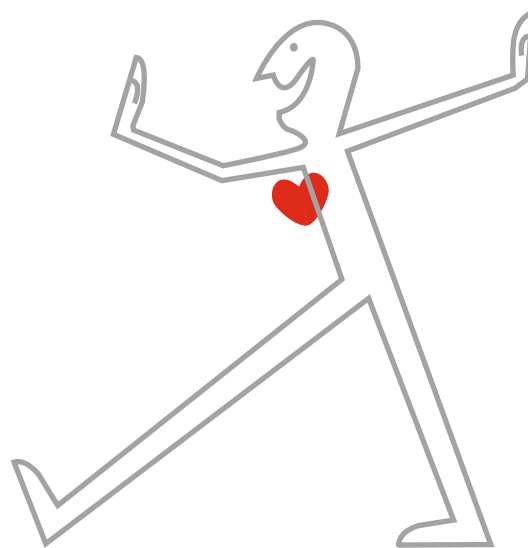
- Volunteer organisations have a duty and responsibility to prevent job seekers "to install themselves in volunteering", becoming full time volunteers and "forgetting" about or postponing their job search.

- One might also look on the "demand side" of volunteers: Who is it that mobilizes these volunteers, where do they work and what are the benefits to others of their volunteer placements.

- In Romania some companies seem to have discovered that volunteering sounds good and attractive – and they advertise for volunteers offering training and possible employment if the training period is successful. This is a

clear threat of hidden recruitment that we need to be aware of.

- The issues of "prescribing" volunteering needs to be treated with caution: There should be no personal pressure on the volunteer to accept a volunteer task and to remain with it especially in the occasion he/she was offered a job offer in the meantime.



## 6. WORKSHOPS (WS) – GOOD PRACTICE SESSIONS

*\*\*\* All the project descriptions have kindly been contributed by the Workshop Presenters \*\*\**

### WS 1) Federacio Catalana de Voluntariat Social (Catalonia)

A New Field for volunteering: "Helping people to gain access to the labour market"

Presentation: Aina Vera

Facilitation: Yvonne McKenna

#### 1) Project details

##### 1.1. Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

FEDERACIÓ CATALANA DE VOLUNTARIAT SOCIAL (FCVS)

Aina Vera Lorenzo, Tècnica Coordinadora de la Sectorial d' Inserció Laboral (SIL)  
laboral@federacio.net

C. Grassot, 3 2<sup>a</sup> 08025, Barcelona

Tel. 93.3141900

Fax. 93.3141108

www.federacio.net

##### 1.2. Organisation Type:

Volunteer centre / volunteer involving organisation

##### 1.3. Name of project / initiative:

A NEW FIELD FOR VOLUNTEERING: "Helping people to gain access to the labour market"

##### 1.4. What is the target group of the project / initiative?

- Unemployed youth
- Long-term unemployed
- Migrants
- Other (please specify) All the groups in risk of social exclusion

**1.5. Main focus of the project / initiative:**

- Learning of skills / competences to raise employability
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Creation of personal social capital (create social relationships, networks, etc)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**1.6. How many persons are/were participating in this project / initiative?**

28 entities

**1.7. Objectives of the project / initiative:**

- To increase the employment rate within groups in risk of social exclusion
- To promote volunteering in the area of the labour insertion and

**1.8. Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:**

The project develops with monthly meetings material of spreading (publication) as leaflets, training courses, itinerant exhibition and edition of a publication

**2) Making the project work****2.1. What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative. What did make this project a success?**

The innovative feature of this project is to emphasize the importance of the volunteering in the area of the labour insertion and in the network with all the entities of the Catalan territory

**2.2. Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?**

The entities by means of the network, the volunteers of these and the companies

**2.3. What were major barriers to collaboration between stakeholders and how have they been overcome?**

The major obstacle has been to connect to the business "world", we are managing by means of the sensitisation campaigns

**2.4. What are major barriers identified so that volunteering can effectively be an instrument / a route (back) to employment? How can they be overcome?**

The role of volunteering in the area of the labour insertion is difficult to define

and make concrete, by means of the analysis with the different entities of the paper (role) of the volunteering in this area that can be clarified

**2.5. To what extend do you think this good practice is transferable? (To other target groups, other countries)**

The networking realized with all the entities

**3) Workshop questions****Which are the three questions you would like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?**

The role of the volunteering in the area of the labour insertion

How to contact the companies

The networking

**Presentation**

The Catalan Federation of Social Volunteering (FCVS), an umbrella organisation, has developed and created a network of more than 20 NGO's concerned with labour market integration. This group is called the **Labour Insertion Group (SIL)**. SIL is involved in improving the quality of life and the social integration of vulnerable groups, such as immigrants, long-term unemployed, young people, people with disabilities and people with drug dependency problems.

The volunteering element in this project is performed by professionals (educators, social workers, employment assessors and psychologists) that help people improve their qualifications and guide them on their way to integration into the labour market. This field for volunteers is new in the Spanish society and therefore little

known, and the challenge is to describe the profile of the volunteer and their role to the other agents involved. The volunteers need training because the employment market is constantly changing. The volunteers' tasks differ according to their profile and the experience they bring, but they mainly help in searching for job opportunities, following the process, reception, training, translating, preparing for job interviews, preparing CV's and covering letters.

The project focus on strengthening organisations through networking, through promoting and recognising the role of volunteers in this area, and through promoting the social responsibility of companies to recruit from communities at risk of social exclusion. This is done through materials such as a promotion CD, leaflets addressed to companies, but also a touring exhibi-

tion, the SIL webpage, company visits and training sessions.

The companies' benefits in this include the obtaining of economic and social profitability, the covering of jobs with qualified staff, a prosperous and more equitable future, and incorporation of CSR into the business.

## Questions and Answers:

### Funding

There are problems with the government, although the government is funding the project as the volunteers **perform tasks and responsibilities that actually belong to the government**. FCVS must strengthen local organisations and give them support because the government does not deliver this. The project is funded by **the European Social Fund, the government of Catalonia and Federal government in Madrid**, and was started late 2006, working with all entities, with the main objective to raise the awareness of the companies.

It is difficult to say how many people actually receive jobs through the service, because the umbrella organisation works more on lobbying and promotion within the public and companies, and the entities are working for themselves.

