



Family Volunteering Research

**Family Volunteering
A new form of engagement**

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Europe wide research

During Spring 2020, surveys were developed in the languages of the partner countries and distributed to volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations in each of the countries (Romania, Ireland, Belgium, Croatia, Norway, and Germany). In total there were 263 volunteers and 138 Volunteer Involving Organisations who responded to the survey, a total of 401 responses.

In this report is a synopsis of the answers taken on the six country response, as well as desk research relating to each of the partner countries. It is interesting to note the comparison between countries in terms of how Family Volunteering has developed. Where Family Volunteering is taking place in organisations, it is not necessarily named or featured as Family Volunteering and happens on an ad hoc basis.

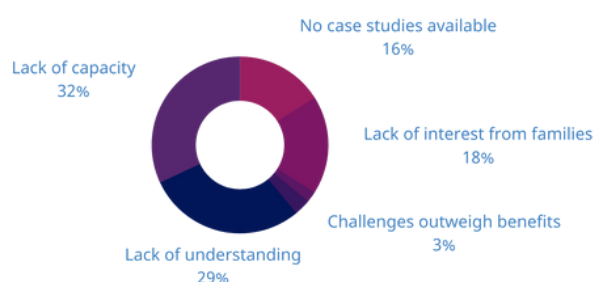


Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) responses

Barriers to offering family volunteering

32% of respondent organisations reported a lack of capacity or resources to support family volunteering, shortly followed by a lack of understanding of family volunteering at 29%. While 16% of respondents identified that case studies of what is happening in family volunteering would provide ideas for those organisations to offer Family Volunteering.

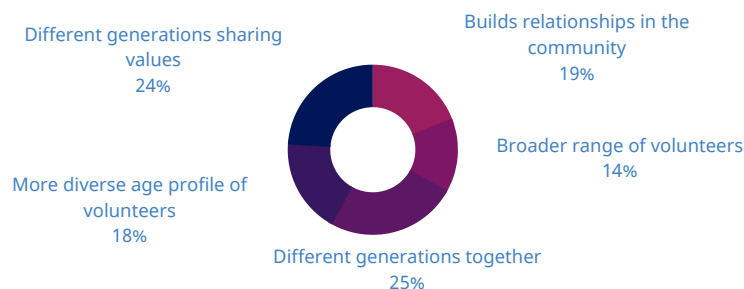
Table 1: Barriers to offering family volunteering



Other publications from this project will aim to tackle those barriers with the development of resources and the sharing of case studies and the highlighting of pilot projects.

The benefits of engaging family volunteers

Table 2: Benefits of engaging family volunteers



It could be suggested that the benefits far outweigh the barriers, and on further exploring this question, it can be seen that those practicing and offering family volunteering have seen inclusion and understanding to be improved.

25% of respondents saw it as a way to spend quality time together doing something meaningful, 24% saw it as an opportunity for different generations to share volunteering values, while 19% said it helped them to build relationships in local communities.

At a time of a global pandemic and societal changes in terms of the interaction of volunteers that have been involved in organisations now is an opportunity to engage this new cohort of volunteers interested in volunteering. For VIOs this is like “two for the price of one” volunteer, when two or more family volunteers join an organisation.

Facilities and flexibility

The success of any volunteer programme is the ability to be flexible in their offer to volunteers.

There has to be “give and get” on behalf of both parties (volunteers and VIOs) and it was positive to see that 67% of respondents were able to offer a facility suitable for family volunteering, 32% did not have a suitable facility while 1% intend to in the future.

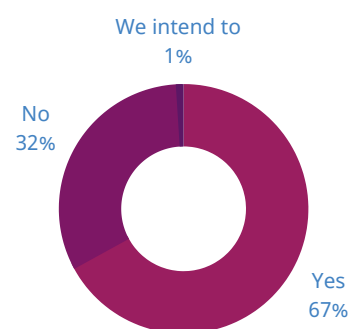
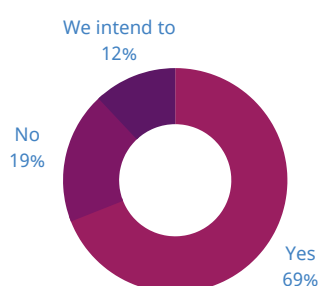


Table 2: Do you have a facility suitable for family volunteering?

Table 4: Can you offer flexible scheduling?



Flexible scheduling

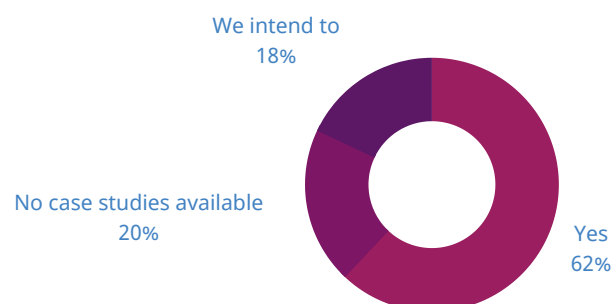
Being able to offer flexibility for families to engage in volunteering is a key to the success of such a programme. Family Volunteers can have limited time available and, when two people from the same family volunteer, it can be challenging for those in caring roles for others.

69% of Volunteer Involving Organisation identified that they could provide flexible scheduling, while 12% intend to in the future. All of which bodes well for the future development of family volunteering.

Volunteer Opportunities

62% of respondent organisations report that they have opportunities available that could be attractive to family volunteers, 18% intend to develop roles in the future and 20% report no case studies available.

Table 5: Do you have opportunities that could attract family volunteers?



These challenges will be addressed in future Intellectual Outputs (IOs) of this project. This provides a positive base on which family volunteering can be offered and developed. It is important that Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) have developed good volunteer management practice before they engage any new groups.

Organisational Support

Volunteer Managers play a key role in volunteer management, whether they be paid or volunteer, this is even more so in Family Volunteering or any form of supported volunteering.

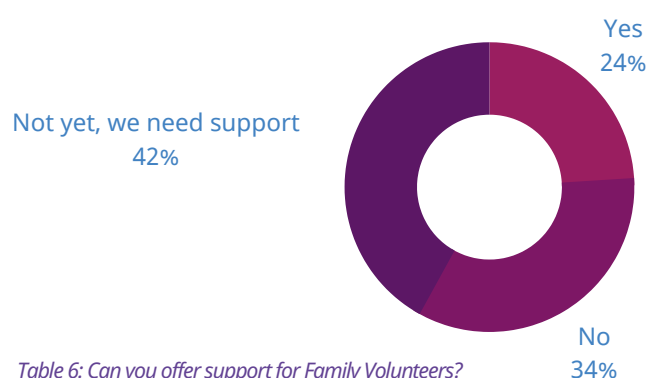


Table 6: Can you offer support for Family Volunteers?

Only 14% of respondents reported that they currently had a team member responsible for providing family volunteering, but interestingly 42% expressed an interest in developing the role and seeking support to develop the role.

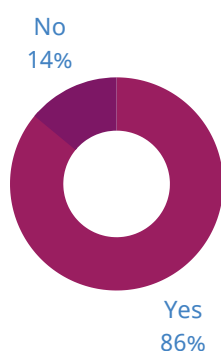


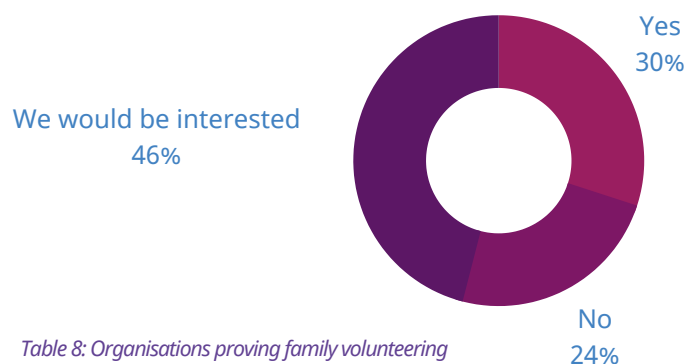
Table 7: Are you interested in developing Family Volunteering?

Interest in developing family volunteering

86% of respondent organisations expressed an interest in developing family volunteering in their organisations, to expand the diversity of those engaged in their volunteer programmes.

Organisations providing family volunteering

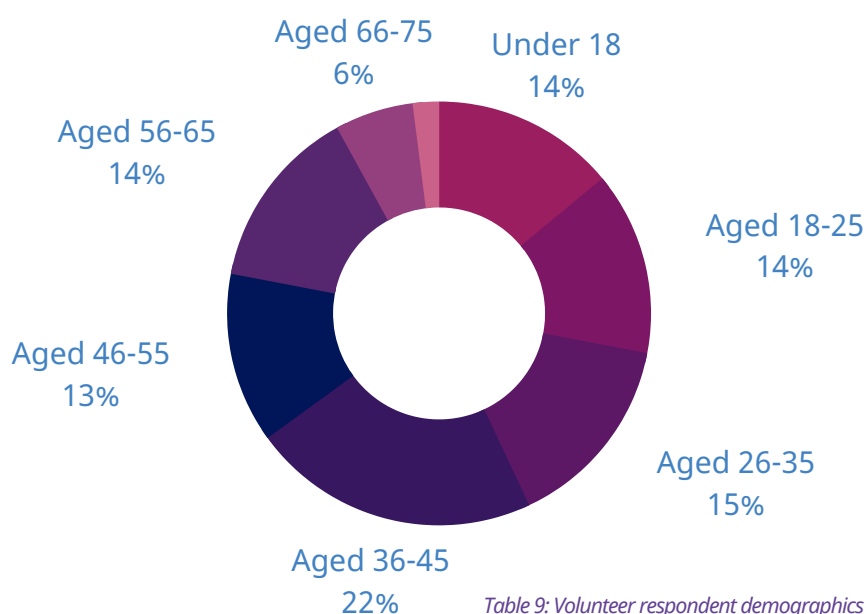
30% of respondents were currently providing family volunteering programmes, 24% were not and 46% currently weren't, but were interested in developing family volunteering opportunities in the future.



30% of respondents were currently providing family volunteering programmes, 24% were not and 46% currently weren't, but were interested in developing family volunteering opportunities in the future. This interest (46%) bodes well in terms of this project and shows there is both a demand and interest in family volunteering, albeit in most cases this is not named as family volunteering within the organisation.

Volunteer responses

We had a balanced demographic response from all volunteer age groups to the surveys, which helps us to paint a true picture in terms of those volunteers interested in the topic of family volunteering. The largest group of respondents was aged 26 – 45 (22%) and the smallest group was aged 76 – 85 (2%).



The gender breakdown was females (75%) and males (25%), and this reflects a relative European figure of male to female volunteers.

Previous participation in family volunteering

Interestingly, 30% of respondents had a previous experience of family volunteering, albeit it may not have been specifically called “family volunteering”, they were in fact volunteering with another family member.

26% didn’t have previous experience, but would like to. Again the focus here needs to be on Volunteer Involving Organisations having the case studies, knowledge and tools in place to support a family volunteering programme.

