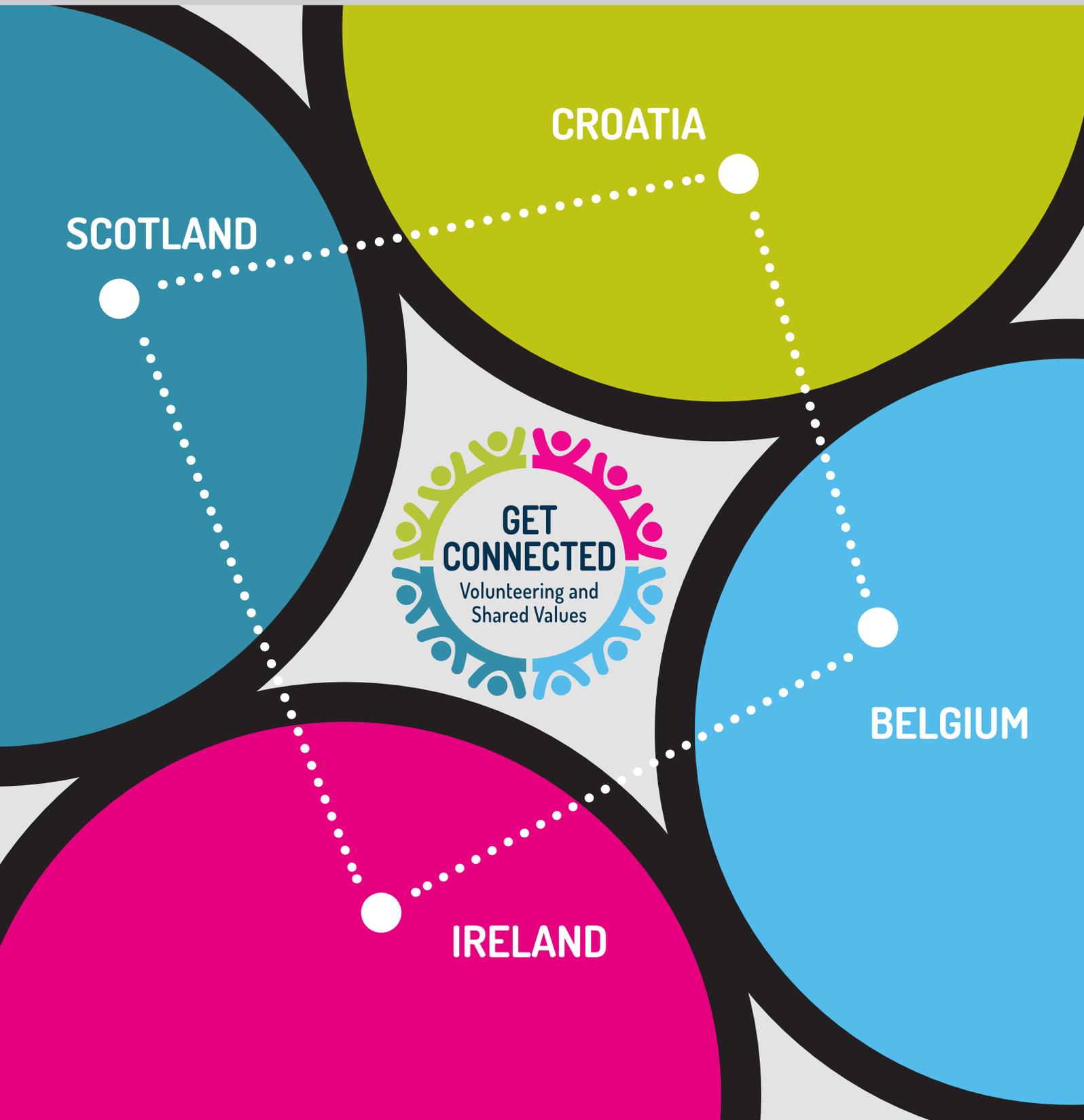


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GET CONNECTED
VOLUNTEERING AND SHARED VALUES
RESEARCH REPORT





'Get Connected - Volunteering and Shared Values'
Europe for Citizens Project
Background Research Report

Prepared by Anne Eustace for Dublin City Volunteer Centre

April 2019



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Anne Eustace
April 2019

Chapter One

Introduction and Background

The 'Get Connected - Volunteering and Shared Values' Project (the Project) provided a valuable and timely contribution to current discussions on the ways in which volunteering can support and influence European values, citizenship and the future of the European Union (EU). This chapter introduces this report and provides the background for the research.

1.1 Introduction

This report sets out the results of the research piece of the Project. The research looked specifically at the supports, infrastructure, policy context and external factors influencing volunteering in the four partner countries Belgium, Croatia, Ireland and Scotland. The research was exploratory, qualitative in nature and relied on material from each of the partners, who were responsible for the Project in their country. This means that the material varied in accordance with each country's situation and outlook.

The purpose of this report is to offer insight into the learning arising from the Project, about values and infrastructure, as they relate to, support and influence volunteering. These were the two main themes of the Project. This report includes an overview of the role that values play in influencing voluntary activity and how voluntary activity, in turn, may influence societal values. The infrastructure that supports volunteering in each country is also described.