### Targets

The project target is to sign contracts with all companies in Catalonia. They have started with large companies and

will then spread further to the smaller enterprises. The problem always arising is the ever-changing labour market. Therefore there is a significant need to follow the trends and adjust the programme, if one wants to succeed in preparing socially excluded people from the labour market.

### Employment agencies

A further issue raised was why the volunteering organisations actually should do the job of governmental and private agencies in helping people to get out on the labour market. The realities are different in different European countries, in Spain the need for such an activity exists. Although it would be ideal for all of the voluntary organisations to be able to give placement for people who cannot find a job, that kind of initiative would create confusion among other, "habitual" volunteers. Also, **there is a danger of volunteer centres to become recruitment agencies**.

Another question raised was if the volunteer centres are asked to replace paid service for free or to lower costs. There is no difference between the volunteer sector that supports the disadvantaged and other sectors, but the profit sector does "make money" out of the disadvantaged.

### Good practice

The good practice that FCVS wants to present through this project is the networking within the organisations, how to work in networks. Together the

networks can defend their views and send their requirements and needs to different companies, a dialogue between entities and companies can be created. Within this program, there is no corporate volunteering, but separate programs for this will be launched soon. Good cooperation with the corporate sector will help in doing so.

The area is the complex. There are many different reasons why some people start volunteering. Volunteering becomes a means to solve "social problems".

A recent trend is that the voluntary sector is pushed into what the volunteers get out of their tasks and what their work give others.

### Conclusions

Which are the respective roles and responsibilities between the private and the voluntary sector regarding employment and delivery of services? This is something that needs to be clarified and also how each of the sectors should use the funding. The added value of each sector should be recognised.

Government and the EU representatives should be aware of the fact that businesses and the volunteering sector do deliver similar services in this area – but under different funding criteria. The volunteer centres should be aware of what they think about the field and what the connection between volunteering and employment is. There should be some leading policies and CEV is a good forum for discussing

common positions on volunteering and the labour market. There are many different projects in different countries that could be synchronised.

## WS 2) Volunteering Ireland

Vol4All - Inclusive Volunteering

Presentation: Chiara Magini (Placement Office Social Inclusion)

Facilitator: Eva Hambach

### 1) Project details

#### 1.1. Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

##### Volunteering Ireland

Chiara Magini: Placement Officer-Social Inclusion,

chiara@volunteeringireland.ie

Coleraine House

Coleraine Street

Dublin 7

Telephone: +353 (0)1 872 2622

Facsimile: +353 (0)1 872 2623

www.volunteeringireland.ie

#### 1.2. Organisation Type:

Volunteer centre / volunteer involving organisation

#### 1.3. Name of project / initiative:

Vol4All – Inclusive volunteering

#### 1.4. What is the target group of the project / initiative:

- Unemployed youth
- Long-term unemployed
- Migrants
- Other (please specify) Homeless people; Members of the Traveller Community; New immigrants; Refugees and Asylum seekers; Offenders and Ex-offenders; Older or Retired people; People recovering from addiction; People with caring responsibilities; People with disabilities; People with mental illness; Youth; People who might be excluded for some other reason

#### 1.5. Main focus of the project / initiative (please tick):

- Learning of skills / competences to raise employability
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Creation of personal social capital (create social relationships, networks, etc)
- Other (please specify) Developing or improving a) new skills b) new interests; c) sense of purpose and contribution; d) integration; e) positive image; f) sense of belonging to the community; g) role and routine; h) self-help and empowerment; etc.

#### 1.6. How many persons are/were participating in this project / initiative?

Since November 2005, **405** potential volunteers, **255** of them in group-based outreach information sessions

- **150** of them in one-to-one meetings
- **About 18% of them** are currently volunteering or have volunteered after meeting with Volunteering Ireland Placement Service

#### 1.7. Objectives of the project / initiative:

- To change perceptions about who is able to volunteer and to show that people who are traditionally perceived as the 'helped' can actually be 'helpers' themselves.
- To promote inclusive volunteering through, amongst other services, an all inclusive Placement Service, which will enable people to volunteer freely and easily, regardless of background or ability.

#### 1.8. Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:

- Promoting the benefits of inclusive volunteering to organisations and individuals
- Supporting potential volunteers with additional support needs and assisting them appropriately in preparing for involvement in volunteering
- Supporting and facilitating the placement of volunteers with additional support needs into meaningful volunteering positions
- Promoting information about good practice in inclusive volunteering to organisations
- Implementing a standard model of Good Practice in inclusive volunteering
- Developing networks with those organisations which have expressed a general interest in inclusive volunteering
- Implementing the involvement of those organisations who have expressed an interest in involving volunteers with additional support needs

**1.9. Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative (if already available):**

1. **113** organisations have been contacted for the target groups listed in Section 1.4.
  2. Contact has been made with **52** organisations/centres who are interested in promoting volunteering to their service users/clients/residents\*
  3. **21** of the organisations were interested in information session for their service users/clients/residents
- (\*) At least 15 of those organisations are currently promoting volunteering to their service users as part of modules aimed to paid employment (or alternative to it), among them: Headway Ireland, BITC 'Ready for Work' project for Homeless people, National Institute for Intellectual Disabilities, National Learning Network.*
3. New Fact sheet on 'Inclusive volunteering' has been developed
  4. New web page on 'Vol4all' – Inclusive volunteering on the website has been developed
  5. 'Migrant volunteer fair' will be organised in May/June 2007

**2) Making the project work****2.1. What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; What did make this project a success?**

## GOOD PRACTICE COMPONENTS:

- Mapping the potential 'referral agencies' at the beginning of the project, in order to build a database of organisations dealing with people with additional support needs and potentially interested in promoting volunteering to their service users/clients/residents
- Addressing target group referral agencies in a timeframe with escalating contact methods (email contact ▶ phone contact ▶ meeting with staff ▶ outreach information session with clients ▶ one-to-one meetings with individuals on request)
- Involvement of referral agencies in identifying suitable volunteering opportunities and in supporting volunteers while volunteering
- Support and willingness to be 'inclusive' by volunteer-involving organisations
- Empowerment of volunteers with additional support needs in order to independently use the mainstream Placement Service
- Team work by the whole Volunteering Ireland & Placement Service team
- Involvement of Volunteering Ireland volunteers in promoting volunteering to their peers
- Constant support & supervision by Volunteering Ireland, Placement Service, etc

## OTHER ESSENTIAL FEATURES, WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO MAKE THE PROJECT A SUCCESS:

- Volunteering Ireland Organisation Database (over 4000 organisations) and Volunteering Ireland Placement Service Database of volunteer-involving organisations allowed to promote the project to a huge audience
- Volunteering Ireland Volunteering Opportunities Database (over 400 opportunities) helped offer a huge, diverse and inclusive choice of volunteering opportunities to potential volunteers
- Volunteering Ireland's reputation, visibility and recognition over the years was really helpful in making contact with volunteer-involving organisations, referral agencies and other stakeholders in order to promote the project

**2.2. Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?**

1. **Pobal** (former ADM), which funded the project. Pobal's mission is to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality through integrated social and economic development within communities. Pobal is a not-for-profit company with charitable status that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and The EU.
2. **Volunteering Ireland**, which is managing the project, reporting to Pobal.