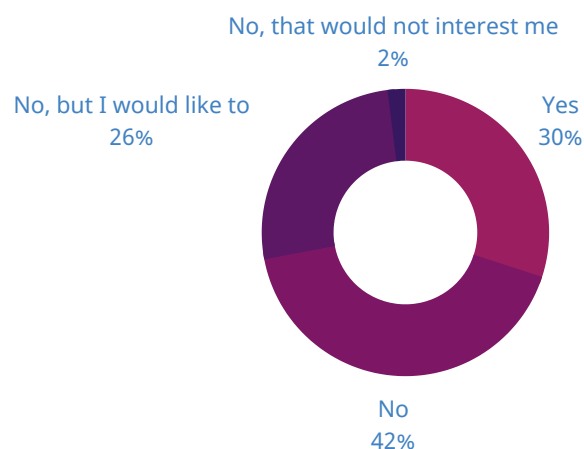
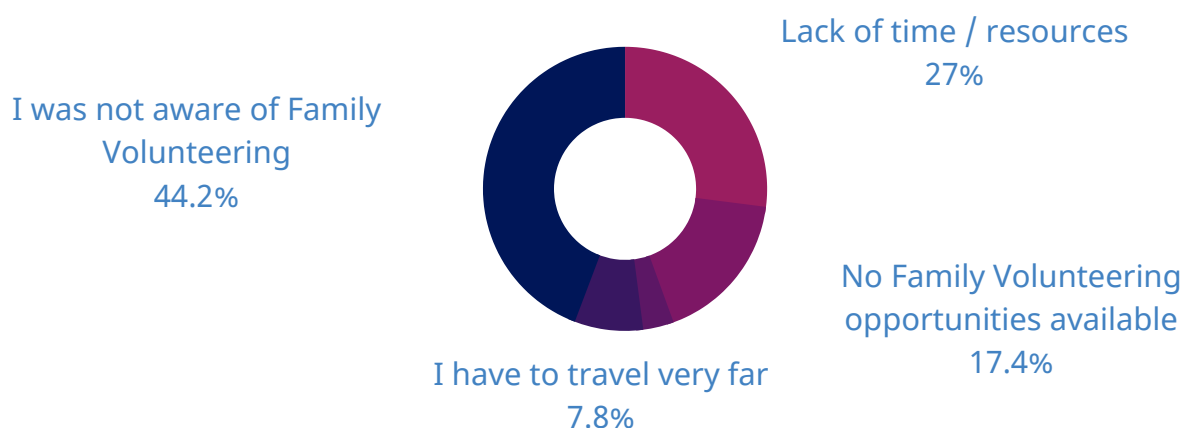


Table 10: Previous participation in family volunteering

The barriers as seen by volunteers

In a project like this, our primary focus should be on reducing the barriers for organisations to offer family volunteering and reducing the barriers for volunteers to participate in such activities. While family volunteering is often clearly not advertised as such and family volunteering opportunities are available, 44% of respondents were not aware of family volunteering, 27% of respondents reported a lack of time / resources, this may be reflected in not enough flexibility being offered by organisations. 17% reported that there are no family volunteering opportunities available, again this might be just a perception as a higher number of organisations reported offering family volunteering.

Table 11: Barriers as perceived by volunteers



The benefits to volunteers

The positive effects of family volunteering outweigh the barriers that are there and these could be used as ways to attract new potential volunteers to your organisation. 16% mentioned that it allows for intergenerational volunteering, 16% said is strengthens communities and family ties and 16% noted that it's a fun way to spend time together.

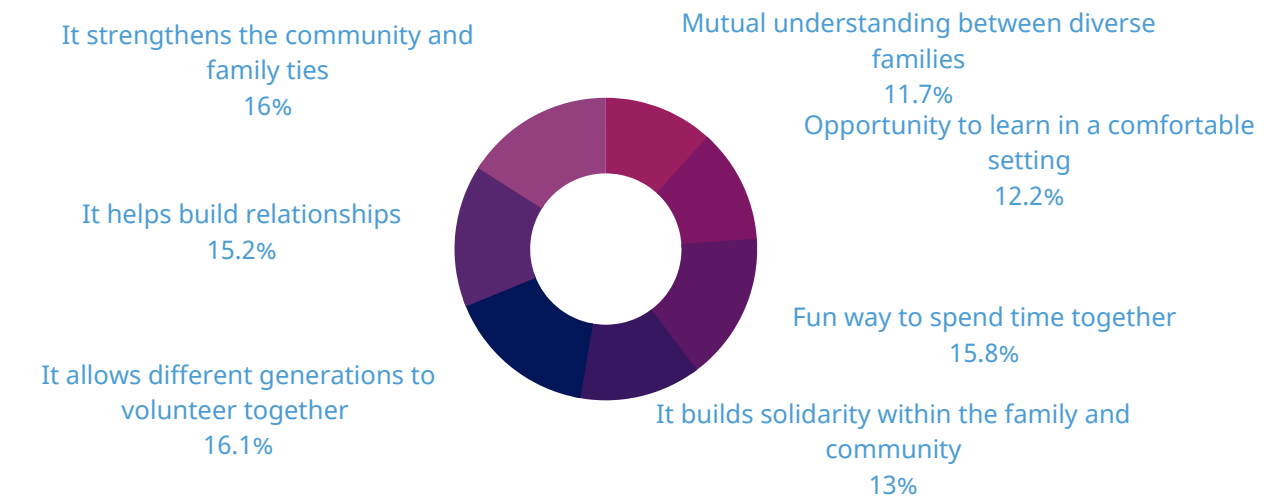


Table 12: The benefits to volunteers



Executive Summary

It is concluded that a Family Volunteering Programme - if piloted - has the potential to provide a very positive experience for volunteers, their family members, and organisations alike and it would allow VIOs to engage a broader range of volunteers with different interests and abilities, from different demographics.

From the organisations who responded to the survey, family volunteering is seen to be already taking place, albeit in small pockets, in most organisations across all countries, in activities such as fundraising, supporting family members of service users, and environmental protection.



Although such volunteering roles are not specifically advertised as “family volunteering”, for example, organisations in Ireland have specifically reported it is now becoming more common for couples and families, e.g. parent / child or couple duo, to sign up together. Many organisations report that family volunteering was not currently taking place within their organisation. In these cases, it is clear across all countries that those organisations are interested in developing family volunteering in the future.

The main barrier noted to offering a family volunteering programme is the lack of capacity and resources - organisations do not feel they would have the time, resources or funding to develop a programme such as this. Another barrier which has been noted by Norwegian organisations is the restriction in involving volunteers aged under 18. This is further noted where organisations have pointed out some organisations may have the lack of knowledge around child protection and legislation involving young people or those under 18, so will be reluctant to do so, unless they are informed on how to go about it.

Organisations see the main benefit a family volunteering programme could bring such as - providing valuable opportunities to build family relationships and enhancing the importance of volunteering as an integral part of life to the younger generation from an early age, specifically, Croatia - where over half of Croatian organisation respondents see this as a huge benefit. Most organisations scored similarly in that the benefit a family volunteering programme would bring is to allow them to engage a broader range of volunteers than they would normally engage, except for Belgium where none of the organisations reported on this being a benefit. Similarly, volunteer respondents also reported that a family volunteering programme has the potential to help build solidarity within the community.

Volunteer age ranges are noted with similar results across all countries. Most volunteer respondents fell evenly between the 18 - 25, 26 - 35, 36 - 45 and 46 - 55 age range. Some differences were noted in Ireland and Belgium, these being the only two countries with no under 18 volunteer respondents. Germany, Ireland, and Norway were the only three countries to have volunteer respondents fall into the 66 - 75 age range. Norway is noted to be the only country with volunteer respondents that fall into the 76 - 85 age range, where 6 out of 48 volunteers who responded were within this range.



Regarding gender, all countries have a considerably higher dominance of female versus male volunteer ratio. Where volunteers were asked if they have participated in a family volunteering programme in the past, it is noted that there is a similar result across all countries with an equal share of those volunteers who have participated previously in a family volunteering programme and those who haven't.

Further indication is given to remaining volunteers, who report an interest in participating in a family volunteering role in the future, specifically in Romania. The main barrier considered by volunteer respondents to join a family volunteer role seems to be most scored across the countries in that there are no family volunteering opportunities available, with the exception to Germany, Norway and Romania where their highest percentage of volunteers report they were not aware of family volunteering. Again, scores were similar with an equal divide between the various benefits, which highlights that volunteers see family volunteering as a very beneficial programme.

Overall, the programme would be a great way to enhance volunteering within local community cohorts. It appears the programme project partners would propose would be the first official family volunteering programme and it would provide an excellent role model for similar programmes around Europe.

Recommendations

1

In the first instance, further awareness should be achieved of what exactly family volunteering is needed. One broad definition should be agreed and used, and organisations should make efforts to raise awareness of what family volunteering is, amongst current and potential volunteers, as much as possible. Activities don't need to be named as family volunteering, but where such offerings are made, volunteers should be made clear that applications are welcome from families / minority groups / supported volunteers etc. If the programme is to gain strong interest from the beginning, this step would provide a good opportunity to gain momentum, as there seems to be a lack of understanding of the concept or a lack of references or case studies to reflection upon.

2

Strong marketing, promotion and advertising messaging across social media and other channels is required to get the message out about family volunteering and its benefits to both VIOs and volunteers.

3

Some organisations reported a lack of capacity or resources to deliver the programme. Perhaps each partner country could provide a starter pack to VIOs on how to set up a family volunteering programme including family volunteering guidelines, examples of good practice (safeguarding, insurance etc), examples of the types of roles, and case studies to highlight the benefits to both the organisation and the volunteer could be dispersed.

4

Timing of the volunteer programme - each VIO could survey their volunteers in advance as to what would be a general good time to offer / deliver the programme. For example, some older families may not work during weekends and it would be ideal for them to have activities during the week, but other families may have adolescents working part-time during weekends so a weeknight evening may suit a lot more families in this instance.

5

Many volunteers reported the location of the activities to be an important element in helping them get involved. When planning for the programme, consideration might be taken to delivering the pilot or concrete activities in an area or venue with good transport / parking options, to allow as many people access to it as possible.

6

Current global circumstances may require volunteering "in family bubbles" or volunteering from home and virtual volunteering and these should be explored by organisations, keeping in mind the general characteristics of volunteer management, but with a much more available mindset to adapt activities for the online world.

Belgium



Population / How many people are volunteering

11,589,623 / approximately 12.5% of the Belgian population
13.9% of the Flemish population.

A brief history of volunteering

The voluntary sector in Belgium is very complex. Its origins go back to Article 20 of the new Constitution (1830), which stated that “Belgians have the right to associate with one another, and this right cannot be submitted to any preventive measure”. The status of non profit organisations was defined by a law approved in June 1921, which provided organisations with a legal status.

The ‘Association pour le Volontariat’ was created in 1972 as an initiative of the Red Cross. In Flanders, the structure coordinating volunteering has been created in 1977 as the non profit organisation Het Platform voor Voluntariaat.

Currently each major region of Belgium has one volunteer centre for the entire region. The Flemish Volunteer Centre / Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk VSVw, formerly known as the “Platform voor Voluntariaat” (since 1977). In 2002, the French-speaking Platform for Volunteering (Plate-forme francophone du Volontariat) was set up as a non-profit organisation that aims to promote volunteering and represent volunteers’ interests in the French-speaking part of Belgium (French Community, Walloon Region, and Brussels Region).

Legal framework for volunteering

Decision-making in Belgium is rather complex, as, according to the competence of each level, decisions can be made on a federal, community or regional level. Concerning volunteering, the legal framework exists at federal level, as it touches upon federal competences such as social security, taxes, labour law and insurance. For management related matters, quality of volunteering, subventions etc., the Communities are entitled to develop their own regulations. As a consequence, supporting measures, as well as the concrete approach and the perception of policy making in the field of volunteering can differ between the different Communities.

The expressions bénévolat and volontariat have been for a long time used as synonyms in Belgium. However, the 2005 law on volunteering, has established a distinction between the two notions. The Act on the Rights of the Volunteer starts with a clear definition of what can be understood by “volunteering”. “Volunteering is an activity executed by an individual, on a free and unpaid basis, and not aimed to do him or her good, neither close friends or family, but aimed towards the organisation itself, a certain aim or the society as a whole, within an organisation not gaining profits.”