This report culminates in a comparison of the features of the infrastructure(s) in each country and draws conclusions to further support good practice volunteering into the future.

1.2. Methodology

The purpose of the research was to observe across the four countries the extent to which the various infrastructures, e.g. policy contexts and supports for volunteering, strengthen the common values (see Section 1.4), as agreed for the Project.

There were three specific tasks that each partner was asked to complete to support the research process. These tasks included providing relevant reference material to include in the literature review, inviting two high level stakeholders to participate in a stakeholder interview with the researcher and completing a PESTLE¹ analysis for their country. Each partner

¹ The PESTLE is an interactive method to gain a snap shot of the Policy, Economic, Social/Societal, Technological, Legal and Environmental factors that are influencing volunteering within each country.

received a briefing note, in September 2018, to guide their contribution to the research (see Appendix A).

In summary, the methodology involved desk research, the PESTLE analysis for each country, consultations with the partners and semi structured interviews with informed stakeholders, two in each country.

The main research questions were:

- How is volunteering supported at a policy level in each partner country?
- What are the features of the volunteering infrastructure in each partner country and what factors influence this?
- How developed is the volunteer infrastructure in each partner country?
- What role, if any, are the various infrastructures playing in strengthening the EU common values?
- What useful observations can be made to inform the future development of volunteering and strengthening of common EU values?

The **literature review** was brief and bounded focusing primarily on volunteering infrastructure types, factors informing and supporting volunteering policy and the EU common values.

The researcher conducted two **stakeholder interviews** in each partner country (eight in total). The stakeholders included people at senior levels with volunteer development agencies and policy officials or funders with decision making responsibility in relation to policy around volunteering. The interviews were a semi structured, confidential, conversation, mainly over the telephone and centred around the following themes:

- Policy context for volunteering and factors influencing this (drivers and inhibitors);
- Themes and issues of pressing interest to policy makers;
- Features of the infrastructure that support volunteering and ideas for future strengthening of the infrastructure and related policy formation;
- Awareness of the EU common values and how they inform and fit with (or not) policy making as it relates to volunteering;
- Challenges and future thinking and interest in volunteering.

Each partner was asked to generate a PESTLE report for their country using an agreed template (see Appendix A). All four countries returned their completed PESTLE to the researcher by end of November 2018. The purpose of using the PESTLE methodology was to

explore the current context and infrastructure that informs and supports volunteering in the four partner countries, Belgium, Croatia, Ireland and Scotland.

1.2.1. Methodological Note:

The results of the primary research are based on the personal views and experiences of those interviewed and material sent to the researcher by the partners within each country. The data generated is useful given that all those interviewed are highly experienced in leading and decision making about volunteering. However, the results must be considered in the context of the very small sample size and the predominantly qualitative nature of the methodology. This report is best used as a record of the research and to prompt further and deeper discussion about the importance of the volunteering infrastructure in each country and the ways that it supports volunteering. It can also usefully inform/guide future research into values as they relate to, influence and are shaped by volunteering experiences.

1.3. Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the structures, funding arrangements, policies, cultural, societal and political contexts and organisations that lead, surround, support and inform decision making and thinking about volunteering. This includes the way volunteering is viewed, funded and organised by the range of stakeholders that are involved in and interested in volunteering, e.g. policymakers, decision makers within the organisations that lead on, manage and direct the development of volunteering and those in VIOs. Infrastructure also includes supports for volunteering, such as written statements of strategy, national frameworks, training for volunteers, information technology, quality standards, good practice guidelines, ethical codes, data collection, monitoring, evaluation, research and legal frameworks.

According to the European Volunteer Centre (CEV 2012) the infrastructure supporting volunteering is often overlooked as it is mainly behind the scenes and not immediately visible to individual volunteers or the beneficiaries of the volunteering effort². However, the infrastructure is arguably crucial for the long-term sustainability of volunteering, for keeping standards high and for attracting and retaining volunteers. It is also important for ongoing policy development and to show and share good practice ways of working, nationally and internationally. A direct quote from the CEV report of 2012 illustrates the potential power and value of a good infrastructure - *'As is now widely known, we estimate that 100 million Europeans profess to be volunteers of one form or another. If they were a country, 'European Volunteerland' would be by far the biggest Member State of the EU. But in order to grow healthily motivated, well-trained and contented volunteers (and satisfied beneficiaries of their efforts too), European Volunteerland needs a well-functioning infrastructure - just like a real country'*.

² European Volunteer Centre (2012) *Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe*.

It is generally accepted that volunteering is good to do and that it has a positive impact on those who volunteer and those organisations and people who are supported by volunteers. The body of robust research to provide evidence for the impact of volunteering is growing. For example, Volunteer Ireland completed research, in partnership with Galway University, into the impact of rural volunteerism on development and sustainability³. This research highlights the essential contribution that volunteers make to rural communities, the rural economy, rural inhabitants, social connections and people's sense of belonging and culture. The research also draws attention to the need for financial support for rural voluntary activities, the importance of support from local and national government, training and education for volunteers and VIOs. These are all vital parts of the infrastructure that serve to ensure the continuity of a high standard of volunteering. They are universal in nature that apply at local and national levels.

