

2023

The Role of Municipalities in Supporting and Promoting **Gender Equality** through Volunteering



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the European Union

Introduction

In the context of a 4-year framework agreement grant under the European Union "Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values" fund (CERV) - "VERA" (Volunteering, Equality, Rights and Action), the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) has created this publication - "The role of municipalities in supporting and promoting gender equality through volunteering". It contains examples from eight different municipalities, candidates and winners of the European Volunteering Capital Competition.

This publication aims to shed light on the policies and programmes of the participating municipalities, showcasing their distinctive approaches and practices to address gender inequality and enhance inclusivity within their communities through volunteering.

The varied projects and initiatives featured in this publication contribute to truly "Collaborative Communities" and underscore the comprehensive scope of gender equality through volunteering: from grassroots campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives to skills development programmes for volunteers. Their examples highlight the importance of local collaboration between entities from different sectors and fields and the engagement of volunteers in driving positive change.

By highlighting their achievements, CEV seeks to inspire and encourage other municipalities and organisations to adopt similar strategies across Europe, fostering a society where gender equality can thrive in line with EU Values.



Participating municipalities

AVILÉS
EV Capital Candidate 2025



AYUNTAMIENTO AVILÉS



Avilés
candidate 2025
European
Volunteering
Capital

SALAMANCA
EV Capital Candidate 2025



Ayuntamiento de Salamanca



Salamanca
candidate 2025
European
Volunteering
Capital

TRONDHEIM
EV Capital 2023



TRONDHEIM
KOMMUNE



Trondheim
2023
European
Volunteering
Capital

GDAŃSK
EV Capital 2022



GDAŃSK



Gdansk
2022
European
Volunteering
Capital

PADOVA
EV Capital 2020



Comune di Padova



European
Volunteering
Capital
2020
Padova

KOŠICE
EV Capital 2019



KOŠICE




European
Volunteering
Capital
2019
Košice

AARHUS
EV Capital 2018



AARHUS
KOMMUNE



European
Volunteering
Capital
2018
Aarhus

LISBON
EV Capital 2015



LISBOA
CÂMARA MUNICIPAL



European
Volunteering
Capital
2015

Municipalities play a key role in promoting and supporting gender equality within the community through volunteering

Many municipalities adopt specific policies, programmes or regulations to address gender inequality through volunteering. By implementing various initiatives, the municipalities have demonstrated a strong commitment in promoting gender equality through volunteering. Their policies and programmes mainly focus on empowering and protecting women and LGBTQ community, trying to create a more inclusive society.

AVILÉS

The Municipality has passed a Citizen Participation Regulation and created agencies to guarantee the participation of women and women's associations in local policies oriented towards gender equality. The Volunteering Local Board, which consists of representatives of the most significant volunteering associations in the Municipality, includes volunteering on gender equality as part of its remit.

SALAMANCA

In 1991, the Women's Information and Advice Center (CIAM) was created to develop programmes and projects, aimed at improving the situation of women and ensuring equal opportunities. In 2018 the Salamanca City Council approved the III Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men of the City of Salamanca, co-created by the City and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) active in this field, in which volunteering organisations and the actions they develop have a special importance.

TRONDHEIM

In recent years the focus has not been restricted to binary gender equality, but on ensuring that people of all gender identities and sexual orientations (LGBTQ) are acknowledged, supported and not discriminated against. The regulations for financial support to volunteering organisations give concrete guidelines and claims for gender equality within organisations and projects.

GDAŃSK

In 2018, the Municipality introduced the Model of Equal Treatment as a local anti-discrimination policy. One of the anti-discrimination premises is, among others, gender equality. The policy obliges the application of the model's principles to any organisation, public or private, which makes use of public funds. This includes volunteering organisations implementing projects co-financed with public funds.

PADOVA

The Municipality actively promotes gender equality education programmes in schools. It supports volunteering associations to organise initiatives related to gender equality. To support and protect the LGBTQ community, the Municipality has created the Spolato Anti Discrimination Centre, and it advocates for and supports Padova Pride. Centro Veneto Progetti Donna is a shelter for women who are victims of violence supported by the Municipality.