It regulates the following issues: volunteering by people with an allowance, reimbursement of expenses incurred by volunteers, liability of volunteers, insurance obligations, information duty, and other items. It sets criteria for volunteering by people with different types of allowances such as unemployment benefits or health benefits and also sets limits to the amounts that a volunteer can be reimbursed throughout one year.

The federal government bears responsibilities related to the implementation of the Volunteer Law after issuing it and has set up the High Council of Volunteers (French: Conseil supérieur des volontaires, Dutch: Hoge Raad voor Vrijwilligers, German: Hohen Rates der Freiwilligen). In 2019 the law has been changed at some points.

Since 2015, the Flemish government has been working on a coordinated Flemish volunteer policy. In addition to the Flemish authorities, the federal and local authorities are also involved. In that context, Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk was recognised as the Flemish centre of expertise for volunteering.

Minimum age for volunteering in your country?

Flemish perspective: Volunteering is only allowed when you are 15 years old and you have completed the first 2 years of secondary education. If not, you have to wait until you are 16.

French perspective: There is no legal age. The labour law doesn't apply. That means that a class representative at 6 years old is a volunteer. Similarly, a child who sells candles for Amnesty is as much a volunteer as the adult next to him.

Family Volunteering

Flemish perspective: Not really. Hosting is not considered (family) volunteering.

French perspective: Yes. The families host students without receiving any money, or some families host dogs who will become "guide dogs" in their house during the traineeship. All family members have to "welcome" correctly the foreign student or the dog. Most of the time, the organisation checks that it's a family choice. Otherwise, volunteering could fail. Which could be a big problem for the organisation that will need to urgently find a new family.

Research into volunteering

KBS: <https://www.vlaanderenvrijwilligt.be/bib/vrijwilligerswerk-belgie-kerncijfers/> and the french version : <https://www.levolontariat.be/les-chiffres-du-volontariat-en-belgique>

Different styles in volunteering: <https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/1123341>

Motivation of volunteers:

https://users.ugent.be/~sbaert/Wat_organisaties_moeten_weten_over_hun_vrijwilligers.pdf

Barriers to Family Volunteering

The main barrier is the age limit.

Other forms of volunteering that could be easily adapted for Family Volunteering

Environmental projects, Social inclusion projects, Sports activities, Online / Digital volunteering, Volunteering in culture and education, Volunteering in the health and care sectors.

Organisation & Volunteer Survey Findings

Executive findings

A total of 2 organisations and 15 volunteers responded. Overall, the findings from Belgian organisations and volunteers' interest in a Family Volunteering programme was very positive. Organisations reported on the opportunities it presented for multi-generational families [to] share volunteering opportunities together with the main barrier being the lack of understanding of family volunteering itself.

Equally volunteers reported that a programme such as this would help build family relationships and provide a multicultural effect. The main barrier reported was around not being aware of a family volunteering concept itself.

Organisation Findings

2 organisations responded to this survey with roles in office management and social guide. Organisations were asked if they currently provide Family Volunteering (FV) opportunities. Of the respondents, 1 organisation currently offers FV opportunities while the other organisation does not. Of the organisation that does offer FV opportunities it is offered during the organisations "Big Volunteer Day" event. This might include a family visiting an elderly person in their home.

The total number of volunteers involved in each organisation ranged from between 3 to 5 to over 4,000 volunteers.

Barriers to offering family volunteering opportunities

Both organisations were provided with a list of reasons on the barriers which prevented them to offer FV opportunities' results as follows: One organisation reported a lack of understanding of family volunteering. Both organisations reported a lack of capacity or resources to support families to volunteer. One organisation reported a lack of interest from families looking to volunteer and one organisation reported the challenges outweigh the benefits, while none of the organisations had cases studies available of other organisations offering family volunteering. Finally, one organisation reported "it is difficult to find projects suitable for an entire family".

Benefits of engaging family volunteers

Organisations were asked what were the benefits in involving family volunteers, both organisations reported:

- A more diverse age profile of volunteers
- The opportunity for different generations to share their volunteering values such as personal / individual responsibility, caring, tolerance, respect, empathy
- It allows different generations from a family to spend quality time together by doing something meaningful
- It helps us to build relationships in local communities

What tools or resources would help you to develop Family volunteering?

Organisations reported that perhaps “having a guide / how to engage amongst families better, understand the expectations”. In addition one organisation said “time and workers” was another resource required.

Facilities and location

Organisations were asked if they had a facility or location that could accommodate family volunteering, a space that is physically accessible and or child safe, if a programme was to run. One organisation reported they did whilst the other organisation did not have the facilities available.

Other staff members

Organisations were asked if they have a staff member or volunteer trained to work with young people or families. Both organisations did not have an additional staff member in this case.

Scheduling

1 organisation can provide flexible scheduling sometimes required for family volunteers.

Volunteer Opportunities

1 organisation has volunteer opportunities that could be attractive to family volunteers.

Orientation and Training

None of the organisations surveyed has orientation and training for members of your team who will provide family volunteering opportunities now but reported the need for support in developing it.

Volunteer Findings

A total of 15 volunteers responded to this survey. Out of the respondents, 1 volunteer was between the age of 18-25, 4 volunteers were between 26-35 and the remaining 10 volunteers were aged between 36-45. 6 were male and 9 were female.

Previous volunteering

Participants were asked if they ever participated in Family Volunteering (Volunteering alongside another member of your family) 4 volunteers did not, while 5 of the volunteers said they hadn't in the past but they would like to in the future.

Barriers to join family volunteering

When volunteers were asked what would be considered barriers for them and their family to join a family volunteer programme; 4 volunteers said there are no Family Volunteering opportunities available, 1 volunteer said they have to travel very far to join a Family Volunteering programme.

7 volunteers were not aware of Family Volunteering. No volunteers reported as feeling uncomfortable volunteering alongside a member of my family. While 9 volunteers reported the lack of time / resources / general accessibility as a barrier.

Benefits

Volunteer reported the following benefits of family volunteering:

- 10 respondents felt it would allow different generations from a family to volunteer together
- 9 felt it would help to build relationships
- 12 respondents felt it would strengthen the community and family ties
- 10 reported it would build solidarity in community and amongst family members,
- 8 respondents felt it as a fun way to spend time together
- 5 reported it gives an opportunity to learn something new in a comfortable setting, while
- 8 respondents felt it would generate mutual understanding between diverse families from the same community

A volunteer said, "it has a positive multicultural effect".

Getting involved

Volunteers were asked to comment on what would make it easier for them to get involved within a family volunteering programme. Most volunteers seemed positive about getting involved and comments include:

"As most of my family members are working full time, it would be beneficial to explain to employers the benefits of volunteering and the impact it could have on its employees long-term and promote it in such way". (to allow for time off)

"Time flexibility, and accessibility".

"Having more volunteer projects outside of working hours (during evenings or weekends).

"Support for families with children".

"If it was logistically planned in a way so that families with very small children could be involved (possibility for parents to take turns etc)"

Types of projects

Volunteers were asked about the types of projects that they would like to be part of, or would make it easier for them to be involved;

"Community building/organizing projects as well as environmental protection"

"Environment, elderly, people in need"

"Painting, gardening, cooking and then giving out meals to those in need, making handcrafts to then sell (for a good cause) or give away, picking up trash in parks, anything which could be done in a few hours, quick and productive to be able to have an impact without using too much time".

"Activities with and for young children".

Croatia



Population and numbers volunteering

According to National Bureau of Statistics, the estimated population of Croatia in 2018 was 4,076,246 people (because of the emigration the population is probably somewhat lower, the last population census was in 2011). Croatia has a low amount of (longitudinal) research projects on volunteerism; therefore, the relevant empirical data is inconclusive. According to the official statistics and yearly reports of the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, estimated number of volunteers in 2018 was 62,699 (the real number is probably somewhat higher, since not all Volunteer Involving Organisations are obliged to submit their reports).

A brief history of volunteering

The first voluntary associations (charitable societies) in Croatia were formed by women during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and they operated within the church, primarily because such work was only available to women at that time. During and after World War I, all charities operated under the name "Red Cross Branches" or within various city committees.

After World War II, during socialism, the concept of today's understanding and understanding of volunteering was not known as such. During the mentioned period the citizens very often participated in numerous actions of construction and reconstruction of the country (buildings, centres, bridges, embankments, railway lines, etc.) organised by the state. At the time of post-World War II reconstruction, the population was massively involved in various forms of "volunteering". Particularly popular were Youth Work Actions (the so-called ORA), an indispensable part of history that should be highlighted here, especially because they are often mentioned in positive contexts and are fondly remembered by citizens. The goals of youth work actions changed with the changes in society.

With the collapse of communism in Europe, Croatia is opting for more dynamic democratic change. The recent Homeland War is the reason for the involvement of many citizens in humanitarian and peacekeeping actions.

Legal framework for volunteering

Since 2007 Croatia has a Law on Volunteering, as amended by the Croatian Parliament in 2013. It contains general provisions, basic principles of volunteering, regulates the scope of work of the body responsible for the implementation of the law, the duties and composition of the advisory body, regulates the ethical code, the state voluntary award, determines contractual relations between volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations, their rights and obligations, regulates the supervision of activities, the penalties in case of violation and the final provision.

In 2008, the National Committee for Volunteerism Development adopted the Volunteers' Code of Ethics, which prescribes ethical standards and fundamental principles of volunteering that guide the process of volunteer involvement in general well-being activities, and prescribes the rules of volunteer behaviour, volunteer involving organisations and volunteering beneficiaries.

Volunteering is also mentioned as a valuable socially useful activity in the school curricula of civic education for primary and secondary schools, which is addressed in Croatian schools as a cross-curricular topic, and in national, regional and local youth strategies, which refer to active citizenship and youth participation in social processes as their goal.

Regulations on standards of quality

The former Ministry of Social Policy and Youth adopted a Rulebook on Quality Standards of Social Services in 2014, which stipulates standard 14: volunteer work, student trainees and interns. Seven quality indicators are listed: the service provider has a written policy and clear guidelines for volunteer work in accordance with the legal regulations; volunteers, students trainees and interns pass an introductory and orientation program; volunteers, student trainees and interns receive a written instruction in which are clearly mentioned their duties, rights and responsibilities, and persons to whom they are responsible for their activities; the activities and work of each volunteer, student and intern are monitored, supervised and evaluated by an expert person or mentor; volunteers, students and interns are introduced to the vision / mission of the service provider and the code of conduct; volunteers, students and interns work in safe and comfortable working conditions, without abuse or intimidation.

The Croatian Volunteer Development Centre (CDVC) established the Quality Standards for Volunteer Centres in Croatia. Volunteer Centres that apply these standards can apply for certificate of quality issued by the Croatian Volunteer Development Centre based on external expert committee recommendations.

The minimum standards that Local Volunteer Centres (LVCs) have to meet include: (i) promoting the value of volunteering, (ii) exchange of information on offer and demand for volunteer work and (iii) citizen education on volunteering. Regional Volunteer Centres (RVCs) must meet LVC standards and further implement (i) education on volunteer management, (ii) inform and advise, (iii) support LVCs, (iv) advocate and represent and (v) conduct research on volunteering.

Besides that, CVDC has also designed Quality standards for volunteer programmes. They represent a self evaluation process guided through a set of 10 standards and the associated quality criteria, as well as suggested possible evidence that the organisation demonstrates to what extent a given volunteer programme meets the minimum quality standards. Quality Standards for Volunteer Programmes are structured in three main areas: 1. Establishing the grounds for developing a volunteer programme, 2. Preparing volunteer positions and steps on how to involve volunteers, 3. Creating an enabling and motivating environment for volunteers.