In their book, 'Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century' (2010), Rochester et al⁴ alert us to the expectations that are held, generally within the human psyche and more specifically within governments, about the contribution that volunteering can make to individual development, social cohesion and addressing social needs. They argue that the weight of expectation about the power and potential of volunteering in addressing social needs has never been greater and has a more prominent place on the agenda of social policy than ever before. They believe this is a global phenomenon and that more and more volunteering is seen to have the potential to assist governments in delivering better public programmes and policies. Also, given the reliance on evidence-based policy and practice, there is a growing expectation that volunteering will demonstrate, through robust research, that it is worth investing in.

The context for volunteering, voluntary organisations, voluntary activity and wider civil society must also be considered and this changing environment is discussed in detail in 'civil society organisations in turbulent times'⁵. The authors, Melbourne and Murray (2017), draw attention to the political and policy environment that surrounds voluntary organisations and the challenges and dilemmas that they face in rapidly changing and more punitive welfare settings. They note that in parallel with the privatisation of public services in the UK, that restrictions on civil society are growing and that many fields of service, e.g. housing, health and social care, are experiencing policy upheaval (p.1). The signs are that independent non-profit organisations seeking to provide flexible, locally based welfare activities are being seriously challenged by increasing regulation. They argue that much remains hidden and that there is still insufficient contemporary work that provides in depth research situated in small

³ Farrell, M. (2018) *Rural Volunteerism: Impacting Development and Sustainability*. Volunteer Ireland.

⁴ Rochester, C., Ellis Paine, A., Howlett, S., and Zimmeck, M. (2010) *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*. Palgrave Macmillan.

⁵ Melbourne, L. and Murray, U. (2017) *Civil Society Organisations in Turbulent Times - A Gilded Web*.

community organisations or specific localities. These patterns and changes all have implications for volunteering and VIOs.

The European Year of Volunteering (EYV 2011) was an excellent opportunity to emphasise the importance of a volunteering infrastructure. The EYV aimed to develop and promote an enabling environment for volunteering in Europe. During the EYV the European Commission noted that there were inconsistencies in how the volunteer infrastructure is supported and developed across the EU⁶. The view was that more needed to be done at national level in member countries. This report returns to many of the themes and recommendations brought to light at that time.

The Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe (P.A.V.E. 2011)⁷ includes a vision for the ideal volunteering infrastructure in all EU Member States and identifies the support mechanisms that should be created and implemented. The support mechanisms include:

- an appropriate legal framework for VIOs and volunteers;
- reliable, dedicated and accessible funding schemes for volunteer involving and support organisations at all levels;
- specific funding streams focusing on volunteering;
- recognition of volunteer contribution as in-kind co-funding (requires commitment from the European Institutions);
- comparable and established data collection systems;
- documenting the impact and value of volunteering for the individual, the local communities and the overall society;
- improved and simplified access to information for VIOs at all levels.

This research adds further weight to the need for all of the above aspects of the infrastructure to be strengthened and embedded EU wide, as well as at country level, locally and nationally. It seems that there is much work still to be done in this regard.

1.4. Values

The EU is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail⁸.

⁶ European Volunteer Centre (2012) *Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe*.

⁷ 'European Year of Volunteering - Volunteer! Make a Difference' (2011). Closing Conference, Warsaw, Poland.

⁸ Article 2. Lisbon Treaty on the European Union. Signed by EU Heads of State (2007).

Volunteering has always been an important part of EU policy. Volunteering is deemed an active expression of civic participation and the European Commission has noted that it helps to foster common EU values through programmes such as the European Voluntary Service (EVS) and the European Solidarity Corps (ESC).

An EU Barometer Report⁹ lists and measures our common values across the EU27, in terms of personal importance as:

- Human rights (43%);
- Respect for human life (43%);
- Peace (40%);
- Democracy (28%);
- Individual freedom (23%);
- The rule of law (21%);
- Equality (20%);
- Tolerance (15%);
- Solidarity or support for others (15%);
- Self-fulfilment (11%);
- Respect for other cultures (9%); and
- Religion (5%).

In the EU barometer report 'solidarity or support for others' was rated only as the eight most important value from the list of twelve. Overtime, we will see how much the work of the European Solidarity Corps strengthens this value. This will provide important learning for the voluntary sector.

Rochester et al (2010) strive to make sense of the complex phenomenon of volunteering by examining the values that underpin volunteering. They distinguish between the values held by individuals and those values held at the collective level in society. They propose that the values held at an individual level are those that influence a person's propensity and motivation to volunteer. The values held at societal level are different in that they are collective and cultural, and they shape attitudes to voluntary action. Halman and de Moor (1994)¹⁰ define values as 'deeply rooted dispositions guiding people to act and behave in a certain way', values are 'an important attribute of culture' and include 'the way we think, how we act and what we own'. Rochester et al (2010) suggest that there are four sets of values which may have a significant impact on volunteering:

⁹ EU Barometer Report No. 77 (2012). The Values of Europeans.