KOŠICE

The City supports long-term volunteers-groups or individuals and their volunteer activities, regardless of the volunteer's age, gender, nationality, race or skin color. Any discrimination is inadmissible. One of the basic ideas underpinning collaboration between the City of Kosice, City Districts, NGOs and other organisations, is that of an absolute zero tolerance to any form of discrimination, against any volunteer.

AARHUS

A new LGBTQ policy has recently been adopted which addresses gender equality through volunteering. As part of this policy, since 2018 the Municipality sets aside funds of DKK 500,000 annually for the establishment and operation of LGBT+HUSET, with the aim of improving LGBTQ people's health, well-being and quality of life as well as to create a place for gathering for the LGBTQ milieu in Aarhus and the surrounding region.

LISBON

There are specific policies, plans and programmes to address gender equality. The Volunteer Bank for the City of Lisbon operates within this overall framework, welcoming and directing all volunteers who sign up, regardless of their gender, to meaningful volunteering projects.

The municipalities provide support to local volunteer organisations and initiatives that contribute towards achieving gender equality goals

As part of their commitment, many municipalities establish partnerships to engage with local volunteer organisations and support their initiatives related to gender equality. Collaboration between municipalities and volunteer organisations can take various forms. Municipalities can provide financial support to the organisations, enabling them to carry out initiatives. This funding can be used to train volunteers, organise awareness campaigns and create educational programmes on gender equality for local schools. Aside from direct financial support, municipalities can provide other municipal resources to support local volunteer organisations, such as meeting, office, and exhibition spaces. The support provided can also be complimented by collaborating with, and involving, local volunteering organisations in the planning and implementation of gender equality policies within the municipality.

AVILÉS

The Municipality wants to strengthen the skills of volunteer organisations. To this end, the Municipality provides associations with technical, financial and training support and they are allowed to use premises at no cost. The Municipality offers free-training courses for volunteers and technical staff of associations including those addressing gender equality issues.

TRONDHEIM

As part of the European Volunteering Capital status, monthly networking meetings are organised around important topics for volunteer organisations, including about inclusiveness and diversity in organisations. Organisations are encouraged to look critically at themselves and their openness for diverse people, including people of all gender identities, especially people identifying with minority gender identities.

PADOVA

The Municipality offers spaces for exhibitions, conferences and associations' offices (for example to the Spolato Centre and the Centro Veneto Progetti Donna). It also supports volunteer organisations through funding, granting sponsorship and promotional materials and campaigns such as posters and billboards.

AARHUS

The Municipality provides funding to some of the local LGBTQ organisations - but there is no requirement to measure or evaluate the achievement of gender equality goals.

SALAMANCA

The actions carried out by the Department of Social Participation and Volunteering, and specifically through the Municipal Agency for Volunteering provide this support, such as: training courses for volunteers on equality; collaboration with the Municipal Volunteer Programme "VoluntaS" in actions to raise awareness and recruit volunteers for different entities; and raising awareness about issues related to gender equality and encouraging their participation and collaboration.

GDAŃSK

There is no separation of gender equality issues from other equality policies. There is an allocation of about €300,000 for their implementation per year. These funds are mainly used to co-finance projects related to equal treatment run by social volunteer organisations.

KOŠICE

Any kind of discrimination, not only against volunteers, is absolutely unacceptable. Therefore, the Municipality transparently provides its resources - financial, educational, material, etc. - to volunteer organisations or initiatives that demonstrate inclusiveness.

LISBON

The Municipality responds and supports local organisations or initiatives by providing financial, human and material resources, having programmes/plans that respond to gender equality: Municipal LGBTQ Plan; Municipal Plan for Equality; Municipal Plan to Prevent and Combat Violence against Women, Domestic and Gender Violence.

The municipalities collaborate with stakeholders, NGOs and institutions to organise volunteering projects aimed at raising awareness and promoting gender equality

To exchange knowledge and best practices, both in terms of awareness raising and developing gender equality policies, many municipalities host discussions with different actors through round tables or individual meetings. Sharing knowledge improves the quality of implementation of gender equality projects and protocols. The municipalities mainly provide funds and financial aid to NGOs, enabling them to have the material resources to effectively organise impactful initiatives on gender equality issues.