Minimum age for volunteering

Croatian Law on Volunteering states volunteers of age of 15 and older minors can sign a volunteering contract and volunteer only with the written consent of a legal representative. Underage volunteers are allowed to volunteer only in those activities or provide services that are appropriate for their age, physical, psychological and moral stage of development and skills, which do not pose a risk to their health, development and success in doing school work.

Children under the age of 15 can be involved in educational volunteering activities as activities aimed towards common good and volunteering education, and that only for the purpose of education in a way that it contributes to development and socialisation of the person, with the condition of the Volunteer Involving Organisation being an educational institution, social welfare institution or other legal entity that organises volunteering in educational purposes, with the approval of relevant government bodies, educational institutions or social welfare institutions.

Family Volunteering

Often, family volunteering is not recognised as a concept, but there are some examples of sporadic inclusion of families in volunteering activities. The most common examples of family volunteering take place in NGOs that were founded by the families of a person with some illnesses / disabilities, of children / adults with developmental disabilities or some type of physical disability. In this case, other family members are often involved in volunteering at the organisation and for the organisation.

Moreover, parents have opportunity to involve in school volunteering with their children, but the focus is mainly on occasional involvement in volunteering - during one-time or short term volunteer activities or some events (for example, school plays, cultural events, etc.).

In Čakovec, the Family Volunteering Programme is being implemented for the third consecutive year, currently organised by NGO called Innovative Ideas Laboratory. They organise volunteer activities once a month on average and they have around 10 families registered for volunteering per school year. In addition to parents of the children, grandparents can also be involved. The age limit for children to be involved in these activities is 14.

Families are also involved in creating the programmes themselves, and they encourage them, especially children, to express their ideas where they would like to volunteer. In activities where young children cannot participate independently, they are assisted by their parents (for examples, in arts and crafts). Activities throughout the year include: playing board games with elderly in Nursing Home and participating in events such as Women's Day celebration, etc.; volunteering for Animal shelter in Čakovec (including preparatory activities such as building and painting dog houses); sport activities with children with autism and physical disabilities.

Family Volunteering

- Matković, A., Bitunjac, A. (Association "MI" - Split, 2019): "Youth Volunteering in the Split area: Attitudes, Experiences and Recommendations".

Research was conducted with the aim of giving young people in the City of Split and the surrounding area the opportunity to express their views and opinions on volunteering. The study was conducted in two parts - in the quantitative part (survey questionnaire) volunteers and non-volunteers (young people from 15 to 30 years) participated, and in the qualitative (focus group) only young volunteers participated.

- Friedrich Ebert Foundation (2019): "Research of Youth in Croatia 2018 / 2019"

Research was conducted with the aim of giving young people in the City of Split and the surrounding area the opportunity to express their views and opinions on volunteering. The study was conducted in two parts - in the quantitative part (survey questionnaire) volunteers and non-volunteers (young people from 15 to 30 years) participated, and in the qualitative (focus group) only young volunteers participated.

- Ćulum, B. (2008): "Why and how to value volunteering? Analysis of the model of institutional recognition of volunteering as a precondition for the long-term development of a culture of volunteering and gaining the advantage for using the services or for employment"

This paper includes translation and analysis of internationally relevant documents, selecting and reviewing relevant national documents, analysis of all data collected; and identifying the recommendations regarding the recognition of volunteering in the Republic of Croatia.

- Ledić, J. (Academy for Educational Development - AED, Zagreb, 2007): "Why we (don't) volunteer?" Public Attitudes Towards Volunteering"

This publication presents the results of a survey of volunteerism conducted in 2006 in the three counties (Osijek-Baranja, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Split-Dalmatia) and the City of Zagreb on a sample of 2000 participants. An analysis of general volunteering attitudes indicates that research participants have generally positive attitudes towards volunteering.

- Žitnik, E., Barbarić, Đ., Milinković, D., Ivelja, N. (Association MI, Association MoSt, 2007): "Volunteering, Attitudes and Practice - research results"

The results of this study conducted in City of Split indicate the need for better information on volunteering, from family to school, and the need for additional promotion in order to engage more people.

- Forčić, G. (Association SMART, Rijeka, 2006): "Volunteering and Community Development: Citizen Participation in Community Initiatives"

The goal of the research was to investigate volunteering in the County of Primorje-Gorski kotar and compare the findings of the research with the findings of the research conducted in the same county in 2001. Research tasks: examine (general) attitudes on volunteering, examine attitudes towards the problems in volunteering, examine participation in volunteer activities and frequency of volunteering, examine citizens' motivation and activities that influence the promotion of volunteering. Based on the results obtained, researchers proposed measures to improve the work with volunteers, with specific emphasis on motivating people to volunteer.

- Škrabalo, M., Miošić-Lisjak, N., Papa, J. (2006): "Community Development and Mobilization: Action Research in Croatia"

This publication presents texts that resulted from the action research project which was conducted by MAP Savjetovanja, on a non-profit basis, over the period 2003 - 2005. The project had two interconnected objectives – a description and analysis of community mobilisation and development practices in Croatia; and the promotion of dialogue, as a vehicle for the exchange of experiences and reflection among practitioners themselves. The project was structured according to the following themes, recognised as particularly significant for an overview of community mobilization and development practices in Croatia: (1) peace building in post-war communities; (2) the gender dimensions of voluntary work; (3) marginalized groups and community development, Roma in particular; (4) local and regional economic development; (5) the role of external interventions and donor programs in community development in Croatia.

Moreover, in several studies conducted on a nationally representative sample of young people in Croatia, researches have also asked young people about their involvement in volunteering. Several smaller-scale studies have also been conducted by students (e.g., on motivation to volunteer, benefits of volunteering, etc.).

Barriers to Family Volunteering

Possible barriers to family volunteering in Croatia are: poor offer of activities that have the potential to involve the whole family (a lot of volunteering activities are unsuitable for children), lack of long-term volunteer positions in which the whole families can become involved (focus is often on short-term and one time volunteer activities).

Other forms of volunteering that could adapted to Family Volunteering

Yes, for example, most school have extra-curricular activities for children (and often one of the activities is school's volunteer club) and they could easily include parents as volunteers in those (for example in various events, school plays, etc.). Additionally, families could also participate in nature and environmental activities (in national parks or in schools) keeping in mind all safety standards. Animal shelters and zoos could also offer volunteer programmes for families - children along with their parents could help feed animals, take them out for walks (if they are in a shelter), etc. This way children can learn about responsible behaviour towards pets and other animals in general.

Organisation & Volunteer Survey Findings

Executive findings

A total of 31 organisations and 39 volunteers responded. Overall, the findings from organisations and volunteers' interest in a Family Volunteering programme was very positive with many asking for more information on family volunteering.

36 volunteer respondents were female and 9 were male, with majority of the them falling into the 18 - 25 and 36 - 45 age range. Some volunteers reported the importance of raising awareness of volunteering to children from early on through education facilities. Organisations reported on the need to advertise and promote family volunteering itself. Again, it was seen throughout the results how family volunteering presented positive ways to create a network for a family support and to bring families together.

Organisation Findings

A total of 31 organisations responded to this survey. Organisations were asked if they currently provide family volunteering (FV) opportunities. Of the respondents, 7 organisations do currently offer FV opportunities while 12 organisations do not. A further 12 do not offer FV opportunities but would like to in the future. Of all the organisations who took part in the survey, the minimum number of volunteers involved per annum was 2, and the maximum was 143 with an average of 40 volunteers involved per annum across the remaining organisations.

Of the organisations who currently provide family volunteering opportunities, the types include:

"Certain activities we offer includes family volunteering, for example during summer camp when we need more volunteers to help with preparation (mowing, pruning) and pitching a tent. In this case, we sometimes have a whole family volunteering".

"While inviting volunteers, we always start with invitation to their family members. Family members usually participate together in all activities (sometimes all members, sometimes only a certain part of the family). Activities attended by family members include organisation of events, cultural and artistic activities, socialising and field trips".

Barriers to offering family volunteering

4 organisations reported a lack of understanding of family volunteering. 11 organisations reported a lack of capacity to support. 4 organisations reported a lack of interest from families looking to volunteer while there were 10 organisations that had cases studies available of other organisations offering family volunteering.

Benefits of engaging family volunteers

Organisations were asked what the benefits were in involving family volunteers figures reported: 2 organisations reported the benefits as having a more diverse age profile of volunteers, 14 organisations reported it as an opportunity for different generations to share their volunteering values. 6 organisations felt it allows different generations from a family to spend quality time together by doing something meaningful, 3 organisations felt it would allow them to engage a broader range of volunteers than they would normally engage while a further 3 organisations felt it would help them to build relationships in local communities.

What tools or resources would help you to develop Family volunteering?

Organisations requested for various resources to develop such programme including:

"Family volunteering guidelines and examples of good practice from abroad would be most helpful"

"Knowledge of family volunteering itself and opportunities to engage interested citizens"

"Publicity and promotion, poster printing, support and promotion at and by local authorities level"

"A space where we could place a family, a person who would coordinate volunteers and design an activity programme / plan for them"

"Stronger organisational capacity of the association that could be devoted to the development of family volunteering"

Facilities and location

Organisations were asked if they had a facility or location that could accommodate family volunteering, a space that is physically accessible and or child safe, if a programme was to run. 16 organisations reported they did whilst the other 15 organisations do not have the facilities available.

Other staff members

Organisations were asked if they have a staff member or volunteer trained to work with young people or families. 17 organisations said they do have relevant staff. 10 organisations said they did not have an additional staff member in this case, whilst the remaining 4 organisations said they intend to have one in the future.

Scheduling

21 organisations said they can provide flexible scheduling sometimes required for family volunteers. 7 organisations said they did not have the ability to provide flexible scheduling whilst the remaining 3 said they intend to in the future.

Volunteer Opportunities

19 organisations reported to having volunteer opportunities that could be attractive to family volunteers, 6 organisations reported as not having such opportunities whilst the remaining 6 said they intend to in the future.

Orientation and Training

6 of the organisations surveyed reported to having orientation and training for members of their team who will provide family volunteering opportunities now, 15 organisations reported to not having such training and 10 organisations said they will need help in developing it.

Volunteer Findings

A total of 39 volunteers responded to this survey. Three of the volunteer respondents were under the age of 18. Fourteen were between the age of 18 - 25, nine were between 26 - 35, ten volunteers were aged between 36 - 45. Two volunteers were between 46 - 55 and the final one respondent was between the age of 56 - 65. Three were male and 36 were female.

Previous volunteering

Participants were asked if they ever participated in Family Volunteering, 10 volunteers said they had, 15 volunteers did not, while 14 of the volunteers said they hadn't in the past but they would like to in the future.

Barriers to join family volunteering

When volunteers were asked what would be considered barriers for them and their family to join a family volunteer programme; 12 volunteers said there are no family volunteering opportunities available, 6 volunteer respondents said they have to travel very far to join a Family Volunteering programme. 14 volunteers were not aware of Family Volunteering. No volunteers reported as feeling uncomfortable volunteering alongside a member of my family. While 22 volunteers reported the lack of time / resources / general accessibility as a barrier.

Respondents also reported the following as examples of barriers to volunteering:

"It's hard for me to coordinate with my daughter, especially in terms of time"

"The fact that I live alone, and my family is in another town, 600 km away."

"There are no family volunteering opportunities available"

Benefits

Volunteers reported the following benefits of family volunteering:

- 27 respondents felt it would allow different generations from a family to volunteer together. 30 felt it would help to build relationships
- 36 respondents felt it would strengthen the community and family ties
- 29 reported it would build solidarity in community and amongst family members,
- 31 respondents felt it as a fun way to spend time together
- 24 reported it would give an opportunity to learn something new in a comfortable setting, whilst
- 22 respondents felt it would generate mutual understanding between diverse families from the same community.