**2.3. What were major barriers to collaboration between stakeholders and how have they been overcome?**

In a few cases, referral agencies did not have enough (human) resources to support their clients while volunteering and to turn down the opportunity on the behalf of their clients.

After mapping some best practices around Europe and worldwide, we aim to propose a further phase of the project where Volunteering Ireland will provide 'volunteer mentors' in order to volunteer together with the supported volunteer, on the basis of a major project developed by Down District Volunteer Bureau in Northern Ireland.

## 2.4. What are major barriers identified to that volunteering can effectively be an instrument / a route (back) to employment? How can they be overcome?

### Objective barriers:

- No volunteer role description
- No training offered to volunteers
- No opportunities for personal/professional growth and career within the organisation
- No reimbursement of expenses
- No reference letter from organisations before a certain minimum commitment
- Physical accessibility of premises
- Lack of professional volunteer culture/management in organisations

### Possible solutions:

- Promoting more 'diverse' (and 'inclusive') volunteer roles within organisations
- Promoting 'diversity' in volunteering
- Promoting volunteer basic rights to organisations (reimbursement of expenses, training, career growth within the organisation, etc) as per our '*Charter for effective volunteering*'.
- Promote accessibility of premises
- Promote professionalism in volunteering (both to volunteers and organisations)

### Subjective barriers:

- Search for immediate paid opportunities, which bring to wasting opportunities to gain/improve skills
- Stereotypes & perception of volunteering as something which is not 'professional'
- Reluctance of admitting to volunteer for personal gain/benefit (perceived as 'selfish' reason)

### Possible solutions:

- Promote benefits of volunteering for the volunteer
- Promote professionalism in volunteering (both to volunteers and organisations)
- Promote different reasons for volunteering and the fact that volunteering should be a rewarding experience

## 2.5. To what extent do think this good practice is transferable? (To other target groups, other countries)

We believe that our project is fully transferable, as far as the Volunteer Centre has a Database of volunteer-involving organisations and volunteering opportunities to offer.

We recommend involving key workers from referral agencies, whose involvement helps provide the specific expertise for each target group.

## 3) Workshop questions

### Which are three questions you would like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?

How can we promote 'employability' benefits of volunteering to potential volunteers?

How can we promote 'diversity' of volunteer roles within volunteer-involving organisations?

How could our 'diverse' and 'inclusive' practices be transferred to the labour market and the for profit sector (private companies) through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and corporate volunteering?

### Presentation

Guiding principles:

In this project VI tries not to segregate people into groups, even though some may need more support than others. All volunteers need support, be it in terms of information or whilst volunteering, but it is important to bring individuals from social excluded groups to the placement service as anybody else.

Those people who are "the helped" can become helpers themselves. This perception has to change not only in general, but also in the minds of the potential volunteers themselves.

► we are all potential volunteers, it is important not to "label" people

Three levels of additional support that potential volunteers from social excluded groups might need are support in perception (outreach sessions), contact-making (one-to-one meetings) and during the volunteering activity. Due to low self-esteem the potential volunteer might think that he or she has nothing to give. At this stage, confidence has to be built up, but the individual might still want somebody to be there at the actual meeting with the volunteer-involving organisation. Due to physical disabilities or mental illness the volunteer might need additional support whilst volunteering, and this is something that normally is provided by key workers such as nurses).

## Problems and solutions

It is an individual's own choice to volunteer, and it is also their choice what they want to do. When making contact with the voluntary organisation, VI does not necessarily disclose the fact that this is an individual that might need additional support, but it's better to ask if the volunteer wants to share or not. VI does not refer the volunteer to the organisation, it is merely the link between organisation and individual, and the organisation is the one who decides if they want to take on the volunteer or not. Therefore, VI lends support but cannot be responsible for any accidents that may occur.

Sometimes, the organisation does turn down a potential volunteer and at this point the individual whose self-esteem is low from the beginning might think "they turned me down because I am an ex-offender" although this is not the case, because the real reason is that the organisation was looking for somebody with computer skills that this particular individual did not possess.

In other cases the volunteer involving organisation might not have the resources needed to engage people with additional support needs. Additional support needs can range from special computer software for people with limited eyesight to key workers that support whilst volunteering. Under such circumstances the individual needs guidance and explanations, it is also possible to contact the organisation to receive the true reasons why

this person was not selected.

In this particular case, volunteering might be a way for social excluded groups to find their way back to the labour market. Cooperation with referral agencies and organisations that take additional support needs in consideration, such as Headway Ireland (people recovering from Acquired Head Injuries), Institute for Intellectual Disability and the Irish Wheelchair Association. However, it must be stressed that one needs to avoid that volunteering as a route back to employment is not the main reason for volunteering. It is an additional benefit, but we must lead people so that they do not volunteer for the wrong reasons. The gist of volunteering should not switch to the sole benefits for the volunteer, rather what the volunteer can do for others and the benefits that can emerge as a bonus for the volunteer.

One has to establish a link between employment agencies' and volunteer centres' databases. The networking factor is very important.

## Equal opportunities

The volunteer recruiting agencies cannot ask for specific volunteers. We have to educate the equal opportunities policy and try to promote people with additional support needs, from different communities etc. Volunteer involving organisations are often quite willing to take on volunteers with special needs. In case the volunteers feel that they are mistreated, VI has a complaint form that they can fill out, but

mostly it is about misunderstandings. People with additional support needs actually bring with them additional opportunities, therefore these people should be encouraged to volunteer.