AVILÉS

The Strategic Plan for Volunteering aims to promote a culture of solidarity, enhancing the concept of volunteering and developing public awareness campaigns, to ensure visibility for the important contributions of volunteering to the social welfare of the community, including gender equality.

SALAMANCA

The Municipality collaborates through economic agreements and financial aid, and has a direct relationship with other entities and institutions (for example with the Sub-delegation of the Government, Junta de Castilla y Leon, Provincial Council of Salamanca). From 2020 to 2023 the Municipality signed economic agreements with 7 entities for the amount of €93,700 and in 2023 gave financial aid to 8 entities for the amount of €26,990, some of which aim at raising awareness and promoting gender equality.

TRONDHEIM

The Municipality financially supports organisations that specifically work with and for the promotion of girls/women participation in music and art. Examples are: Akks, an organisation that promotes female participation in music (production); Femenalen, a festival that promotes women in music.

GDANSK

The Equality Fund was established with € 40,000 and it aims to co-finance equality projects coming from citizens and social organisations initiatives. Around 80 initiatives of organisations and informal groups of citizens are co-financed by this fund every year. The Mayor of Gdansk has established the annual Gdansk Equality Award, given to individuals and organisations that have made the greatest contribution to equality activities and combating discrimination in Gdansk, including those related to gender issues.

PADOVA

The Municipality collaborates with stakeholders, NGOs and institutions through round tables aimed at gender equality and volunteering initiatives, with the authority to approve relevant protocols. In addition, the Municipality is available to have individual meetings with NGOs to discuss the topic.

KOŠICE

The Municipality cooperates with stakeholders, non-governmental organisations and institutions in volunteer projects aimed at raising awareness and promoting gender equality. The main focus has always been doing volunteer projects for the benefit of the entire community involving and including people of all genders.

AARHUS

The Municipality funds organisations and makes concrete tools available to organisations in order to promote gender equality.

LISBON

The City Council is part of the organising committee of several collaborative networks. Those networks integrate platforms and groups of associations, organisations from civil society and public bodies working in the areas of gender equality, LGBTQ, migration and the integration of people with disabilities, committed to promoting equality. The City Council emphasises initiatives to mark commemorative dates such as "The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women" on 25 November.

Municipalities play a crucial role in collaborating with gender equality organisations and advocacy groups to promote volunteering as a means to address gender inequality

The municipalities recognise the importance of addressing gender inequality and actively looking for partnerships with local gender equality organisations and advocacy groups. Through collaboration, the organisations can effectively promote volunteering as a tool for addressing gender inequality within the community. At the same time, the organisations and advocacy groups advise the municipalities on the implementation of gender equality through volunteering policies.

AVILÉS

The volunteering organisations participate, representing the interests of the different groups, in the Local Volunteering Board. It is a place for debate, reflection, proposals and shared decision-making between the entities and the Municipality on all the measures implemented in the field of volunteering. Various volunteering associations dedicated to achieving gender equality count on volunteers from the EU Programme "European Solidarity Corps".

SALAMANCA

The Municipal Volunteer Agency supports all entities and NGOs active in the field of equality, to support their efforts and raise awareness among the population about gender equality, through training, recruitment and referral of volunteers, advice, etc., as well as other actions aimed at promoting positive social awareness among citizens through active social participation.

TRONDHEIM

Binary gender equality is very advanced in Norway, therefore the focus lately is rather on more marginalised groups from the LGBTQ movements.

GDAŃSK

The Equal Treatment Council has been established by the Mayor of Gdansk. The Council consists of 14 representatives of equality organisations and advocacy groups. This Council is an advisory body for the Mayor in the co-creation and implementation of equality policies in Gdansk.

PADOVA

The Municipality establishes the Equal Opportunities Commission internally. It also collaborates to promote gender equality with the network of Regional and Provincial Equal Opportunities Commissions, the Equal Opportunities Councilor of the Province and the economic sector (Chamber of Commerce, Confindustria Network, etc).

