



European Volunteer Centre

Valuing Volunteering Conference Impact and lessons of the European Solidarity Corps

21st November

Avenue de Cortenbergh 79 | 14:30 - 17:00

14:30- 14:45 **Opening:** Gabriella Civico: CEV Director & Alice Coden: Erasmus Plus Trainee University of Padova.

14:45- 15:00 **"Volunteering, Solidarity and Youth in the EU - State of Play"** Floor van Houdt Head of Unit for Youth programme, outreach tools and traineeships European Commission - Directorate General for Education and Culture

Organised in a "World Cafe" format, the conference will provide the opportunity to discuss the following questions:

1. How does volunteering contribute to the promotion of values and protection and defence of citizen's rights?

Facilitator: Nicolò Triacca

Volunteering translates the fundamental values of justice, solidarity, inclusion and citizenship upon which Europe is founded into action. Acting as a volunteer means having a positive impact on people and the environment, it's a collective action that moves from values into practices. In this group we will discuss how promotion, protection and implementation of people's rights and values can be carried out and which are the implications, the benefits and the threats for volunteers, society and public policies.

2. How can we increase equality, and deal with inequality, in volunteering?

Facilitator: Anu Viltrop

Engaging people of diverse realities and backgrounds is an important consideration for all volunteer-involving organisations but what are the processes for creating a variety of volunteering opportunities so that everyone can be involved regardless of the background or situation? What does variety in volunteering look like and what are the indicators?

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3. How do Volunteer Centres deal with recruitment of volunteers for controversial causes and roles?

Facilitator: Nina Arwitz

Volunteer Centres help match people who want to volunteer with organisations that need volunteers. But how should we handle controversial volunteering opportunities? For example, volunteering roles that may be job substitution, roles with a controversial organisation such as the Scientologists, roles with anti-human rights movement, roles in public services, or roles on opposing sides of a political debate such as abortion rights. Is it the role of Volunteer Centre to advertise all volunteering roles without any judgment, or to make judgments about what roles can be advertised? If the latter, how do we agree on the criteria for advertising roles?

Table 4: How can the impact of the European Solidarity Corps be maximised?

Facilitator: Michel Lefranc

It's important that we ensure that the whole of the Solidarity sector can engage with ESC and not only the youth field. For this we need that the process for gaining the quality label is understandable and accessible for a diverse range of volunteer involving organisations. Is it? ESC volunteering should ideally lead to a lifetime of solidarity actions and volunteering engagement - what conditions need to be in place for this to happen?

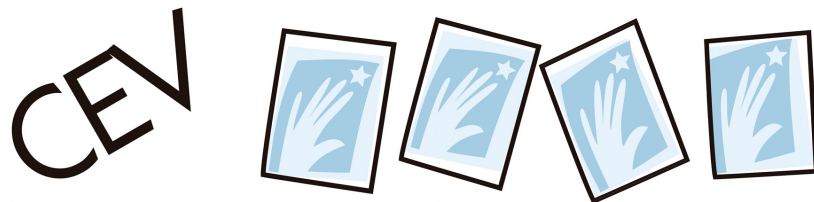
5. How can we empower leadership and make it more responsive to social needs? What does volunteering need in terms of leadership (platforms, centres, networks,? What infrastructure is needed?

Facilitator: Jelena Kamenko

One of the common biases regarding volunteering is that, since it is an activity based on free will, it does not seek structured models of support. The existing concepts of leadership for volunteering in Europe vary in many respects, from volunteer centers that in most cases retained the original idea of serving as a local volunteer development agency, to national networks dedicated to the research and development of volunteering as a multidimensional social agenda. Is there something flawed with the existing concept of structured leadership for volunteering? Does something need to change and if so, what?

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6. What is the relationship between social entrepreneurship and volunteering?

Facilitator:

In some contexts, social entrepreneurs are being encouraged to engage volunteers. If the social entrepreneurship generates personal profit for founders, owners or shareholders is it ethical to engage volunteers in order to deliver its objectives? Is naming/ branding a not-for-profit NGO as a Social Enterprise a good approach to attract new people as volunteers? Does the volunteering community in your country connect with social enterprises? What are the important trends and what should we be optimistic and/ or cautious about?

7. How can volunteers best contribute to the achievement of SDGs starting at 'home'?

Facil

Out of the 17 SDGs, many are linked to community development in its many formats and all have intrinsic connections with volunteering. Specifically, SDG11 aims for sustainable cities and communities, and the contribution of volunteering to sustainable communities is unquestionable. One of the most stringent needs in both large or small cities is the one of housing. It is one of the biggest issues at present, with the risk of growing bigger and generating other negative effects, linked with education, integration, health, etc. Can volunteers get involved in solving this issue? How? What tasks, activities or campaigns can volunteers initiate, join or support? What can we do, as volunteering infrastructure bodies, to enable volunteers to get involved in housing issues? Join this table to explore more in-depth links between volunteering and SDGs.

8. What is the relationship between civil society, volunteering and the State?

Facilitator: Joao Teixeira

A good, healthy relationship between the State and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), volunteer based and/or volunteer promoters, is an essential condition for good, quality volunteering. It is important to ensure that this right, that should contemplate the free decision of the CSO about the areas of volunteering involvement in the communities, is an integral part of the community development, at all levels within a country. This relationship should be supported by protocols and a regular system of financial or logistical support granted by national governments (and/or any other level of government). What should this include ?

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