## The employability issue

A complete other question is how long the volunteers stay within the organization. It is quite hard to follow-up all volunteers. The key workers are important and VI tries to meet with them and discuss what they can do together, because some organizations do not have resources for volunteers with additional support needs. That is why VI started to think about the mentoring for volunteers. There was one idea of volunteering as a group, because of lack of resources one group volunteered together as two key workers and 13 volunteers.

As to the question of how to raise employability through volunteering there was a suggestion that volunteering should be an alternative choice, and the cooperation with the profit sector and human resources management should be introduced to the possibilities. Volunteer centres need to show how opening doors can work, and probably segment the target groups a bit more.

Even though an argument is that "volunteering is good for your CV" this should not be the main cause for volunteering. Research in Hungary suggests that there are two types of volunteers, the "old" and the "new" type. The "old" group volunteer for the

good cause and the sake of it while the "new" group is cautious about what they can put on their CV.

The recent trends in the Netherlands have shown that volunteering is not only seen by the governments in terms of participation and employability, but also as a means for migrant women just to participate in society as the first and maybe also the last state. This is a good development and Movisie also cooperates with local employment agencies.

What is the way forward on the employability issue? In many countries the employers do not recognize the value of volunteering, but there is certainly a positive link in volunteering that builds up your capacity to interaction in a working environment. From an employer's point of view, volunteering can be positive provided you stop it. The time spent on volunteering is time that is not spent on business.

## Conclusions

Many job centres struggle with the notion of volunteering. The key thread is training, and there is a need to get an understanding of volunteering to the public sector. One problem is that placement agencies receive money for putting people in jobs, not in volunteer tasks. The danger lies in the fact that if one promotes volunteering as a route to employment, it will not take long before the private sector does the same, and there is a need to be very careful on this.

**The link between volunteering and employability could be that it makes you discover your own potentials.** There are for sure benefits in volunteering but they should not

be put too much in front to avoid the danger of the motives becoming blurred and people start volunteering for the wrong reasons.

### WS 3) SNC (France)

Renewed solidarity to tackle unemployment

Presentation: Jessica Holc

Facilitation: Michel de Tapol

## 1) Project details

### 1.1. Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

Solidarités Nouvelles face au Chômage

Jessica Holc, Déléguée générale

jessica.holc@snc.asso.fr

2 cité Bergère – 75009 Paris – tél: 01 42 47 13 41

www.snc.asso.fr

### 1.2. Organisation Type

Volunteer centre / volunteer involving organisation

### 1.3. What is the target group of the project / initiative?

- Unemployed youth
- Long-term unemployed
- Migrants
- Other (please specify) All the groups in risk of social exclusion

### 1.4. Main focus of the project / initiative:

- Learning of skills / competences to raise employability
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Creation of personal social capital (create social relationships, networks, etc)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### 1.5. How many persons are/were participating in this project / initiative?

In 2006, 1200 voluntary members came with 2000 job seekers.

### 1.6. Objectives of the project / initiative:

'New solidarities facing Unemployment' focus to fight against unemployment and mechanisms of social exclusion, mainly by the accompaniment of job seekers and the creation and the development of solidarity activities.

### 1.7. Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:

- Accompaniment of job seekers
- Creation and funding of bound jobs for people accompanied by the association in partners associations

### 1.8. Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative (if already available):

For accompanied job seekers: returns toward work (56% in 2006) and creation and financing of 72 bound jobs.

For the voluntary members: implementation of solidarity citizen mechanisms.

## 2) Making the project work

### 2.1. What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; What did make this project a success?

Organization in network by the constitution of local groups of solidarity.

### 2.2. Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?

- the citizens who commit themselves into these actions while giving time to accompany the job seekers and money to sustain the funding of responsible jobs.
- the partners associations for which we subsidize these jobs.
- the local and national associations for the development of our actions, the support to the job seekers and others such as (lodging, health, access to the rights, etc.), the involvement in the public debate.

### 2.3. What were major barriers to collaboration between stakeholders and how have they been overcome?

The main obstacle is the difficulty to mobilize for a citizen action of struggle against unemployment, this cause being considered as the business of the State (the employment public service in particular) and of the companies

## 2.4. To what extent do think this good practice is transferable? (To other target groups, other countries, ...)

They could probably be applied in the countries that undergo a high unemployment rate.

### 3) Workshop questions

#### Which are three questions you would like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?

Do some similar experiences exist in other countries? And if yes, what are the modes of implementation?

How do citizen engagement and solidarity with job seekers encourage their return to work?

What are the complementarities between the voluntary accompaniment and the devices of the public service of the employment? And what are the existing complementarities in the other countries?

#### Presentation

The organisation "Solidarités Nouvelles face au Chômage" was founded in 1985 and has since then developed methods for enhancing solidarity in the difficulties that come with unemployment. The project consists of accompanying unemployed people. Two volunteers members, a "binome" ("tandem") accompany each unemployed as long as necessary. The volunteers' tasks are to listen, stimulate and encourage and help in ending the person's isolation. The project is a complementary action to national employment agencies, no competitions or replacement are sought.

Solidarity groups "groupes de solidarité" (volunteers) consisting of around 12 persons, meet each month to design action and evaluate the suc-

cesses /and challenges the face working with the unemployed. The main aim is local action; connection to the local life; importance of collaboration with other stakeholders (small enterprises that could offer a job e.g.); to build local social capital, networks and relations to support the unemployed.

There are currently 97 Solidarity groups in France with 1200 volunteers involved. These groups have become "independent structures" of the project. In 2006, 61 % of 815 people who were accompanied found a job or a training programme for future employment. Contact was lost with 19 % of the people and the rest are still seeking a job or found some other solution.

The financing of the project is secured through donors; in 2006 2300

donors financed 72 temporary jobs (60.600 hours of work) in 60 partner associations, for unemployed persons helped by the association. These jobs are called "development jobs" and are meant to create a step to a permanent job, and in order to extend the number of jobs as well as support the development of the non-profit field and social economy. The salary of the unemployed to work with a local association will be paid for a fixed period through the project fund, which means a double benefit for the employed person and the voluntary organization that can employ this person.

As the perspective of unemployed persons is a "blind spot" not taken into account in public debate they have little or no possibility to voice their concerns or to participate in decisions that concern them – SNC addresses this problem giving the unemployed a voice, and creates awareness amongst the local community for the problem of unemployment. It is about **recreating solidarity**: citizens can take action for unemployed (often people do not know about difficult situations of their neighbours).