KOŠICE

The Municipality cooperates with and supports everyone who has the desire and willingness to implement various volunteer projects in Košice and its surroundings, beneficial for all residents. The Municipality wants to ensure that the widest possible public understands the importance of volunteering in terms of its invaluable contribution not only to Košice, but to the entire society.

AARHUS

The Municipality collaborates with the local LGBTQ organisations and their national umbrella organisations.

LISBON

The Municipality financially supports organisations active in gender equality and LGBTQ and has a Municipal Committee for Equality which is an advisory body to the Municipality of Lisbon on the design, implementation and evaluation of municipal public policies to promote equality and combat discrimination, including the creation of Working Groups to draw up municipal plans in the field.

The municipalities ensure that volunteer opportunities are accessible, inclusive for people of all genders, and free from discrimination through specific policies

The municipalities implement policies and guidelines that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender. These ensure that volunteer opportunities are free from gender-based discrimination and that all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully.

AVILÉS

The Local Volunteer Office, on an individual basis and without discrimination, provides information about volunteering projects to anybody interested, including the contact information of the organisations responsible for these projects.

TRONDHEIM

The new Municipal Plan for Trondheim (2020-2032) states that the Municipality has to ensure that everybody can participate in the volunteer activities and that it has to be inclusive, diverse and give equal opportunities for all.

PADOVA

The Municipality guarantees equal opportunities verifying the access criteria for associations to the municipal register and collaborating with the Volunteer Service Centre (CSV) of Padova and Rovigo.

AARHUS

The Municipality strives to ensure that opportunities are accessible and inclusive. Through collaboration and concrete projects with relevant stakeholders, the Municipality is working together with the local community towards strengthening and extending inclusive and accessible opportunities.

SALAMANCA

The Municipal Regulation of Volunteering of the Salamanca City Council (2021) aims to facilitate non-discrimination through the Municipal Agency of Volunteering, which acts as a resource where volunteer entities in Salamanca can connect with citizens who wish to collaborate with them in various actions and projects.

GDAŃSK

Gdańsk has established accessibility criteria in social projects funded by the Municipality. This means that any project applying for funding to the Municipality must refer to these criteria. In the description of the beneficiaries of the projects, the bidders indicate the gender breakdown of beneficiaries. The gender of beneficiaries is also one of the elements reported in the final report submitted to the Municipality.

KOŠICE

Everyone in Košice, without exception, has the opportunity to sign up and actively participate in any announced volunteer event at any time. The Municipality is not aware of cases of discrimination against participants during volunteering events.

LISBON

Lisbon City Council has been awarded several times by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, being considered a Municipality of Excellence for Living in Equality and recognised for its good practices in terms of Gender Equality, Citizenship and Non-Discrimination.

The municipalities are working on implementing programmes or initiatives to tackle gender-based violence through volunteering.

The municipalities have implemented programmes and initiatives that focus on supporting shelters for victims of gender-based violence, as well as organising events, workshops, campaigns to raise awareness and prevent such violence, and training volunteers on gender equality issues. In many municipalities, women shelters are managed both by professional, paid personnel, and volunteers.

AVILÉS

The City Council makes significant efforts regarding gender equality. One of the main projects is "Punto Lila" (Lilac Point), dedicated to provide information and support against gender-based aggression. It is set in nightlife venues during summer and holidays, and counts on paid workers and volunteers from an organisation dedicated to women's care.

SALAMANCA

Since 2019 annual training opportunities for volunteers on gender equality issues have been developed by the Municipal Volunteer Agency, in addition to the actions developed by CIAM including: workshops in Educational Centers; School of Equality; delivery of awareness modules on equality and prevention of gender violence; sexual assaults prevention campaign and 'zero tolerance' projects like 'Puntos Violeta', involving previously trained volunteers to inform and support women during large events.

