Volunteering in the European Union

A 2010 study in preparation of the 2011 European Year on Volunteering

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The study on Volunteering in the EU

- Undertaken by ICF GHK in 2009, final report February 2010
- Contracted by the Educational, Audio-visual & Culture Executive Agency (EAC-EA) and undertaken on behalf of the Directorate General Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission
- To aid in the preparation of the 2011 Year of Volunteering
- Specific aims:
  - Reach a better understanding of the volunteering landscape in all 27 Member States, in terms of facts and figures, regulatory and institutional arrangements, specific issues such as competition, procurement, taxation, job and service substitution;
  - Identify trends, similarities and differences, opportunities and challenges;
  - Help determine the scope of possible future policies and actions which could be more effectively implemented at the European level rather than at national or regional/local level;
  - Raise awareness of the possible benefits of supporting volunteering.
Social and political need for data on volunteering

Why is more and better data needed?

- Volunteering is a growing phenomenon in most MS, thus making important societal and economic contributions, especially in times of economic crisis
- Insufficient and fragmented data makes it impossible to:
  - Monitor the phenomenon in terms of size and trends
  - Measure the benefits and impacts of volunteering (including ‘value for money’ of governmental strategies, support and public funding)
  - Identify potential problem areas (e.g. service / job substitution, possible ‘instrumentalisation of volunteering’, ‘tensions’ caused by legal / institutional framework)
  - Anticipate new challenges and needs (e.g. new skills and training required due to the professionalisation of the sector)
  - Improve policy and decision-making
  - Compare between EU Member States.
Data already collected in the EU (1)

- A wide variety of definitions and concepts, for example:
  - “all activity carried out for the public good, which is based on civic movement and voluntary action and is not paid for” (FI)
  - “work carried out within a host organisation without compensation” (HU)
  - An activity which is “spontaneous, gratuitous, without intended remunerative aims and should be undertaken exclusively for solidarity purposes” (IT)

These also influence how volunteering is being measured

- A wide variety of approaches to data collection on volunteering in the EU (e.g. different methods, years, categories of data collected, etc. – see next slides)
Data already collected in the EU (2)

- Different organisations responsible:
  - National Statistical Offices (NSOs)
  - Voluntary organisations (or representative / umbrella organisations)
  - University / research institutes
  - International organisations (ILO / UN)
  - Others

- Different methods and sources:
  - Surveys: very different levels of coverage (due to different concepts and definitions), sample sizes, methods, etc.
  - Administrative data
  - Census data
  - Qualitative data / estimates

- Different years: from very recent to end of the nineties

- Different ‘regularity’: from one-off to every few years
Data already collected in the EU (3)

- Great differences in results of different measurements, for example:
  - National surveys overall tend to show lower levels of volunteering in comparison to some of the key European or international surveys.
  - European and international surveys provide varying levels of volunteering across Europe (e.g. ranging from an estimated 150 million adults based on the European Social Survey, to 136 million based on the Eurobarometer and 100 million by a EP study).
  - Eurobarometer 2006 presents “Education, arts, music or cultural associations” as the second sector for volunteering whereas from national reports “Social, health and welfare” rank second.
Data already collected in the EU (4)

- Different features of volunteering covered

**Volunteers**
- Total numbers and trends (all MS although some only have data for one year)
- Time devoted to volunteering (no comparable data in BG, ES, HU, IE, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK)
- Gender (no data in EL, ES, LV)
- Age (different age categories used, no data in EL, LU, MT)
- Educational level (some difference in levels, no data in CY, EL, LV, MT, PT, SK)
- Employment status (no data in BU, EL, LV, LU, MT, PT)
- National geographical distribution (no data in LV, LU, MT, PT, SI)
- Volunteer involvement by sector (some variety in sectors, no data in CY, EL, IT)
- Type of volunteering activity carried out (different typologies, no data in CY, ES, FI, PT, LT)
- Motivational factors (available in less than half of MS)
Data already collected in the EU (5)

- Different features of volunteering covered (continued)

  **Voluntary organisations**
  - Number of voluntary organisations (no data in LV, LU, PT and RO, no uniform definitions as to what constitutes a voluntary organisation) and trends in their number (no usable data in nearly half of MS)
  - Sectors of voluntary organisations (variety in sectors, no data in AT, CZ, DE, LV, LU, NL, SI)

  **Economic dimension**
  - National funding made available to volunteering (no data in AT, BG, EL, ES, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, SK)
  - Economic value. Very different calculation methods, work in progress, no consensus, only very few MS use national accounts
  - Our study used the replacement cost method and calculated FTE and % of GDP
Existing pan-European data collection efforts

- **European Values Study (EVS)**
  - Published every 9 years, provides longitudinal data, covers 47 countries covering all EU MS (including Croatia)
  - Data collected: adherence to voluntary organisations and activities and engagement in unpaid voluntary work for these organisations

- **Time Use Survey (TUS)**
  - Eurostat undertook a first wave of the Harmonised European Time Use Surveys (HETUS 2000), carried out by several European countries between 1998 and 2006. 15 MS take part at present.
  - Data collected (according to 2004 guidelines): time spent (in minutes per day) on volunteer work and meetings, broken down:

- **ILO New manual on the measurement of volunteer work**
  - Published in 2011
  - Recommends adding volunteer supplements to Labour Force Surveys. For example, the US has a volunteer supplement as part of its population survey.
  - The European Volunteer Measurement Project aims to encourage MS to use the manual.
  - To date, Poland has added a supplement to its LFS in 2011 and published the results in 2012; Hungary added a supplement in the third quarter of 2011; Italy planned to insert a module in a social survey in March 2013.
Thank you for your attention