There is also solidarity between the "solidarity groups": the donations are distributed by the national network of the groups; there is networking of the groups; capacity building; publications; and partnerships with other key stakeholders at national level such as France Bénévolat.

Everybody will be welcomed in the project (provided they have the right

to work).

#### Recruitment

The recruitment is done by "word of the mouth" and through websites such as the one of France Bénévolat, which is good for a more diverse group of people. There is no obligatory training of the mentors, but they can come to a monthly meeting on Saturdays all over France. Six training modules have been developed, but the central idea is that you do not need any training; it should be open to everybody. There are four paid staff members for 1200 volunteers and 2300 donors, and 2/3 of the donations go to temporary work placements, a maximum of 20 % go to the paid staff.

#### Development jobs

Are they "subsidized labour"? SNC would like to put emphasis on the name "development jobs", because they are meant to create jobs, as an incentive in the beginning that leads to sustainability. The organisations are often looking for funding to make these jobs sustainable. These jobs are only made available in the non-profit sector.

The local dimension is crucial when it comes to the partnerships. The solidarity groups have informal contacts and "connections" and to make a structure of this would be very difficult. The solidarity groups work with employment agencies, and some of them are actually volunteers. Concerning the volunteers in general, there are not much

of a difference between woman and men, active and retired people becoming volunteers. The average time they spend volunteering for SNC is 2-3 years. The added value of the group is very diverse. Lately we have had many people working in Human Resources to volunteer, which can be problematic since the added value of volunteering should be precisely different from that of professional agencies.

The audience wanted to know why there is a "tandem" taking care of the unemployed, instead of a one-to-one relationship. The tandem avoids the power relationship that can occur between just two people and also because the task can be over demanding for one person, it is better to divide the roles and share responsibility over the psychosocial job, and give each other mutual support.

### Results

The results that we have seen so far are that our activities do not replace the job research that the people helped do on their own. The approach we take is rather how civic solidarity can help on the route (back) to employment. Volunteering might be one of the ways because it tackles the most significant problem, that of the isolation.

### Similar experiences

While in the Netherlands subsidized labour is paid by taxes, SNC emphasises that the project is complementary to subsidized labour schemes. SNC lobbies to raise awareness that accom-

panying of the unemployed is crucial, and shows good example of how this accompanying work: the volunteers accompany 3 people instead of the 300 that officers at the National Employment Agency ANPE have to follow. Their agendas and objectives are not always the same. SNC deals with people who are not eligible for usual state subsidized schemes. SNC wants to remain a "citizens movement", meaning that they have to find citizen resources and function with own rules (e.g. anonymity). The project remains very small scale with 2000 persons (compared to four millions unemployed).

The collaborations with organisations and other stakeholders have to be actively sought, created and entertained.

### Transferability

The transferability depends on the legal system of each country, especially on the unemployment benefits regulation.

### Conclusions

The new approach of this project is the work in volunteer tandems to accompany an unemployed, the focus on solidarity and citizenship instead of volunteering as a route back to employment and the use of sponsors to create temporary placements for unemployed. Volunteering should not replace the work of employment agencies, but complement it.

Volunteering means voluntary en-

agement, and can therefore never be an obligation for job seekers. However, it could be seen as a counterpart for the assistance that people receive. But then again, "assistance" should not be stigmatized; it is not the peoples' fault that they are on assistance- so there should be no counter-obligation. If volunteering will be "instrumentalized" one day for whatever purpose, this will be detrimental to volunteering, but citizens will find their way to

get engaged differently.

On the other hand "work" is still very often seen as the only way of recognition and identity building. It is better to focus on "**citizenship**" – not only you as a worker but you as a person – this is interesting in the approach of SNC and precisely not obligatory; **it is about putting mutual solidarity of society at the heart.**

## WS 4) Caritas Germany

"Jugendpaten" Tutoring of unemployed youths by volunteers, A project by the Volunteer Centre Augsburg

Presentation: Maria Herting, Caritas Germany

Facilitation: Christopher Spence

### 1) Project details

#### 1.1. Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

Verbund Freiwilligen-Zentren  
 Maria Herting, Geschäftsführerin  
 maria.herting@caritas.de  
 Deutscher Caritasverband e.V.  
 Referat Gemeindec Caritas und Engagementförderung  
 Postfach 420, 79004 Freiburg  
 Karlstr. 40, 79104 Freiburg  
 Tel.: 0761/200-153  
 Fax: 0761/200-751  
 www.freiwilligenzentren.de

#### 1.2. Organisation Type:

Volunteer centre / volunteer involving organisation

**1.3. Name of project / initiative:**

Tutoring of unemployed youths by volunteers

**1.4. What is the target group of the project / initiative:**

- Unemployed youth
- Long-term unemployed
- Migrants
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**1.5. Main focus of the project / initiative:**

- Learning of skills / competences to raise employability
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Creation of personal social capital (create social relationships, networks, etc)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**1.6. How many persons are/were participating in this project / initiative?**

About 25

**1.7. Objectives of the project / initiative:**

To help youths to apply in a qualified way

**1.8. Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:**

A volunteer is a trainer of youths and meets him/her regularly

**2) Making the project work****2.1. What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; What did make this project a success?**

Seniors with a lot of experiences help youths to find their way

**2.2. Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?**

Schools, volunteer centres

**3) Workshop questions****Which are three questions you would like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?**

Is volunteering which is from the beginning planned as a route back to employment still volunteering in a "classical" way based on free decision, free will to do social work (this question has no reference to my good practice example)

The difference of paid work and volunteering has to be protected – the way to employment is only one aspect of volunteer's motivation

**Presentation**

The project idea is to give young people the opportunity to face their future. The volunteer centre itself, and the council of the city finance the program. It started in the beginning of 2006 and there are 25 volunteers tutoring young people, one volunteer works with one young person. The volunteers receive training in pedagogical skills, communications skills and emphasis is put on the fact that the young person should not be dependent on the volunteer. The volunteer centre offers insurances, weekly meetings, facilities, reimbursement of expenses and a certificate. The volunteers should have life- and work experience and be open-minded. In addition, they should be able to create a network for the young person. They should be able to offer on average 2-4 hours a week of their time for one year, but this it up to the volunteers themselves.