A volunteer said it would be a great way of: "Teaching the younger generation from early age that volunteering is an integral part of life and is changing society from the ground up"

Getting involved

Volunteers were asked to comment on what would make it easier for them to get involved within a family volunteering programme. Most volunteers seemed positive about getting involved and comments include:

"Implementation of the activities at a time when family members have a day off"

"Organisation of actions and activities outside my working hours".

"Systematic education to raise awareness of children and young people about the value of participating and contributing to the community in a healthy and fun way"

Types of projects

Volunteers were asked about the types of projects that they would like to be part of or would make it easier for them to be involved. Types include:

"Helping those in need, projects like Green Cleaning (ecological activities - cleaning parks, beaches, etc.)"

"Environmental activities, assistance to the elderly"

"Fun games, helping another family, helping seniors, planting flowers"

"Assistance in the distribution of food, clothing, humanitarian supplies, assistance in cleaning the household or asylum, socialising with those in need".

Germany



Population of your country / How many people are volunteering

83 Million / 30.9 Million – 43.6% (2014, German Volunteering Survey) [1]

History of volunteering in your country

Volunteering started in Germany in the 19th century and was connected to the building of the welfare state. Citizens, especially men, were asked to inherit political offices without payment. Furthermore, religious based volunteering started during this time which mainly involved female volunteers. This trend led to (a feeling of) political participation and civic self-organisation. Additionally sports, cultural and educational clubs started during this time. The pre-condition were less working hours and growing wealth within society.

Furthermore, the state relied on volunteering to cover social practices they couldn't focus on. The state became therefore the biggest sponsor of volunteering. In the beginning of the 20th century volunteering became more institutionalised and organisations with social, intellectual, educational etc. intentions were established. Many of these clubs / institutions / organisations still remain and are a big factor for volunteering today. Moreover, many social movements have had and still have an influence on volunteering. For example the feminist movement, environmental movement etc. Fortunately, beside the expectation of individualisation, volunteering is still popular and is on the rise.

Legal framework for volunteering

There are just several informal ideas, for example volunteering should not replace a professional position. Furthermore volunteers insurance is covered during volunteering and usually all costs incurred during volunteering are covered for the volunteer, but that is not mandatory.

Minimum age for volunteering in your country?

No.

Forms of Family Volunteering that take place

There are some local initiatives but no uniform concept or idea. It seems as if organisations carry out family volunteering under their own guidelines and perception. According to studies in the 2004, 42% of people along with their children took part in volunteering activities. Families without children only reached the rate of 32%. It seems as if often own children are the reasons for parents to volunteer. Mostly they are engaging for school or kindergarten but it is not clear if the members are mainly volunteering together as a family or rather individually. [2]

Research into volunteering

The largest contribution to volunteering research is the volunteering survey as mentioned above. The results of this study highlight that volunteering is still increasing in Germany. There are more men volunteering than women and the percentage of female volunteers is growing from 41.5% to 45.7%. Around 70% of people are engaging in activism (taking part in demonstrations etc.).

There is quite a difference in the educational background of the participants. 76% of citizens with higher education are taking part in activism, whereas only 58.6% of people with lower educational background are participating.

- Especially informal support in the close social life is very likely
- Time spent in formal volunteering is shrinking
- Socio-economic resources are key to starting to volunteer
- Being in good health is a big factor in volunteering
- People who care for values like solidarity are rather likely to volunteer
- Frame condition is relevant for people to volunteer
- 43.2 % of people with migrational background are volunteering [3]

Barriers to Family Volunteering

No formal barriers. Only the willingness of social disadvantaged groups to volunteer in general. Furthermore privacy policy and data protection needs to be kept in mind when publishing the report to the general public.

Other forms of volunteering that could be easily adapted for Family Volunteering

There are some concepts that could be adapted but we would have to think about the difference in age.

Organisation & Volunteer Survey Findings

Executive findings

A total of 11 organisations and 65 volunteers responded. Most organisations reported the main barrier to offering family volunteering was the lack of understanding of family volunteering itself within the community while the biggest benefits were seen between it being an opportunity to have more diverse age profile of volunteers and the opportunity for different generations to volunteer together.

47 volunteer respondents were female, with most of the them falling into the 26 - 35 age range and 36 - 45 age range. Some volunteers would like to volunteer but felt as a single parent with no support presented a barrier to them in participating, in addition some of these respondents as well as being single also worked in multiple jobs so time was an issue. Benefits to volunteers were considered as the FV programme being a great way to introduce children and young adolescents into volunteering at an early age.

Organisation Findings

A total of 11 organisations responded to this survey. Organisations were asked if they currently provide family volunteering (FV) opportunities. Of the respondents, 5 organisations do currently offer FV opportunities while 2 organisations do not. A further 4 do not offer FV opportunities but would like to in the future.

Of all the organisations who took part in the survey, the minimum number of volunteers involved per annum was 2, and the maximum was 150.

Of the organisations who currently provide family volunteering opportunities, the types include:

"Common activities at our farmers like planting activities or harvest activities"

"In refugee help whole families can volunteer"

"Leisure activities of families together with mentally disabled adults"

Barriers to offering family volunteering opportunities

9 organisations reported a lack of understanding of family volunteering. 6 organisations reported a lack of capacity or resources to support families to volunteer. 4 organisations reported under 18's as not allowed to volunteer. 2 organisations reported a lack of interest from families looking to volunteer while there were 2 organisations that had case studies available of other organisations offering family volunteering. A further 2 organisations reported that the challenges outweighed the benefits.

Benefits of engaging family volunteers

Organisations were asked what the benefits might be in involving family volunteers: 10 organisations reported the benefits as having a more diverse age profile of volunteers, 10 organisations reported it as an opportunity for different generations to share their volunteering values. 9 organisations felt it allows different generations from a family to spend quality time together by doing something meaningful, 3 organisations felt it would allow them to engage a broader range of volunteers than they would normally engage while a further five organisations felt it would help them to build relationships in local communities.

Other feedback on the benefits include:

"Preservation of values, diversity of opinion, diversity of perspectives"

Tools or resources to develop Family volunteering?

Organisations requested for various resources to develop such programme including:

"Ideas, support, information"

"Financial resources, venues, structured task packages"

"Budget for staff and materials"

Facilities and location

Organisations were asked if they had a facility or location that could accommodate family volunteering, a space that is physically accessible and or child safe, if a programme was to run. 7 organisations reported they did whilst the other four organisations do not have the facilities available.

Staff members

Organisations were asked if they have a staff member or volunteer trained to work with young people or families. 7 organisations said they do have relevant staff. 4 organisations said they did not have an additional staff member in this case.

Scheduling

6 organisations said they can provide flexible scheduling sometimes required for family volunteers. 4 organisations said they did not have the ability to provide flexible scheduling whilst the remaining 1 said they intend to in the future.

Volunteer Opportunities

6 organisations reported to having volunteer opportunities that could be attractive to family volunteers, 1 organisation reported as not having such opportunities whilst the remaining 4 said they intend to in the future.

Orientation and Training

For this question 6 organisations reported to not having orientation training options and 5 organisations said they will need help in developing it.

Volunteer Findings

A total of 65 volunteers responded to this survey. 2 of the volunteer respondents were under the age of 18. 10 volunteers were between the age of 18 - 25, 14 were between 26-35, 13 volunteers were aged between 36 - 45. 10 volunteers were between 46-55 and 14 volunteer respondents was between the age of 56 - 65. There were also 2 volunteers aged between 66 - 75. 18 respondents were male and 47 were female.

Previous volunteering

Participants were asked if they ever participated in Family Volunteering (Volunteering alongside another member of your family) 16 volunteers said they had, 35 volunteers did not, while 13 of the volunteers said they hadn't in the past but they would like to in the future.

Barriers to join family volunteering

When volunteers were asked what would be considered barriers for them and their family to join a family volunteer programme; 11 volunteers said there are no Family Volunteering opportunities available, 5 volunteer respondents said they have to travel very far to join a Family Volunteering programme. 40 volunteers were not aware of Family Volunteering. 4 volunteers reported as feeling uncomfortable volunteering alongside a member of my family. While 29 volunteers reported the lack of time / resources / general accessibility as a barrier. Respondents also reported the following as examples of barriers to volunteering:

"Wouldn't have been possible due to work, being a single mother and later due to illness"

"Financial reasons"

"My family isn't living in the same place"

Benefits

Volunteer reported the following benefits of family volunteering:

- 38 respondents felt it would allow different generations from a family to volunteer together
- 31 felt it would help to build relationships
- 35 respondents felt it would strengthen the community and family ties
- 27 reported it would build solidarity in community and amongst family members,
- 41 respondents felt it as a fun way to spend time together
- 27 reported it would give an opportunity to learn something new in a comfortable setting, whilst
- 29 respondents felt it would generate mutual understanding between diverse families from the same community

Getting involved

Volunteers were asked to comment on what would make it easier for them to get involved within a family volunteering programme. Most volunteers seemed positive about getting involved and comments include:

"If there are local opportunities"

"More information and maybe possibilities of support".

Types of projects

Volunteers were asked about the types of projects that they would like to be part of or would make it easier for them to be involved. Types include:

"Helping refugees"

"Support single parents"

Ireland



Population of and number of people are volunteering

Census 2016 results show that Ireland's population stood at 4,761,865 in April 2016, on forecasting figures this is said to stand at 4,939,284 in July 2020. According to the most recent CSO data (2016), over one million people in Ireland volunteer annually. There is little statistical data on volunteering in Ireland as a whole. The World giving index ranks Ireland as 5th in the world in the time its citizens give to volunteering with over 41% of the population volunteering (2019).

History of volunteering

There has been a long tradition of voluntary activity and charitable service in Ireland that has been shaped by religious, political, and economic developments forming a substantial element of national economic and social life. By the 19th century, many voluntary hospitals had been established to be dependent on voluntary effort. Many of these institutions and organisations still exist today such as the St. Vincent de Paul.

Volunteerism in 19th century Ireland was also apparent in the Gaelic cultural revival before independence from Great Britain. These Gaelic revivalist organisations made a distinct contribution to refining an Irish identity through organisations like Conradh na Gaeilge (formally known as the Gaelic League) and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) which still thrives today. Given the influence of the Catholic Church which advocated that social welfare was a matter for the family and the parish, the state was reluctant to engage with the delivery of social services until the mid 1960s.

There was a noticeable shift in this policy by the 1970s and voluntary sector provision of social services and education began to receive increased state support. However, rather than being replaced by state services, the voluntary sector has complimented or provided an alternative and the role of volunteers has remained pivotal in the delivery of these services. Recent decades have seen a fall-off in the importance of religious organisations (although their presence is still indisputable) and the rise of community and independent non-profit organisations that are organised around issues like social and economic marginalisation.

The focus of more recent non-profit organisations, furthermore, is more critical of state inaction and structural causes (Donoghue, 1998). The United Nation's International Year of Volunteers in 2001 also gave a new impetus to volunteering in Ireland, significantly increasing demand on Volunteering Ireland's services. Volunteer Centres and other organisations were also affected by the increased attention to volunteering as a result of the International Year of Volunteers. (European Commission, Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Country Report Ireland).

Legal framework for volunteering

The Government of Ireland through the Department of Rural and Community Development is in the final stages of developing a National Strategy on Volunteering in consultation with all stakeholders. It is intended that this work will build on and update the Government's 'White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector' (2000) and the subsequent 'Tipping the Balance' (2002) report by the National Committee for Volunteering.