¹⁰ Halman, L., and R. de Moor (1994) *Comparative Research on Values* in Ester, P., L. Halman and R. de Moor (Eds) *The Individualised Society*, pp. 21-36, Tilburg University Press: Tilburgh.

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- The principles of **altruism or beneficence** based on the moral imperative of compassion or care for other people;
- The idea of **solidarity** expressed as a feeling of identification with a group or society and a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of the groups and its members;
- **Reciprocity** and the understanding that helping others may lead to receiving help oneself in turn, when in need; and
- **Equity and social justice** based on the belief that inequality and injustice are morally and socially wrong and must be addressed.

The Project sits well within this context of exploring values and learning about the ways in which values matter to, and the extent to which they are affected by, volunteering and vice versa. The questions that arise include whether or not volunteer participation deepens our values, does this vary across the partner countries and from the various participant groups? What can we learn from the context of each partner country? These are critical questions and the answers will have a direct impact on the future of Europe from both a local and transnational level.

A central aim of the Project was to examine the extent to which volunteering, strengthens (or not) EU common values. This was based on the premise that it generally understood and assumed that volunteering strengthens common values. The rationale was that given the crises and challenges that Europe is current encountering (e.g. Brexit, the migrant crisis, high youth unemployment, civil unrest and disenchantment to name but a few) that now more than ever there is a vital and powerful role for volunteering to strengthen shared values for the betterment of society. The view is that common EU values and bonds that unite, rather than divide humanity, are of paramount importance for the future of the Union and the unity of her citizens. The hypothesis was that volunteering, including the way it is supported and organised, has an important role to play in strengthening, some or all, of our common values.

A set of Common Values were agreed for the Project. This Framework of Common Values is a significant and practical output from the Project. It has potential for use in further research and reflective practice to inform good practice volunteering into the future. At the outset it proved necessary to develop this bespoke Framework of Common Values as there was no definitive list of values that fit well with volunteering. The EU Barometer values were a useful reference point and yet they were too high level and distant from the reality of volunteering. As a result of this Project they were adapted to fit better with volunteering. The Common Values are listed in Table One.

Table One - Ten Common Values¹¹
Active citizenship – being able to act on social and political issues, such as crime prevention in your local area, cleaning up your street, etc.
Civic responsibility – carrying out civic duties that benefit the whole of society, such as obeying the rule of law, voting in elections, jury duty, becoming a charity trustee, etc.
Courtesy – treating people with warmth, politeness and respect.
Empathy – understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
Environmental protection – looking after the natural environment for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone.
Equality – treating people equally and fairly, regardless of their background, identity or personal circumstances.
Respect for other cultures – recognising, appreciating and valuing other cultural, racial and ethnic groups.
Self-fulfilment – being able to make yourself happy through your own efforts, such as using your skills and talents to achieve your hopes and ambitions.
Solidarity or support for others – the strong bond formed between people who support each other and/or have a shared purpose, such as campaigning to stop a school closure.
Tolerance – the willingness to accept different behaviours, beliefs and opinions.

1.4.1. Survey of Volunteers – ‘Before and After’¹²

The Project sought to demonstrate through a 'before and after' survey the extent to which volunteering helps to strengthen (or not) EU common values. The rationale was that while volunteer motivations are widely discussed and researched, there is little information on the link between values and volunteering. The intention of the surveys was to explore the relationship between values and volunteering.

Project participants were asked to complete a ‘before’ survey prior to them commencing their volunteering (where possible) and an ‘after’ survey was then carried out once participants had completed 30 hours of volunteering. The purpose of the surveys was to gauge the degree of connectedness to the common values within the four countries. A total of 153 people participated in the first phase of the survey and 124 in the second phase.

¹¹ Set of Common Values agreed for the Get Connected Project (2018).

¹² Europe for Citizens Project: Get Connected – Volunteering and Shared Values, Survey Results. Volunteer Scotland (2018).

1.4.1. 'Before' Survey Findings

The following is a glimpse of the main findings of the first survey which was conducted between April and September 2018. It is important to stress that the results must be viewed carefully and mindful of the small sample sizes (n=153 for Survey 1 and n=124 for Survey 2) and the challenges around robust *tracking* across the two surveys.

Values

The values of *equality, empathy, courtesy and cultural respect* were amongst the top five in terms of importance to people, personally, in all four countries (Table 2).

The values of *Active Citizenship and Civic Responsibility* were rated least important, personally, to respondents, out of the ten listed values, except in Scotland where *Civic Responsibility* featured in the top five (Table Two).