The youngsters that the project helps are often migrants or people from disadvantaged conditions, without lan-

guage skills and good social network. They have no perspective and are sometimes drug addicts. The volunteers' tasks are to find out whether the youth is willing to work on his or her future, to create an open relationship in an atmosphere of acceptance and a space of trust where the youth can develop skills. The volunteer should check for the young person's social skills and networks, living standard and supportive environment. The volunteer help the young person realize the gap between wishful thinking and the reality of the labour market.

There is collaboration with the social services where the young people get the address of the volunteer centre, and if they are interested they come. Their own wish to get involved is important and the first meeting is between the volunteer, the young person and the manager. It is common that the young person choose somebody of the same sex. The volunteers do not replace professional aid, but the working philosophy is to help young people closer to the labour market,

not provide them with some kind of friend or grand parent, more like help to self-help.

### Questions and answers

There are two types of motivations to start volunteering, not necessarily two different types of volunteering. There are people who have everything and turn up to volunteer and there are people who have nothing. Some volunteers do not want to be measured by skills they gain, but only as the fact that they do volunteer.

Why are volunteers doing the job that professionals should be doing? Is it because the employment agencies are not good enough? Why are the volunteers not supported by the employment agencies by financial means and training? Is there any added value that volunteers give while assisting with finding the employment? It should be very clear why volunteers should assist with finding employment if the agencies are doing their jobs good enough. It is important that volunteering organisations lobby for the help of agencies and schools to improve their work.

The question of recognition of skills was raised, related to the certificates on the EU level, but also on a national level. It has to be emphasized that this kind of volunteering does not make volunteering in general lose its spirit. One should not be looking for volunteers to do the work of professionals but for the added value that volunteering can bring.

### Transferability

This idea is transferable to other countries to some extent. This kind of project is a kind of intergenerational learning, which creates new connections between different generations. It is similar to learning from the experience of your parents and grandparents. It is important to have this kind of support in the moments when try to enter society again. Most people feel very excluded when unemployed without the social network so that at first they need some professional support.

### Conclusions / questions to keep in mind:

Volunteer centres should think about how to mobilise more volunteers for this kind of tasks, because government constraints will grow.

In many cases young people are not prepared for the labour market and need targeted support to build their capacities.

The gap between social integration associations and employment associations is still very often big – there is clearly a need to bridge between these two actors that work with very different realities and assumptions.

Governments are more and more interested in what volunteering organisations are delivering in terms of social services that used to be delivered by governmental sectors. Volunteering organisations should not be willing to provide services for free or cheap because they use volunteers.

It is good to know why people want to volunteer and to know what the young people expect from the volunteer centre, that they do not expect to have a job at the end of their experience. The overall important point is that such projects should not take away the genuine value of volunteering.

We should not be looking for volunteers to do jobs of paid professionals and state responsibility but just to give the added value to that work. Volunteer centres can point out that unemployment can be dealt with in a more humane way.

## WS 5) Association MI-Split (Croatia)

Volunteering as a route (back) to employment in Croatia

Presentation: Nives Ivelja

Facilitation: Saskia van Grinsven

### 1) Project details

#### 1.1. Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

ASSOCIATION –“MI”

Nives Ivelja, nives@udruga-mi.hr

Udruga MI

Sinjska 7, 21000 Split, Croatia

tel: (+385) 21 / 329-136,

fax: (385)21/329-131

www.udruga-mi.hr

#### 1.2. Organisation Type:

Volunteer centre / volunteer involving organisation

#### 1.3. Name of project / initiative:

“Croatia - Volunteerism in the country in transition”.

**1.4. Main focus of the project / initiative:**

- Learning of skills / competences to raise employability
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Creation of personal social capital (create social relationships, networks, etc)
- Other (please specify) - influence values in the society

**1.5. How many persons are/were participating in this project / initiative?**

5 professionals in the organizations and 30 in the network

**1.6. Objectives of the project / initiative:**

Develop and promote volunteerism in Croatia

**1.7. Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:**

- Promotion- influencing public opinions
- Education for host organizations, assistance in linkage with volunteers
- Education, referrals and mentoring of volunteers
- Development and conducting of volunteer – events/ activities
- Development of Volunteer centres' network
- Advocating for positive legal regulations and supportive policies

**1.8. Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative (if already available):**

- 10 years of operation of the Volunteer centre
- publications, research, participation in advocacy for the Volunteer law, organization of Volunteer day conference (10 years)
- Direct work with volunteers – citizens of Split
- Technical assistance to NGOs and institutions in Croatia
- TOT in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Informal network of 6 volunteer centres/ programs from 4 regional centres in Croatia

**2) Making the project work****2.1. What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; What did make this project a success?**

Involvement of large number of organizations from different sectors

**2.2. Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?**

Other Volunteer Centres and National foundation for development of Civil Society

**2.3. What were major barriers to collaboration between stakeholders and how have they been overcome?**

Legal regulations were not favorable. New Law of volunteer work opens new opportunities.

**2.4. What are the major barriers identified so that volunteering can effectively be an instrument / a route (back) to employment? How can they be overcome?**

High rate of unemployment, public opinion about volunteering

**2.5. To what extent do you think this good practice is transferable? (To other target groups, other countries, ...)**

The model can be transferred to other communities and countries in transition

**3) Workshop questions****Name three questions you would like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?**

Remarks on perceived differences about volunteering in presented example and in participants' countries

**Presentation**

The organisation MI-Split intended to start recruiting and educating volunteers in neighbourhoods and local communities in 1997, but it was too early; there was still no support from local authorities. In 1998, the first volunteer day event was held with 33 organisations present. The background to this is that NGO's are seen as state enemies; volunteer work was not appreciated; there were doubts about the intentions of volunteers and not for profit organisations. The Volunteer days have been organised ever since and are nowadays counting with over 100 organisations as participants.

There is a larger interest in volunteering with the challenge to train and recruit volunteers and find good placements and matches.

The promotion strategy involves material such as T-shirts, calendars, bookmarks, leaflets, posters, balloons and maps, the publishing of three manuals and a volunteer booklet, a volunteer ID, media presentations, the heart print logo that is accepted on a national level, celebration of December 5th, dinner parties, round tables and annual awards for volunteer efforts.