TRONDHEIM

The Municipality runs a Crisis Centre which is mostly run by paid personnel. The Municipality is also responsible for secure living for women (secret address etc.). Financial support is also provided to volunteer organisations like "Sisters for sisters" and the "International Welfare organisation" which work with gender-based violence victims. The Municipality also promotes initiatives and service-lines, run by volunteering organisations, which aim to help victims of forced marriage or genital mutilation.

GDANSK

Volunteering organisations are crucial for the implementation of the Programme for Counteracting Violence. All shelters for people experiencing violence are financed by the Municipality but run by CSOs; awareness campaigns and events are organised by the Municipality and NGOs. Each June the event "Days of Freedom and Solidarity" is organised.

PADOVA

There is the Protocol that aims to standardise and rationalise initiatives on the subject at the municipal level.

KOŠICE

The volunteers provide assistance to individuals who reach out for help. However, addressing gender-based violence falls primarily within the responsibility and jurisdiction of state authorities, rather than volunteers.

LISBON

The Municipality runs and supports several programmes and initiatives to tackle gender-based violence, such as: a Municipal Centre for Victims of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, where the victims have psychological, legal and counselling support; a programme of Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence; and projects supporting the integration, empowerment and independency of LGBTQ young people and victims of domestic violence.

Some municipalities have participatory budgeting projects that allocate funding specifically to projects aimed at combating gender inequality through volunteering

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a global approach to building local democracy and engagement through making available public money available to communities, to be spent as decided by those that live within them. PB gives people real power to make real decisions over real money. The participatory budgeting process allows community members, including gender equality organisations, advocacy groups, and individuals interested in volunteering for gender equality, to submit project proposals aimed at addressing gender inequality through volunteering. By implementing participatory budgeting projects that allocate funding specifically to projects aimed at combating gender inequality through volunteering, the municipalities not only demonstrate their commitment to addressing this issue but also empower the community members to actively contribute in the decision-making process.

AVILÉS

The Municipality provides associations with funding through direct grants for volunteering projects, and open calls for grants for associations and social entities, giving priority to those that have volunteers and promote gender equality. The Municipality has also implemented a process known as "Citizen Contribution to Municipal Budgets." aiming to foster direct citizen involvement in municipal management. The Citizen Participation Council uses an action-research methodology to contribute to the decisions on allocation of funds. The Municipality doesn't pre-allocate a fixed portion of the budget, or limit the scope of citizen proposals to certain areas of action, granting citizens greater freedom to participate.

SALAMANCA

From 2019 participatory budgeting is regulated by the Regulation for Democratic Participation of the City of Salamanca and once the citizens have submitted their projects, it is the City Council's responsibility to decide which projects to prioritise. There are different municipal departments that provide economic support since it is a cross-cutting issue in municipal policies and it is linked to the cross-cutting nature of the work developed by the Municipal Volunteer Agency. For the year 2023, it has been established that 10% of the municipal budget is allocated to construction, repair, and remodelling projects subject to participatory budgeting, always open to citizen involvement and participation through the different proposals received.

GDAŃSK

Participatory budgeting was introduced in Gdańsk in 2013 and since then, 822 projects have been implemented for the amount of over PLN 157 million. The participatory budgeting of the Municipality offers funding opportunities for projects focused on addressing gender inequality through volunteering. However, it does not allocate a specific pool of funds exclusively for such projects. Regrettably, no residents have submitted any projects of this nature thus far.

LISBON

The Municipality has an allocated budget to provide associations with funding for projects considered to be of municipal interest and aiming to support the sustainability of activities in areas of social rights such as gender equality.

Conclusion

This publication gives insight into the distinct approaches and practices implemented by the participating municipalities to address gender inequality and promote equality and inclusion through volunteering.

Through their policies and programmes, the municipalities have demonstrated that it is not possible to address gender equality through volunteering without ensuring inclusive and accessible volunteer opportunities for all, free from gender and other intersectional discrimination. The municipalities have implemented guidelines that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender and other characteristics.

To raise awareness and advocate for gender equality the participating municipalities have collaborated with NGOs, stakeholders and institutions. Moreover, the municipalities have highlighted how this close collaboration with gender equality organisations and advocacy groups and the promotion of volunteering is essential as an impactful tool to address gender inequality.



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