Table Two - Survey 1					
Importance of the Values - Top Five for Each Country¹³					
(n=153 in total across all four countries)					
Country	Value One	Value Two	Value Three	Value Four	Value Five
Belgium (n=42)	Equality (91%)	Courtesy (79%)	Empathy (72%)	Cultural Respect (74%)	Environment (66%)
Croatia (n=35)	Equality (87%)	Tolerance (80%) Cultural Respect (80%)	Courtesy / Empathy / Solidarity (73%)		
Ireland (n=36)	Courtesy (92%)	Equality (83%)	Empathy (78%)	Cultural Respect (75%)	Tolerance/Environment (61%)
Scotland (n=35)	Equality (74%)	Courtesy (71%)	Empathy / Civic Responsibility (63%)	Cultural Respect (51%)	

When respondents were asked to **rank the values**, *tolerance* appeared as one of the top five values for all of the countries, except Scotland. *Equality* and *cultural respect* appeared in the top ranked values for each country. *Solidarity* was ranked in the top five by three countries, i.e. Ireland, Croatia and Scotland (see Table Three).

¹³ The question posed in Survey 1 was ' How important are these values to you personally?'

Table Three - Survey 1 Ranking of Values in Terms of What Matters Most (n=144 in total across all four countries)				
Ranked Values	Belgium (n=47)	Croatia (n=28)	Ireland (n=34)	Scotland (n=35)
1 st (top)	Tolerance	Tolerance	Tolerance	Courtesy
2 nd	Courtesy	Cultural Respect	Equality	Equality
3 rd	Equality	Environment	Solidarity	Empathy
4 th	Empathy	Courtesy	Cultural Respect	Cultural Respect
5 th	Cultural Respect	Solidarity	Self-Fulfilment	Solidarity
6 th	Self-Fulfilment	Self-Fulfilment	Empathy	Environment
7 th	Solidarity	Empathy	Courtesy	Tolerance
8 th	Environment	Equality	Environment	Self-Fulfilment
9 th	Civic Responsibility	Civic Responsibility	Active Citizenship	Civic Responsibility
10 th (bottom)	Active Citizenship	Active Citizenship	Civic Responsibility	Active Citizenship

The majority of respondents in all four countries believed that they were able to either *usually* or *always* live out the values that mattered to them the most in their day-to-day lives (e.g. those values that were either ranked the most important and/or featured in the top five most important values). The exception was in Scotland where *solidarity* was ranked as the fifth most important value and yet only 45% of respondents reported feeling able to either *usually* or *always* live out this value in their day-to-day lives. This finding fits with the results from the stakeholder consultations in that *solidarity* was less understood as a word or concept. It seems less naturalised into the everyday language of people and thus may be more difficult to imagine or realise behaviourally.

The values that respondents appeared to find more difficult to live out in their day-to-day lives were *Active Citizenship* and *Civic Responsibility*. Respondents in Ireland and Scotland also appeared to have some difficulties living out the *environment* value, in their day-to-day lives, when compared to respondents in Belgium and Croatia.

Motivation to Volunteer

The main motivation for volunteering was altruistic, i.e. to help others rather than to personally gain from the experience. The only exception to this was *'to learn new skills'* which featured in the top five responses for Croatia, Ireland and Scotland. This fits with the literature as one of the primary motivations to volunteer. According to Stebbins (2004)¹⁴ the motivation to volunteer is usually a blend of self-interest and altruism. In the case of this research it may also be indicative of education and employment agendas in each country where volunteering is often identified as a route to developing skills to improve future employment prospects.

The desire to build relationships, e.g. *'to make new friends'* / *'to feel part of a team'* formed the second layer of motivation. This drive for social connectedness is a major contributor of volunteering in combating social isolation and loneliness, which we also know is inextricably linked to mental health.

The more individual / personal motivations for volunteering featuring in the bottom part of the charts, e.g. *'to feel appreciated'*. Interestingly, the option *'to improve my health and wellbeing'* also appears in the bottom section of the chart for each country. Given the increasing health and social care issues that different societies are facing, particularly around obesity, loneliness and isolation, it is interesting that the majority of respondents did not appear to view volunteering as a means to helping to improve their health and wellbeing. This is despite the growing body of evidence showing that volunteering has a positive impact on health and wellbeing¹⁵. This may indicate that health and wellbeing benefits are probably not a motivator for engagement in volunteering for many people. These benefits are more of a by-product from their engagement and they may not even recognise the benefits overtly.

Volunteering Areas of Interest

The top five areas that respondents were interested in volunteering in are depicted in Table Four. The results show the variety across countries and gives an indication of cultural preferences and patterns around volunteering. The results also reflect, somewhat, the themes that emerged through the stakeholder interviews. For example, a lot of volunteering in Ireland and Scotland is local and community based, whereas in Belgium there are strong inclinations to respond to the refugee crisis. However, it is vital to understand that this sample is small and therefore these results must be viewed with caution. It is possible that the results merely reflect the personal preferences and chosen cause of those who responded

¹⁴ Stebbins, R., (2004). Introduction in Stebbins, R., and M. Graham (Eds). *Volunteering as Leisure/Leisure as Volunteering: An International Assessment*. CABI Publishing: Wallington.

¹⁵ Linning, M. and Jackson, G. (2018) *Volunteering, Health and Wellbeing – What Does the Evidence Tell Us?*. Volunteer Scotland

and are not representative of anything wider. Whilst interesting this warrants further research before any solid conclusions are drawn.