**Impacts of work**

Nowadays a new value system has de-

veloped after history, we now share higher values. Volunteering is accepted and has shown positive examples that have encouraged new attempts and had positive influence on legislation. We have created networking based on identity and values such as mutual trust, sharing and solidarity. The impact our work has had can be shown in the following examples. A new law of volunteer work was adopted early 2007 and a national strategy of supportive framework for development of civil society has been drawn up. There are now volunteer centres in four regions of Croatia, we have established networks of regional volunteer centres and programs, the Ministry of Family, Veteran Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity is now responsible for volunteering and the national foundation for development of civil society supports programmes for volunteering.

### Volunteering and employment

It is still about the "basics" of volunteering, to find placements for volunteering; focus especially in state institutions. Therefore the association "MI" are not yet focused on volunteering and employment. There has to be a change of environment and mindset of NGOs. They try very much to engage for their own mission and are not open to the wider picture of volunteering promotion.

It is more an "accidental" success of "ex-volunteers" to be employed rather than targeted programmes.

In Croatia, the context to develop specific employment projects is missing. There is a high level of unemployment, the mind-set is not in place and value foundations need to be developed.

### Questions and answers

The association "MI" has connections/ collaborates with local governments, but not with the national government. Now that the National Council for the Promotion of Volunteering exists, it might get involved in volunteering although still focusing on "control". The future prospect will depend on the level of investment and promotion of volunteering; there is a need to take a participative approach, and collaboration is necessary to make things happen at the local level. There are similarities but also differences in terms of the regions of Croatia: Some parts where directly touched by the war, others not. The rural areas work quite differently than cities such as Split. The association has programmes such as Training for Trainers, which is training to learn volunteer management and work with local authorities.

There has been a Change in governmental awareness and they are now getting interested. There is no structured network organisation, the meetings are organised with USAID funding and other funding is received from the MOTT foundation, national foundations and municipality funds.

The mentoring is considered as "informal" neighbourhood caring for others. It is not taken into account by

volunteer law (because the volunteering must be "organized"). This kind of work is organized through NGOs as there are no state activities that involve volunteers.

### Similarities to other countries

In *Slovenia* there is a similar approach. There is a lack of sense of volunteering not because it was forced but because the state took care of everything. Neither is there here a recognized body at the national level; Slovene Philanthropy takes over this role as one of its priorities.

In *Bosnia and Herzegovina* there has been an accidental success of volunteers working with OSMIJEH; it is not promoted as such as an outcome but in reality happens.

In *Romania* there were "Open doors" of the government in the field of volunteering and social services; an accreditation scheme has been implemented for social services in Romania that includes even the condition that volunteers need to be involved in the work, which helped to push volunteering and its role / image.

What do the volunteer centres do if there is an over-demand of volunteers and lacking match making with organisations? In that case organisations have to be more creative in recruiting "receivers" of volunteers; promoting volunteering as a way to raise employability might be an example of this. The new approach is that volunteering brings benefits to both sides: it benefits society, the local community

and the persons you work with; but it is also a benefit for the volunteer.

The big challenge seen from the Romanian experience is that advertising volunteering as route to employment undermines volunteering: people will come only to get their volunteering paper and not because of the sheer interest / motivation to volunteer.

However, there is always a mix of motivation: employability might be one of them; for instance from the Australian experience we learn that the challenge is to accept and target different forms of motivations to volunteers.

### Advantages of advertising volunteering as a route to employment

This approach could "sell" volunteering better and it can lead to the recognition that skills and competences are learned – volunteering is a "learning event" and that they could even be officially accredited. It can be a different way of learning, especially for persons that have failed in formal learning etc.

### Disadvantages

It can undermine the genuine value of volunteering to get engaged altruistically for the common good and it could be used as a replacement for paid jobs, or cheap labour. Unemployed volunteers might stay longer in unemployment benefits to stay in the informal, non-stressful and secur-

ing environment.

We need to get the balance right, and recognize that people volunteer for different reasons; be careful that “employability” is not the only / main reason.

However, especially in CEE and SEE, volunteering first needs to be seen and recognized as a value as such – in order to avoid challenges of it being misused or misunderstood yet again.

### Accreditation of volunteering

In *Slovenia*, the Faculty of Social Work demands volunteer engagement of students; it is not in itself volunteering, but leads students to continue to volunteer.

In *Australia*, certificates in active volunteering have been developed, e.g. Recognition of Prior Learning, as well as in *Croatia*, where the Volunteer portfolio was developed.

There is a need of a case by case approach: Accreditation will not fit all volunteers and volunteer realities / experiences; it could be counterproductive: For some it is just pride and prestigious and it would offend older ladies that have been serving tea for 25 years now all of a sudden to get an accreditation on the skills learned.

One should take into account different ways of awarding and rewarding volunteers and their experiences: not only through skills development recognition but also through public thanking, awards, etc.

### Conclusion- Tricky points

- The local context has to be taken into consideration when answering questions about volunteering and employability

- Advantages of promoting volunteering as a route to employment can easily be seen as disadvantages

- The discussion on volunteering and employability also raises the question of recognition and accreditation of skills learned through volunteering.

## WS 6) Halley Movement (Mauritius)

Volunteer Mentorship Programme for young entrepreneurs

Presentation: Mahendranath Busgopaul, Secretary- General of the Halley Movement

Facilitation: Gwen van Roekel

### 1) Project details

#### 1.1. Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

Halley Movement

Mahendranath Busgopaul

halley@intnet.mu

Halley Movement

Cite Pitot, P.O.Box 250, Curepipe, Mauritius

Tel: +230 570 1521

Fax: +230 677 8544

www.hallemovement.org

#### 1.2. Organisation Type:

Volunteer centre / volunteer involving organisation

#### 1.3. Name of project / initiative:

Mentorship programme for young entrepreneurs

#### 1.4. What is the target group of the project / initiative:

Unemployed youth

Long-term unemployed

Migrants

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1.5. Main focus of the project / initiative:

Learning of skills / competences to raise employability

Enhancing self-esteem

Creation of personal social capital (create social relationships, networks, etc)

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**1.6. How many persons are/were participating in this project / initiative?**

sixty (60)

**1.7. Objectives of the project / initiative:**

Providing business skills to young & starting entrepreneurs through mentoring by business people

**1.8. Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:**

One year follow up by skilled business people

**1.9. Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative (if already available):**

Several young entrepreneurs have been able to start their own businesses.