In December 2020 the Government of Ireland launched the National Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2025. The National Volunteering Strategy (2021 - 2025) sets out a long-term vision for volunteering and volunteers in Ireland. With actions to be implemented over the next five years, the Strategy set a general direction of travel for government policy in relation to the volunteers and the volunteering environment. It also builds upon and strengthens the renewed relationship and partnership between Government and the voluntary sector which has developed during the course of its preparation.

Minimum age for volunteering

In Ireland, you can volunteer if you are under the age of 18. However finding a volunteering role depends on the roles available at the time and if they are suitable for under 18s, it is generally hard to find roles for those aged under 18 and Volunteer Involving Organisations often say that insurance and legal responsibilities of managing volunteers deters them for offering more volunteer roles for young people.

Family Volunteering in Ireland

In 2015 along with students from Technological University Dublin Volunteer Ireland carried out research into the demand for family volunteering, there was a strong demand and interest for family volunteering for potential volunteers. Volunteer Involving Organisations were keenly interested too, with a number explaining that their lack of knowledge of lack of resources was the only thing stopping them.

In this original research there were not many roles advertised as suitable for Family Volunteering, while it is unclear the reasons for this, some anecdotal feedback leads us to believe that organisations feel the demand will be much greater than the supply and they prefer to work with families and inter generational volunteers where one or more is already involved in a group. Most of this volunteering is in outdoor activity setting and includes environmental and clean up groups.

Research been carried out into volunteering

Given the strong volunteering history and high number of people volunteering there has been little research into volunteering in Ireland, Volunteer Ireland has produced research into volunteering which informs both the Irish public and our own work. Research includes:

- [The Impact of Volunteering on the Health and Well-Being of the Volunteer](#)
- [Rural Volunteerism: Impacting Development and Sustainability](#)
- [Migrant Participation in Sport Volunteering in Ireland](#)

Further information on additional research can be found at www.volunteer.ie. Other studies carried out include:

- [Study on Volunteering in the European Union](#)
- [Government White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector](#)

Barriers to Family Volunteering

- Roles unsuitable to under 18s or under 16s
- Unwillingness to engage (a lack of understanding of what diversity can bring to a Volunteer Involving Organisation).
- Fear – not childminding service

Other forms of volunteering that could be easily adapted for Family Volunteering

- Beach clean ups
- Environmental projects
- Leave No Trace
- Volunteering in bubbles
- Event Volunteering family friendly area

Organisation & Volunteer Survey Findings

Executive findings

A total of 22 organisations and 68 volunteers responded. Some organisations already have family volunteering in place, but not advertised as an official family volunteering project. Most organisations reported the main barrier to offering family volunteering was the lack of understanding of family volunteering itself within the community while the biggest benefits were seen between it being an opportunity to have more diverse age profile of volunteers and the opportunity for different generations to volunteer together.

The majority of volunteer respondents were female, with most of them falling into the 56 - 65 age range followed by 36 - 45 and 46 - 55.

Organisation Findings

A total of 22 organisations responded to this survey. Organisations were asked if they currently provide family volunteering (FV) opportunities. Of the respondents, eight organisations do currently offer FV opportunities while six organisations do not. A further six do not offer FV opportunities but would like to in the future.

Of all the organisations who took part in the survey, the minimum number of volunteers involved per annum was five, and the maximum was over 20,000+.

Of the organisations who currently provide family volunteering opportunities, the types include:

"Our family volunteering includes anyone over the age of 16 in the most part volunteering with a Parent or Guardian, or siblings / couples volunteering together"

"Often husbands and wives would volunteer together via some of our fundraising; we have a daughter of a member as convenor of a support group - we encourage all family and friends who are able to get involved"

"We run a regular clean up group and we encourage all ages to join in. If younger children wish to take part we encourage parents / guardians to take part too. We have a number family groups join us each month"

Barriers to offering family volunteering opportunities

- 6 organisations reported a lack of understanding of family volunteering.
- 5 organisations reported a lack of capacity or resources to support families to volunteer.
- 4 organisations reported under 18's as not allowed to volunteer.
- 4 organisations reported a lack of interest from families looking to volunteer
- 3 organisations that had cases studies available of other organisations offering family volunteering.

Comments on types of barriers include:

"Young children Insurance/ Health and Safety and Child Protection Policies"

"Age of Volunteers is 18+"

"Lack of knowledge about family volunteering among organisations"

Benefits of engaging family volunteers

Organisations were asked what the benefits might be in involving family volunteers:

9 organisations reported the benefits as having a more diverse age profile of volunteers, 10 organisations reported it as an opportunity for different generations to share their volunteering values. 10 organisations felt it allows different generations from a family to spend quality time together by doing something meaningful, 6 organisations felt it would allow them to engage a broader range of volunteers than they would normally engage while a further 8 organisations felt it would help them to build relationships in local communities.

What tools or resources would help you to develop Family volunteering?

Organisations requested for various resources to develop such programme including:

"Clear information sheets in relation to Good Practice and Safeguarding"

"Guidelines on Health and Safety / Child Protection and Insurance for supporting parents of children to volunteer with their children"

"Case studies to show benefits to the organisation and to the individuals; marketing materials to help attract family volunteers"

Facilities and location

Organisations were asked if they had a facility or location that could accommodate family volunteering, a space that is physically accessible and or child safe, if a programme was to run. 10 organisations reported they did whilst the other ten organisations do not have the facilities available. 2 organisations said they would like to in the future.

Other staff members

Organisations were asked if they have a staff member or volunteer trained to work with young people or families. 12 organisations said they do have relevant staff. 10 organisations said they did not have an additional staff member in this case.

Volunteer Opportunities

12 organisations reported to having volunteer opportunities that could be attractive to family volunteers, 6 organisations reported as not having such opportunities whilst the remaining 4 said they intend to in the future.

Orientation and Training

For this question 4 organisations reported they do have it in place. 9 reported to not having orientation training options and nine organisations said they will need help in developing it.

Volunteer Findings

A total of 65 volunteers responded to this survey. 2 of the volunteer respondents were between the age of 18 - 25, 8 were aged between 26 - 35, 15 volunteers were aged between 36 - 45. 15 volunteers were aged between 46 - 55 and 19 were aged between 56 - 65. There were also 5 volunteers aged between 66 - 75. In total, 15 were male and 49 were female.

Previous volunteering

Participants were asked if they ever participated in Family Volunteering (Volunteering alongside another member of your family) 27 volunteers said they had, 22 volunteers did not, while 14 of the volunteers said they hadn't in the past but they would like to in the future. One volunteer said that family volunteering wasn't something that interested them.

Barriers to join family volunteering

When volunteers were asked what would be considered barriers for them and their family to join a family volunteer programme; 21 volunteers said there are no Family Volunteering opportunities available, 5 volunteer respondents said they have to travel very far to join a Family Volunteering programme. 20 volunteers were not aware of Family Volunteering. None of the volunteers reported as feeling uncomfortable volunteering alongside a member of my family. While 10 volunteers reported the lack of time / resources / general accessibility as a barrier. Respondents also reported the following as examples of barriers to volunteering:

"I live alone - some distance from other family members"

"I don't have family in Ireland I came alone"

"Relevant family live too far away now"

Benefits

Volunteer reported the following benefits of family volunteering.

- 15 respondents felt it would allow different generations from a family to volunteer together
- 10 felt it would help to build relationships
- 9 respondents felt it would strengthen the community and family ties
- 7 reported it would build solidarity in community and amongst family members,
- 6 respondents felt it as a fun way to spend time together
- 2 reported it would give an opportunity to learn something new in a comfortable setting, whilst
- 5 respondents felt it would generate mutual understanding between diverse families from the same community

Getting involved

Volunteers were asked to comment on what would make it easier for them to get involved within a family volunteering programme. Most volunteers seemed positive about getting involved and comments include:

"Lifting of current restraints - to operate from a managed position"

"Location of the volunteering role"

"To provide my times that suit me and rest of family"

Types of projects

Volunteers were asked about the types of projects that they would like to be part of or would make it easier for them to be involved. Types include:

"We are enjoying the Royal canal Clean up so far and we are planning to do the soup run"

"Events, fundraising, caring, visiting, social"

Norway



Population and How many people are volunteering

According to [Statistics Norway](#), the population was 5,367,580 at the end of the 2019 and 3,846,756 were aged between 19 and 79 years old. [The Association of NGOs in Norway](#) (Frivillighet Norge) annual survey „[Frivillighetsbarometeret](#)“, highlights 63% of Norwegians between the ages 19 and 79 have volunteered in the last year. This brings the total to 2,423,456 people.

Brief history of volunteering

In the first half of the 19th century, the first organised NGOs appeared in Norway. Volunteering has roots far back in Norwegian history, but the term volunteering is usually connected to the industrial revolution. In the beginning of the 19th century, Norway got its first constitution. As a result, new laws that secured the right to religious freedoms and the right to assemble were enacted and this lay the framework for a new landscape of national organisations. The first was „[Selskabet for Norges Vel](#)“ (Norwegian Society for Development) in 1809. In 1844, the first real civic association was founded, „[Det Norske Afholdenhetselskap](#)“ (Norwegian Society for abstinence).

By the end of the century several different associations were founded. Charities started schools, hospitals and other institutions, some are still in operation today – among them „[Diakonhjemmet](#)“ (Hospital in Oslo).

Today NGOs still run several institutions, but after Norway found oil in the mid-60s and the social security was established in 1966, the number has declined. However, the sector itself has grown. Both sports and the culture are dependent on volunteering. It is uncommon if your child attends a sport and you as a parent do not volunteer in the club. This social expectation is not affected by the social classes. If you buy your way out of the joint effort, most people will react negatively.

Legal framework for volunteering

Volunteering is mostly unregulated in Norway. There are some laws that regulate the demand for a certificate from the police if you are to work with children or other defined groups. On 1 June 2015, the Norwegian government presented its new national policy for volunteering, „[Frivillighetserklæringen](#)“ (The declaration of Volunteering). This lays out how the government views the volunteer sector and how it should interact and support it. The national plan also recommends local policies, but as up today only 18% of the local governments have such a policy. The national policy is non-binding and the government is in no way obligated to follow its recommendations.

Minimum age for volunteering

No, but the organisations themselves have such limits depending on the circumstances. All children under 18 must have a signed consent from the legal guardian.

Family Volunteering

Family Volunteering takes place. Activities for children, urban farming, farming related activities, swimming (and lifeguards), "Activity friends" where the entire family does culture related activities together with another family that needs to develop a network, choir, flea market, walking trips in the local area.

Some cases where the activities are not developed for Family Volunteering as such, but members from the same family, volunteer together.

Research into volunteering in your country

There have been several studies on volunteering carried out in Norway. The institute for Social Research was founded in 1950 since then done a wide range of studies around volunteering. A search in their database shows 64 reports regarding volunteering during the period 2009 - 2020. In 2020 six reports have so far been published, these are as listed below. Here are some reports from recent years.

Folkebiblioteket og frivilligheten; Frivilliges forventning og motivasjon

Volunteering and the public library; The expectations and motivations of volunteers, Stina Katrin Åmo, 2019.

Using descriptive stakeholder theory as lens, this study presents the results from a case-based study in Norway on what motivates volunteers and how their expectations towards their task can affect their motivation. The methodology used is qualitative research interviews of 13 volunteers, with subsequent discourse analysis. This study shows that the initial expectations of volunteers have an effect on their understanding of their roles, their understanding of tasks and which reward systems their sustained motivation is influenced by. In this study, it is demonstrated how feedback from others can adjust the expectations of volunteers and thereby adjust how they understand their role, task and their and influence their motivation.