Table Four - Survey 1				
Areas Respondents are interested in volunteering in				
Top 5 Responses				
	Belgium	Croatia	Ireland	Scotland
1 st	Asylum seekers / refugees	Events / festivals	Local community	Events / festivals
2 nd	Homelessness	Youth or children's activities outside school	Events / festivals	Local community or neighbourhood
3 rd	Environmental protection	Children's education and schools	Culture and heritage	Fundraising
4 th	Children's education and schools	Teaching / tutoring / mentoring	Health, disability and wellbeing	Health, disability and wellbeing
5 th	Local community	Culture and heritage	Supporting older people	Emergency services, first aid and public safety

Community Spirit

The results suggest that levels of community spirit, in all four countries, tend to occupy the middle ground between weak and strong. Levels of community spirit amongst participants from Belgium appear to be marginally weaker compared to that in other countries. The results for Ireland indicate a slightly stronger feeling of community spirit. These results mirror the results of the stakeholder interviews in that the political situation is currently more turbulent in Belgium than Ireland and the divide between the city and the provinces is greater in terms of diversity and support for volunteering. However, as mentioned earlier, the samples are so small that it is important that any findings be tested through further research before any firm conclusions are drawn.

There are several consistent messages emerging from the results in terms of how community spirit could be improved in all four countries. Communication was a theme cross-cutting the responses, with participants suggesting that local community activities and events need to be better promoted "*so that everyone knows about them*". This also linked with the issue of inclusion and ensuring that information and events are accessible to all, e.g. language was noted as a barrier to involvement in Belgium in instances where people did not speak the local language.

Another suggestion to improve community spirit was creating more opportunities for people to come together. This was coupled with the need to create more spaces for people to come together and improved community links and routes through which people could become both informed and involved in local activities and events.

Respondents did not seem to view community spirit as something that they themselves could try and promote / generate without any external influence or support. Despite an apparent willingness amongst participants to become more involved in their local community, there appears to be a heavy reliance on someone else (whether that be the national / local government, community groups, or a leading member of the local community, etc.) taking control of creating, coordinating and promoting opportunities for local people to come together. This has resource implications as few government agencies or community groups have either the resources or the infrastructure in place to provide this level of intervention for local communities. It raises the question as to how local communities can be empowered to see community spirit as something that they can take responsibility, agency and ownership of. The infrastructure must be strengthened to create ways to initiate, empower and encourage community capacity building. This is likely to require specific interventions to create the conditions conducive for people to become community leaders or community anchors with resources to support this. On the other hand, policy-wise, there may be a preference for a more subtle/organic approach or a balance of the two so as to truly empower communities particularly those that are disconnected.

1.4.1. 'After' Survey Findings

The following is a glimpse of the main findings of the second survey which was conducted between August and September 2018.

Benefits of Volunteering

The social element, connections and the personal achievements gained through volunteering featured prominently in the responses from all countries in terms of what volunteers had gained the most from their volunteering experience. This reinforces the belief in enhanced personal and relationship-based outcomes as a result of volunteering. Again, this warrants further research before any firm conclusions are drawn.

The top five benefits that respondents from Croatia and Belgium gained from their volunteer experience retained a focus on altruism as was evident in the findings of the first survey, e.g. *'to helps others' / 'to feel I'm making a difference'*. There were also signs of more personal and relationship-based outcomes being realised when compared to the reasons given for why they wanted to begin volunteering in the first Survey.

The top five benefits in Ireland and Scotland were more strongly focused around the personal and relationship-based outcomes (*'having fun' / 'making new friends'*). This suggests that

whilst people may often begin volunteering for altruistic reasons, what they actually gain from the experience is centred around relationship building and improved personal outcomes. Volunteers are not always aware of the full range of benefits to be gained from their volunteer experience unless they are prompted to carry out some form of personal reflection. This suggests that it would be worthwhile for VIOs to formally facilitate reflection opportunities for their volunteers so as to encourage fuller appreciation, personal and organisational, of the benefits of their volunteering.

The findings raise interesting methodological and psychological questions around the possible sway towards the socially desirable response. For example, do people tend to give altruistic reasons for becoming involved in volunteering because they feel that this is the “*right answer*” to provide when asked? Or is it possible that people do not realise the full range of benefits that can be gained through volunteering until they actually experience volunteering. This requires further consideration and research. It also offers another angle for VIOs as they work to promote volunteering opportunities.

Values

There was similarity in the ranking of the values across Surveys 1 and 2 and also some differences. The top five values that featured in Survey 1 and Survey 2 were *tolerance, courtesy, equality, empathy and cultural respect*. It is fair to say that all of these values are important for positive human experience and can arguably contribute to positive attitudes towards and within volunteering.

In the results for Croatia, there was a noticeable shift with *Active Citizenship* moving from being rated as important by 47%, in Survey 1 to 71% of respondents in Survey 2. It is unclear what precisely prompted this shift and it would be worth exploring this further in future research, particularly if we are keen to find ways to actively encourage positive shifts in attitudes and behaviours relating to active citizenship.