**2) Making the project work****2.1. What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; What did make this project a success?**

Business people are volunteering their time to teach young entrepreneurs the joys and frustrations of business through a period of one year.

**2.2. Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?**

Private sector partnership

**2.3. What were major barriers to collaboration between stakeholders and how have they been overcome?**

Business people are reluctant to volunteer their time on a free basis. Personal contacts are being used to overcome the barriers.

**2.4. What are major barriers identified to that volunteering can effectively be an instrument / a route (back) to employment? How can they be overcome?**

People volunteering their time should be recognised in some sort of ceremonies.

**2.5. To what extent is this good practice transferable? (To other target groups, other countries, ...)**

It is working in the SADC region of Africa and will work in any other part of the world.

**3) Workshop questions****Which are three questions you would like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?**

How young people can start their own business

How entrepreneurs can overcome difficulties

How young people can become an agent to employ other youths in business

**Presentation**

The *Mentoring Young Entrepreneurs for Business Initiatives* is one of the projects that the non-profit organisation Halley Movement runs on Mauritius. The same program exists in other countries in Africa as well. The project has had a good start since 2003, when the first pilot was launched. IAVE-Mauritius through the Halley Movement provides for the structure and manual for the mentoring program. The idea is that the private sector, personified by business men and women with already established businesses and experience, should guide one young person who wants to start up its own business. The volunteering is in this way done by the business people, and the route to employment through volunteering in this case is an indirect one, since the people gaining access to the labour market are not the ones who volunteer themselves.

**Problems and solutions**

The business people volunteer their time for free to advice the young entrepreneurs once or twice a month, preferably by physically visiting them

but in cases of lack of time by telephone. The Halley Movement has created a network of mentors so that the mentors know about each other and can replace each other if necessary. It is a significant challenge to get the private sector involved, and actually implement the actions that are supposed to be performed by them. The Halley Movement has relied on personal contacts and collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce for finding the right mentors, but still there might be difficulties concerning the time that the mentor wants to offer, especially in the beginning when the young entrepreneur has many questions on his mind and tends to contact his or her mentor on every problematic occasion. The mentor serves as a role model for the young person, but the entrepreneur might be reluctant to share ideas with the mentor out of fear of him or her stealing them, therefore the Halley Movement tries not to match mentor and entrepreneur from the same branch. The mentor reports back to the Halley Movement once a month on what matters have been brought up and what advice has been

given. The Halley Movement puts emphasis on not engaging the mentors with more than one entrepreneur, at least in the beginning, so as not to lose their interest. However, the similar projects in Kongo and Zambia have engaged 10 mentors for 100 entrepreneurs, showing the fact that one has to take society-specific characteristics into consideration when deciding upon the number.

The businesses is mostly in the informal sector, like selling cakes and painted t-shirts, and at times the business of the young entrepreneurs goes so well that he or she can take on other young people.

The mentors do not label themselves "volunteer", whereas in fact they are volunteering their time for no profit whatsoever. The project is creating a link between the private sector and the voluntary sector, and it is problematic to learn to think like the other sector does. One carrot that has worked well in making the mentors sign up for the project is to have big events at the beginning of each project, inviting all the media and high politicians, so that the businesses that provide mentors receive publicity. The more well known the project and these kind of events become, the easier it is to find mentors. One idea that came up during the discussion was also that businesses could include the mentorship in their annual report.

### Similar projects in other countries

The workshop compared other examples from the countries represented, and the issue of financial support was raised. In Mauritius, the government encourages SME's, and give the young entrepreneurs low interest loans as a small start-up. The similar *Toyiza project in Algeria* has a system of micro-credits for young people to develop businesses, a credit that they have to reimburse afterwards so it can be used to finance new projects. In Germany, the *Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung* has a project in which business people volunteer to come to schools and teach business skills. The pupils have started a project on their own consisting of ironing shirts for the business people for remuneration. In Spain and France similar projects of governmental support for young businesses can be found. There is an emerging focus, that we did not see a few decades ago, on learning how to manage money.

There are certainly risks in this sort of inter-sectoral projects, on either sides- that one sector steps into the other sector. It is important to bear in mind not to let the voluntary sector become a for-profit sector.

### The volunteering context

In the volunteering context, the main issue is probably the strategy to recruit mentors from the private sector to volunteer. Clearly this good practice has benefits for the young entrepreneurs,

by way of sharing experience of more developed businesses and the creation of certain solidarity. We need to understand that businesses go into relationships like this for certain reasons, and traditional arguments for volunteering might not work in this case. The different sectors think very differently about values and objectives, and there has to be a process involved where each side learns to understand the other's core activities. Then again, volunteering should not be performed for the wrong reasons, but if one wants to deal with the business sector there is a need to think differently. Companies do not always look for profit, but a key factor might lie in the publicity they can achieve in making their name and logo known and receive a good reputation.

### Conclusion

Through volunteering their time and experience, businesses can help developing skills and competences among young people. This is bridge-building in that it creates a certain solidarity and new competencies, that the young people can duplicate to other young people in pace with their own businesses growing.

Companies have a lot to offer when it comes to social responsibility, but giving money must not always be the way. If a company is ready to volunteer the time of their employees, that is a good sign that the company is serious, and it is a shame to see this being misused.

---

## 7. VOICES FROM PARTICIPANTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*"We as a sector need to separate the competency element of volunteering and focus on that with employers and unemployment agencies. But competency development via volunteering must remain by free will. Stakeholders must get around the table: compare labour market needs, social needs and competency accreditation that employers will accept for jointly identify terms and formalities. Then there is a basis for collaborating without invading each others work fields."*

*"The presentation of Ireland was very inspiring and I think I will certainly use ideas in our own organisation."*

*"The meeting with like-minded people and hearing about their experiences was most useful."*

*"The workshop of SNC (France) was very good and gave us good examples about citizenship and solidarity."*

*"I would like to hear more about tricks for promotion of volunteer work and how to cooperate with the private sector i.e. in financial support. If it is working well in the U.K. why not in other countries?"*

*"According to questions raised and the discussion at the work groups, it was very clear that this subject is really an important matter within the volunteering sector. More discussion is needed."*

*"The workshop presented by Chiara of Ireland was very good: concrete, good examples,.... very much prepared. The discussion afterwards was good, a lot of people within the group were participating."*



Published by CEV, the European Volunteer Centre  
© 2007

In collaboration with