Betingelser for frivillig innsats: Motivasjon og kontekst

Conditions for volunteering: Motivation and context. Wollebæk, Sætrang and Fladmoe 2015

The report uses data gathered from 1998 to 2015 and focuses on what makes people volunteer, what motivates volunteers and why they stop volunteering.

Frivillighet , klasse og sosial ulikhet – Norsk frivillighet i et klasseperspektiv

Volunteering, class and social differences – Volunteerism in Norway seen in a class perspective. Eimhjellen and Fladmoe, 2020

There have been several studies on how relevant income, education etc are for volunteering. This study also approaches this, but also gathers the respondents in a social class setting. Findings that are of particular interest for us is that having a social network is the most important factor for volunteering. In some areas a person with a network is more than four times as likely to volunteer as a person without.

Finansiering av frivillighet: Frivillig sektors økonomi og lokallagenes rammevilkår

The financing of volunteerism: The economy of the volunteer sector and the framework for local organisations. Arnesen, 2020

The report investigates how the economy for volunteering organisations has changed and how local government policies on volunteering has impacted the framework for local organisations.

Organisasjonslandskap i endring 2009–2019: Fra ideologisk samfunnsendring til individuell utfoldelse?

Change of the organizational landscape 2009-2019: From an ideologically change of the society to an individual expression. Arnsen and Sivesind, 2020

The report examines developments in the Norwegian organizational landscape over the past decade, based on an analysis of the first results of a new survey on local and national NGOs. The purpose has been to follow up and deepen findings that have been documented in previous research, and to provide new knowledge about different parts of the voluntary sector. The questions that the surveys have sought to answer include the what changes are taking place in the organizational population and organizational forms at the local, regional and national levels; which social spheres the organisations primarily target; their scope and composition in terms of membership, employees and finances, activities and use of social media, and contact with public authorities.

The findings show that the voluntary sector in Norway is strengthening in many areas - not by reversing the development of the old popular movement model, but by developing new characteristics that fulfill current needs for different sections of the population.

Kommunal frivillighetspolitikk og lokale organisasjoner

Local governments policy for NGOs and local organisations. Trætteberg, Eimhjellen, Ervik, Enjolras and Skiple, 2020

The report studies the cooperation between municipalities and voluntary organisations. The analyzes are particularly focused on the fields of culture and leisure, healthcare, children and adolescence, and integration. It distinguishes between interaction in policy design and interaction in the implementation of activity.

Lokalt beredskapssamarbeid. Frivillige, politi og kommuner i lokalt beredskapsarbeid

Local readiness cooperation. Volunteers, police and local governments. Skiple and Windsvold, 2020

The report examines how the readiness cooperation works. One of the conclusions is that the volunteer sector and the police are able to establish a well functional cooperation when a crises develops, but both parties experience challenges whit the local governments.

Sivilsamfunnsdeltaking blant innvandrere i Noreg

Participation in volunteering and other civil activities among immigrants Eimhjellen, Bentsen and Wollebæk, 2020

This report is a follow-up from an equivalent report (Organisasjonsengasjement blant innvandrere - Eimhjellen og Arnesen, 2018). It examines the relationship between volunteering and trust, between volunteering and political engagement and between volunteering and informal care work among immigrants.

Kollektiv handling i digitale medier: Nye digitale skiller?

Collective actions in social media: New digital inequalities?

Eimhjellen and Ljunggren, 2017

Based on a 2016 survey among Norwegians, this report examines social inequalities according to the usage of different types of social media and social / political community participation. The report indicates that social inequalities are being reproduced in digital media. This may have important implications on citizenship and democracy.

Frivillighet og folkehelse: Empiriske analyser av sivilsamfunnsdeltakelse, helse og livskvalitet

Volunteering and public health: Empirical analysis of civil society participation, health and quality of life, Fladmo and Folkestad, 2017

The report examines the correlation between civil participation, health and quality of life from to different angles.

Nye samarbeidsrelasjoner mellom kommuner og frivillige aktører: Samskaping i nye samarbeidsforhold?

New forms of cooperation between local government and NGOs: Co-creating in new partnerships? Eimhjellen and Loga, 2017.

The report examines new ways of cooperation between local governments and volunteering organisations. It looks at what degree co-creation is happening, who is involved, barriers and success factors. It also points out that even though co-creation is a new word in local government, Norway has a long tradition for working together across sectors. Co-creation can therefore be looked upon as a new tool, rather than a new concept.

All the reports from 2009 – 2020 can be found [here](#).

Barriers to Family Volunteering

- The concept is new and not understood
- Lack of time and resources
- Lack of organization capacity in the organisations
- Lack of suitable activities

Other forms of volunteering that could be easily adapted for Family Volunteering

In the survey, organisations state that most of their activities can fit families, but the organisations must first understand what FV is, and then get help to promote and organize for it. Also, many states lack the staff to set this in motion. (Many CEOs / leaders of voluntary centres have less than 100% positions and no co-workers.)

Organisation & Volunteer Survey Findings

Executive findings

A total of 52 organisations and 48 volunteers responded. Overall, the findings from Norwegian organisations and volunteers' interest in a Family Volunteering programme was very positive. However, the knowledge of the concept was low and there is a need for further information. Volunteers reported that a programme such as this would create meaningful ways to spend time with family members.

Organisation Findings

Organisations were asked if they currently provide family volunteering (FV) opportunities. Of the respondents, 16 organisations currently offer FV opportunities while the other 10 organisations do not.

The total number of volunteers involved in each organisation ranged from minimum 10 volunteers to over 600 volunteers.

Barriers to offering family volunteering opportunities

Both organisations were provided with a list of reasons on the barriers which prevented them to offer FV opportunities' results were as follows: 18 organisation reported a lack of understanding of family volunteering. 17 organisations reported a lack of capacity or resources to support families to volunteer. 11 organisations reported a lack of interest from families looking to volunteer and 1 organisation reported the challenges outweigh the benefits, while 9 of the organisations had cases studies available of other organisations offering family volunteering.

Benefits of engaging family volunteers

Organisations were asked what the benefits might be in involving family volunteers': 34 organisations reported the benefits as having a more diverse age profile of volunteers, 36 organisations reported it as an opportunity for different generations to share their volunteering values. 49 organisations felt it allows different generations from a family to spend quality time together by doing something meaningful, 28 organisations felt it would allow them to engage a broader range of volunteers than they would normally engage while a further 38 organisations felt it would help them to build relationships in local communities. Other benefits reported on include:

"One can more easily show resource-poor families in the community that it is useful to be social. At the same time, many may find that volunteering in this way does not require effort"

What tools or resources would help you to develop Family volunteering?

Organisations requested for various resources to develop such programme including: "Better facilitation from those who lead the activities"

"Good examples from others who have done the same."

"Recruitment and promotional materials."

"Access to families who will benefit from the offer. Then it is easier to get volunteers."

Facilities and location

Organisations were asked if they had a facility or location that could accommodate family volunteering, a space that is physically accessible and or child safe, if a programme was to run. 45 organisations reported they did whilst the other 7 organisations do not have the facilities available.

Other staff members

Organisations were asked if they have a staff member or volunteer trained to work with young people or families. 38 organisations said they do have relevant staff. 13 organisations said they did not have an additional staff member in this case.

Scheduling

38 organisations reported to having the ability to provide flexible scheduling sometimes required for family volunteers. 7 organisations reported to not have this ability and an additional 7 organisations said they do not currently but will in the future.

Volunteer Opportunities

24 organisations reported having volunteer opportunities that could be attractive to family volunteers, 8 organisations reported as not having such opportunities whilst 20 said they intend to in the future.

Orientation and Training

For this question 20 organisations reported they do have it in place. 11 reported to not having orientation training options and 21 organisations said they will need help in developing it.

Volunteer Findings

A total of 48 volunteers responded to this survey. 23 volunteers were aged under 18. Four of the volunteer respondents were between the age of 18 - 25, five were between 26 - 35, seven volunteers were aged between 36 - 45. Six volunteers were between 46 - 55 and five volunteer respondents were between the age of 56 - 65. There were also eleven volunteers aged between 66 - 75 and a further six volunteers between 76 - 85. Two were male and 46 were female.

Previous volunteering

Participants were asked if they ever participated in Family Volunteering (Volunteering alongside another member of your family) 20 volunteers said they had, 33 volunteers did not, 9 of the volunteers said they hadn't in the past but they would like to in the future. 5 volunteers said that family volunteering wasn't something that interested them.

Barriers to join family volunteering

When volunteers were asked what would be considered barriers for them and their family to join a family volunteer programme; 6 volunteers said there are no Family Volunteering opportunities available, 6 volunteer respondents said they have to travel very far to join a Family Volunteering programme. 53 volunteers were not aware of Family Volunteering. 7 of the volunteers reported feeling uncomfortable volunteering alongside a member of my family. While 9 volunteers reported the lack of time/resources / general accessibility as a barrier. Respondents also reported the following as examples of barriers to volunteering:

"Mom and dad work a lot and we do not have much time for leisure."

Benefits

Volunteers reported the following benefits of family volunteering:

- 43 respondents felt it would allow different generations from a family to volunteer together
- 40 felt it would help to build relationships
- 40 respondents felt it would strengthen the community and family ties
- 30 reported it would build solidarity in community and amongst family members,
- 40 respondents felt it as a fun way to spend time together
- 38 reported it would give an opportunity to learn something new in a comfortable setting, whilst
- 26 respondents felt it would generate mutual understanding between diverse families from the same community

Another benefit was seen also as a way to "Strengthen Society".

Getting involved

Volunteers were asked to comment on what would make it easier for them to get involved within a family volunteering programme. Most volunteers seemed positive about getting involved and comments include:

"Knowledge of what it is all about"

"Location of the volunteering activity"

"To have events and activities that fit my interests"

Types of projects

Volunteers were asked about the types of projects that they would like to be part of or would make it easier for them to be involved. The types include:

"Attend major events"

"Help the elderly or refugees"

"Grow vegetables in the local community, fellowship with an immigrant family"

Romania



Population and how many people are volunteering

Romania has 19,266,567 inhabitants ([Worldometer April 7, 2020](#)) or 20,121,641 inhabitants according to our last census in 2011.

The statistics on volunteering are very few and limited. There are no official studies dedicated to volunteering. The percentage of people who are reported to volunteer varies, according to the different studies and also according to how people understand what volunteering means (for the general public, the concept of volunteering partly or fully overlaps with donations (of money or blood even), supporting your local church and others).

The most recent study ([World Giving Index 2018](#)) points out 6% of the population volunteered in 2017 (as opposed to 9% in 2016), even though other [previous studies](#) showed percentages between 14% and 20% (with some [data from 2010](#)).

As a disclaimer we need to note that the apparent decrease of the percentages is not necessarily reliable or accurate, given the arguments expressed above, nor were the initial higher numbers, but these are just the data we have (even if the methodologies of collecting them may be very different, between the 2 studies).

A brief history of volunteering

In Romania, volunteering saw a rebirth after 1989 (before the communist period there were reported volunteering activities, especially related to war interventions and Red Cross work, but also standard community help). After communism fell, we could see the first signs of more modern volunteering, so to say, when the first international volunteers arrived, through the programs Peace Corps and Voluntary Service Overseas and also when other well-known international organisations (World Vision, Habitat for Humanity, Save the Children) created Romanian branches, bringing in experience and expertise in volunteer management. Volunteering in Romania started to increase when local organisations began involving local volunteers and from 1997 onwards, local volunteer centres appeared (mostly as departments of other NGOs, but also a few of them established with this particular mission of a volunteer centre).

The 2001 International Year of Volunteering generated a series of initiatives that truly shaped volunteering in Romania: more and more organisations started to involve volunteers in a structured manner, more volunteer centers were set up, the number of volunteers increased (especially youth), the visibility of volunteering raised and it started to be reflected in the media.