The differences are of interest and raise some useful points for consideration and further research. However, the results must be viewed carefully and mindful of the small sample sizes (n=153 for Survey 1 and n=124 for Survey 2) and the challenges around robust *tracking* across the two surveys. The reality is that the surveys were mainly stand alone, with limited scope for comparison of results in instances where the same people participated in both surveys.

Comparison or setting the survey results alongside each other is useful when we take account of the type of questions asked. For example, Survey 1 questions were intended to gather data to set a baseline and so were more 'one off' and factual. The tone of Survey 2 questions was more reflective and designed for *after* a volunteering experience, e.g. focus on benefits and

gains *from* the experience. Therefore, it is not surprising that personal reflection is more evident, as an energy or tone, in the responses to Survey 2.

Self-Fulfilment was one particular value that revealed change across the two surveys. This value was of less personal importance to respondents in Survey 1. The anecdotal feedback suggests that some volunteers even considered this value to be a negative value underpinned by an element of self-interest. However, *Self-Fulfilment* went on to feature in the top five in Survey 2 in Croatia and Scotland. This may be indicative of respondents reflecting on how they have personally gained from their volunteer experience and developing an awareness and appreciation of the importance of self-fulfilment as a value. It would be good to conduct further research in this area and explore what this tells us about changes in people's values and/or the extent to which volunteering enables people to fulfil these values.

The values *Environment*, *Solidarity* and *Self-Fulfilment* had a stronger presence within the top five in the results for Survey 2 than those for Survey 1.

1.4.3. Overall Conclusions from the Surveys

The surveys were an important element of the Project. They were challenging to design and administer, particularly the pre and post intentions. It was difficult, in reality, to achieve repeat participation in the surveys by the same volunteers. That said, the experience of conducting the surveys encouraged deeper thinking about values, how we define values and how they are perceived, internalised and experienced by volunteers. We are also left with a Ten Value Framework that can be further tried and tested through future research.

The results of the surveys confirm that the Ten Value Framework adopted and applied by the Project is sturdy enough. Certainly, the values that were ranked most important, including *tolerance*, *empathy*, *courtesy*, *equality* and *cultural respect* are understood and considered practical and possible to live out in everyday life. The values of *solidarity*, *environment*, *civic responsibility* and *active citizenship* seem to be more nebulous and less well internalised or naturalised into the volunteer experience. Further research using the values framework could usefully enrich our understanding of the role values play and the ways that they can be strengthened and internalised as part of a volunteering experience.

It is impossible to say at this point whether an experience of volunteering strengthens a person's values. However, the results suggest that the purposeful act of *reflecting* on a volunteer experience through a framework of values, helps people think about their values and naturalise them into parlance and expectations. There are certainly indications from this research that the value of *self-fulfilment* shifted positively, for some respondents, as a result of their volunteering experience as part of the Project. This suggests that there is potential to influence (deepen or alter) our sense of personal values through a volunteering experience. This warrants further research and careful attention to the purpose and the ethics of such an

endeavour. The results of this research suggest that a useful starting point could be to use the values framework as a reflection tool/exercise pre and post a volunteering experience. This would serve as an interesting and supportive personal development exercise. It also has potential for use in good practice volunteer management.

1.5. Report Structure

Following this introduction, Chapters Two to Five present the PESTLE findings and overall results of stakeholder consultations for each of the four countries that were involved in the Project. Chapter Six draws together the overall conclusions of the comparative analysis of the infrastructure within each country. It also sets out observations to consider for the future development of good practice volunteering and the infrastructure to support this.

Chapter Two

Report for Belgium

2.1. Introduction

This section sets out the results for Belgium. It is based on the combined analysis of the submitted reference materials, stakeholder consultations and the PESTLE analysis that was submitted by Serve the City, Brussels¹⁶.

2.2. Infrastructure to Support Volunteering in Belgium

Volunteering is important in Belgium and has a long history with links to Catholic Church initiatives and a strong scouting presence.

Various studies indicate that volunteering is a major force in Belgian society¹⁷. Voluntary work contributes to the wellbeing of Belgian society, for example by providing company to lonely people, playing sports and making sport more accessible to young people. From the perspective of the government and policymakers, volunteering contributes to active citizenship, fortifies social cohesion in society and enables solidarity between people. Volunteers can make possible what other sectors cannot, it can open channels where other sectors sometimes fail.

The Belgian partners define the volunteering infrastructure as the global context of support and supportive measures in which volunteering can take place and flourish. Two important elements of the volunteering infrastructure in Belgium are the comprehensive legal framework on different policy levels and the support component, including cross-sector and sector support centres and appropriate funding.

Belgium is complex as a country, where volunteering is concerned, as there are a number of distinctive communities, i.e. Dutch speaking, French speaking and German speaking parts. The Flemish side of the country tends to be more developed and receives the most funding and yet there is also resistance to volunteering. There is no national umbrella organisation, as such, for volunteering.