There were also a series of volunteering infrastructure elements developed: celebrating International Volunteer Day on December 5th every year, organizing volunteering award ceremonies (since 2001) and the National Volunteer Week on an annual basis (since 2002), setting up an informal network of volunteer centres (which reached 25 members in 2012), setting up a volunteering web portal, a National Council on Volunteering (active only for a few years), the first magazine with volunteering-related articles, organizing annual National Volunteering Conferences and national public campaigns to promote volunteering.

Most of these efforts were initiated or coordinated since 1997 by Pro Vobis - which established the first local volunteer centre in the country and gradually adapted its services and scope to become the National Volunteer Centre (in 2002) and finally the National Resource Centre for Volunteering in 2010, when it also founded a representative structure, the VOLUM Federation, that could have the legitimacy to do advocacy and lobby activities in relation to the government and other national authorities.

Volunteering evolved greatly in Romania after 2011 - European Year of Volunteering (EYV), with the increase of public attention for the concept, the rise in European Volunteering projects (through EVS and recently ESC) as well as the changes to the volunteering law, the professionalisation of volunteer management processes (through constant training and consultancy on Volunteer Management and a vivid exposure to advanced counterparts in Europe and their expertise, mostly because of membership in CEV and Erasmus+ partnerships), as well as the diversification of the volunteers profile (not just young people anymore, but also seniors, adults, corporate volunteers, skilled volunteers, in different proportions, but still, on the rise).

Legal framework for volunteering

There is a volunteering law - initially passed in 2001 (in the favourable context of International Year of Volunteering 2001), with changes in 2005 and then major adjustments in 2014. The current law clearly states: What volunteering is, An age limit for volunteers (explained below), The obligation to sign a volunteering contract and have other documents (job description, safety training sheet, volunteers registry), The obligation to provide a volunteer coordinator (either an employed staff or a volunteer), The right for the volunteer to ask for and be issued a volunteering certificate, testifying to the number of hours dedicated to volunteering and the abilities acquired through volunteering, The option of the volunteering experience to be recognized as professional experience (if performed in the field of study).

There is no national policy or strategy specifically dedicated to volunteering, even though there are references to volunteering in a variety of policy documents, mostly initiated by non-governmental organisations or coalitions (such as in Youth policy documents, in non-formal education position papers, etc). The local development strategies (developed by local public authorities) ought to have Volunteering chapters, but in very few cases these are done with the support of the civil society or are anchored in the local reality and capacities. VOLUM Federation also has its own development strategy as a federation that serves the volunteering sector in Romania, but this does not qualify as a national strategy.

In 2011, the national coordination group for the implementation of the European Year of Volunteering developed a Public Agenda for Volunteering in Romania for 2012-2020, as a strategic document coming out of the working groups developed for EYV2011.

Minimum age for volunteering

The Volunteering Law no. 78/2014 provides for a minimum age for volunteers: 16 years old. Over 16 (the age when one person obtains the right to sign work contracts, according to Employment regulations), a volunteer can sign on their own the volunteering contract. 15 year olds can become volunteers, but with an approval from their parents or legal guardians, annexed to the volunteering contract.

For all those under 15 who want to get involved in volunteering activities, the NGO sector encourages organisations to set-up programs of education for volunteering, in which youth under 15 are beneficiaries, learning about volunteering and civic engagement, and getting ready to become volunteers, once they have the capacity to make their own decisions on this.

Forms of Family Volunteering that take place

Not currently.

Any other research been carried out into volunteering in your country?

Usually, these are project-based and rather focused (for example, Pro Vobis investigated the willingness of people to volunteer, within a Europe for Citizens project, receiving more than 750 replies and indicating a clear willingness and interest of people (especially youth) to volunteer). The studies on the civil sector include some references to volunteering, but are not very constant or detailed and have been cited above in point 2.

There was a study on the impact of volunteering on the process of learning for youth, done in 2016 by the Youth and Sports Ministry, within an Erasmus+ project, "Support for Better Knowledge in the Youth Policy" (348 respondents). This study points out that 29% of the youth between 18 and 35 years old declare to have participated in volunteering activities in the last 2 years (out of these 42% were involved with an NGO and 58% with a public institution). The willingness to participate in volunteering as members or constant volunteers is approximately 9%.

Barriers to Family Volunteering

The main barrier we see at this point is the lack of capacity of local organisations to build and set up suitable volunteering opportunities for families with a variety of needs, adapted to the specific profile of adult volunteers. Usually organisations in Romania are rather reactive in how they build up programs and use already tested intervention methods, rely on their traditional pools of volunteers and traditional messages, so any change in their strategic approaches will require more work and effort. Reaching vulnerable adults and maintaining their engagement in a longer process (selection, volunteering activities, reflection, validation of skills) will also be challenging and a potential barrier may be an invoked lack of time from the families or low degree of trust in their ability to perform these tasks.

On a more general note, if we speak also of general barriers towards volunteering, outside the scope of project (but which may influence our work within the project) - poverty is clearly one - people of different ages are rather much more inclined to look for a job (and will be focused on this for a while also from now onwards), thus neglecting other means of spending their time, potentially leading to a decrease in volunteering or a tendency to dismiss it.

Besides these - the COVID19 situation poses new and unpredictable barriers - civil society is and will be affected by the crisis, and it will need extra efforts to recover after this period. This recovery may become a priority in the face of initiating new programs. However, this barrier can also become an opportunity, especially since Family Volunteering is more suited to fostering the value of togetherness, bringing people together and channelling their energy towards positive initiatives.

Other forms of volunteering that could be easily adapted for Family Volunteering

Environmental volunteering is the easiest to be adapted for Family Volunteering - short-term activities with a limited time commitment requirement (1-day, or even half a day) are quite popular among Romanian citizens and gather large numbers of volunteers (Let's Do it Romania, large planting campaigns, etc.), mobilizing typically inactive volunteers (adults, usually working quite a lot, and not having time to volunteer for the long-term, but who are happy to get involved in these one-off initiatives). These could be more easily transformed to community days where families could clean and beautify their neighbourhoods, instead of larger green spaces.

Organisation & Volunteer Survey Findings

Executive findings

A total of 20 organisations and 31 volunteers responded. Again, it is seen that stronger promotion would engage more volunteers. However, the level of knowledge of the concept family volunteering was low while the request for further information was high. Overall, it was seen to be a very positive programme to start.

Organisation Findings

Organisations were asked if they currently provide family volunteering (FV) opportunities. Of the respondents, 4 organisations currently offer FV opportunities while 16 organisations do not, out of which 15 organisations would like to in the future.

The total number of volunteers involved in each organisation ranged from minimum 5 volunteers to over 2,000 volunteers.

Barriers to offering family volunteering opportunities

The 2 organisations were provided with a list of reasons on the barriers which prevented them to offer family volunteering opportunities' results as follows:

- 9 organisations reported a lack of understanding of family volunteering.
- 11 organisations reported a lack of capacity or resources to support families to volunteer.
- 8 organisations reported a lack of interest from families looking to volunteer and
- 2 organisations reported the challenges outweigh the benefits, while
- 3 of the organisations had case study examples available of other organisations offering family volunteering.

Benefits of engaging family volunteers

Organisations were asked what the benefits might be in involving family volunteers: 11 organisations reported the benefits as having a more diverse age profile of volunteers, 17 organisations reported it as an opportunity for different generations to share their volunteering values. 18 organisations felt it allows different generations from a family to spend quality time together by doing something meaningful, 13 organisations felt it would allow them to engage a broader range of volunteers than they would normally engage, while a further 14 organisations felt it would help them to build relationships in local communities. Other benefits reported on include:

"It offers advantages for families, new opportunities to deepen family relationships and a new context of being together with a common purpose other than prosperity / health / family care"

What tools or resources would help you to develop Family volunteering?

Organisations requested for various resources to develop such programme, including:

"Further promotion of this concept with well-managed adult volunteer management, taking into account their motivation and matching between their skills / experience and the needs of the organisation in which they are involved"

"Location, time."

"A model of a family volunteering program. Let us experience this form of volunteering within our families to understand from within the resorts, needs, benefits"

Facilities and location

Organisations were asked if they had a facility or location that could accommodate family volunteering, a space that is physically accessible and or child safe, if a programme was to be run. 13 organisations reported they did, whilst the other 7 organisations do not have the facilities available.

Other staff members

Organisations were asked if they have a staff member or volunteer trained to work with young people or families. 15 organisations said they do have relevant staff. One organisation said they did not have an additional staff member in this case and an additional four organisations said they intend to in the future.

Volunteer Opportunities

11 organisations reported to having volunteer opportunities that could be attractive to family volunteers, 2 organisations reported as not having such opportunities whilst seven said they intend to in the future.

Orientation and Training

For this question, three organisations reported they do have it in place. Six reported to not having orientation training options and eleven organisations said they will need help in developing it.

Volunteer Findings

A total of 31 volunteers responded to this survey. Ten volunteers were aged under 18. Nine of the volunteer respondents were between the age of 18 - 25, two were between 26 - 35, seven volunteers were aged between 36 - 45. Two volunteers were between 46 - 55 and one volunteer respondent was between the age of 56 - 65. Overall 6 were male and 25 were female.

Previous volunteering

Participants were asked if they ever participated in Family Volunteering (Volunteering alongside another member of your family) 6 volunteers said they had, 8 volunteers did not, 17 of the volunteers said they hadn't in the past but they would like to in the future.

Barriers to join family volunteering

When volunteers were asked what would be considered barriers for them and their family to join a family volunteer programme; 6 volunteers said there are no Family Volunteering opportunities available, 4 volunteer respondents said they have to travel very far to join a Family Volunteering programme. 18 volunteers were not aware of Family Volunteering. 1 of the volunteers reported feeling uncomfortable volunteering alongside a member of my family. While 14 volunteers reported the lack of time/resources / general accessibility as a barrier.

Benefits

Volunteers reported the following benefits of family volunteering:

- 24 felt it would help to build relationships
- 23 respondents felt it as a fun way to spend time together
- 21 respondents felt it would generate mutual understanding between diverse families from the same community
- 20 reported it would build solidarity in the community and amongst family members
- 19 respondents felt it would allow different generations from a family to volunteer together
- 19 respondents felt it would strengthen the community and family ties
- 19 reported it would give an opportunity to learn something new in a comfortable setting,

Getting involved

Volunteers were asked to comment on what would make it easier for them to get involved within a family volunteering programme. Most volunteers seemed positive about getting involved and comments include:

"Stronger promotion of this type of volunteering"

"More programs to offer Family Volunteering"

Types of projects

Volunteers were asked about the types of projects that they would like to be part of or would make it easier for them to be involved. Types include:

"Related to education, environment, support for people in difficulty"

"Social inclusion projects."

"Recreational: planting trees, flowers, etc. in the community / social: helping vulnerable / cultural people: organising different events"

"More activities for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds"

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Learn more about this project on our web page: www.familyvolunteering.eu.

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The strategic partnership implementing the project is made up of 6 organisations with vast experience in volunteering and developing quality volunteering programmes:

- CEV-European Center for Volunteering from Belgium - europeanvolunteercentre.org;
- Croatian Volunteer Development Centre - hcrv.hr;
- Volunteer Centre Augsburg, Germany - freiwilligen-zentrum-augsburg.de
- Volunteering Ireland - volunteer.ie
- Vestre Aker Frivillighetssentral, Norway - vestreaker.frivilligsentral.no;

and the applicant organisation – Pro Vobis– National Resource Centre for Volunteering from Romania - provobis.ro.