The Federal Public Service for Social Security is responsible for all regulations on the legal status of volunteers in Belgium. The Federal Public Service supports the High Council of Volunteers, which is also a federal level body.

¹⁶ Serve the City, Brussels is a global movement of volunteers showing kindness, in practical ways to people in need.

¹⁷ Study of Volunteering in the European Union, County Report for Belgium ([date]). GHK.

The High Council of Volunteers is the main public institution dealing with volunteering. It is the official body intended to support volunteering in Belgium. It was established at the end of 2002 by the Ministry of Social Affairs. This permanent advisory body was formed to advise and inform the Federal Government on issues related to volunteering and to ensure attention was paid to specific problems concerning volunteers and volunteering in different areas such as: social security, tax law, the relationship between volunteering and the labour market.

The Flemish Government supports the volunteer sector, mostly through the Flemish Ministry of Welfare and the Flemish Ministry of Culture. Both provide project funding and structural support for volunteer organisations and volunteer support centres.

In 2002, the French-speaking Platform for Volunteering was set up as a non-profit organisation. This aims to promote volunteering and represent volunteers' interests in the French-speaking part of Belgium. The Platform acts like an umbrella for French-speaking organisations involved in volunteering and works to develop policies and practices to promote and assist volunteering organisations, to facilitate communication between them and to lobby on issues that are of concern to them.

The national lottery is involved through the money given to cover costs for insurance for volunteers in small non Government organisations (NGOs). The provinces have the role of providing support for volunteers' insurance for small NGOs. Some municipalities set up Volunteer Platforms (Liege, Etterbeek), Volunteer Days to thank volunteers, or a consultative council of associations. There are foundations and cooperatives, such as the King Baudouin Foundation, that invest money in studies and research relating to volunteering.

In Flanders, every province has a Volunteer Support Centre as part of a public service, which covers the entire province. The main types of service provided by these centres are information, training and educational programs. Some of the larger cities set up volunteer support services, sometimes specifically targeted at certain groups such as persons with a disability, migrant volunteers, etc.

The majority of volunteering support bodies are non-profit associations. This status gives them more autonomy in carrying out their activities. The range of activities of supporting bodies is more or less the same. The main aim is to support volunteering, volunteers and volunteer organisations. Most of the support bodies are committed to assist organisations that are active in the same or similar field (sectoral – such as youth, environment, socio-cultural, development cooperation, elderly, welfare, etc.), or to any organisation that engages volunteers (intersectoral).

Although priorities may be different, the following services are provided by support organisations:

- Information on issues related to volunteering (law, regulations, sometimes linked to the specific sectoral situation, etc.);
- Provision of training;
- Organisation of conferences;
- Publication of research papers and reports on laws and regulations and collection of good practices;
- Promotion of volunteering (campaigns through the mass media, events, meetings and conferences are mostly mentioned).

Another feature of infrastructure that supports volunteering is volunteer compensation.

The belief is that the infrastructure for volunteering is quite well developed in Belgium. However, a number of challenges or aspect that could be improved were noted, as follows:

- Expand public opinion and vision of volunteering, the understanding of volunteering is restricted to traditional 'care-taking' activities and new forms of volunteering are not always recognized;
- Enhance the image of volunteering at different levels and with the active involvement of more stakeholders, such as media, VIOs, public institutions and volunteers themselves;
- Strengthen the structure for collaboration between volunteer centres;
- Develop a common policy agenda¹⁸;
- Strengthen quality assurance of volunteering;
- Provide an ethical code that organisations can voluntarily adhere to;
- Develop specific funding mechanisms in Belgium that promote and support volunteer initiatives and sustain volunteering structures;
- Set up a national funds targeting the volunteering sector;
- Funding for the volunteering infrastructure at national and European levels;
- Develop research relating to volunteering.

2.3. Policy Context for Volunteering in Belgium

This section sets out the main features of the policy context for volunteering in Belgium.

The political situation includes a right-wing federal government alongside more socialist local government, and this is challenging for volunteering.

¹⁸ In development currently by the Flemish Volunteer Centre.

In general, the main themes that policymakers are concerned about that relate to volunteering are the refugee situation, migrants, nationalism, populism, the growing gap between rich and poor and the economic issue of profit regarding volunteers.

The interest from policymakers towards volunteering is considered higher within the Flemish Community. The National Volunteer Centre receives an annual grant and regularly receives additional funding for projects. The Flemish Government also implements campaigns to bring volunteering into the spotlight, such as the annual Prize for Volunteering.

The Law on the Rights of the Volunteer regulates aspects such as volunteering by people with an allowance, reimbursement of expenses, liability of volunteers, insurance obligations, and information duty.

A significant driver of volunteering currently in Belgium is refugees and the influx of asylum seekers into the country. The differing views on how to respond to the influx of asylum seekers is a challenge for Belgium and volunteering within Belgium. A citizen's movement called the Platform Citoyenne was created in Brussels by several associations and many citizen volunteers coming together. The Platform organized a response, such as meals, healthcare, accommodation and psychological support at Park Maximilian and the opening of bed spaces in the WTC III building in Brussels. The Platform aims to incorporate a long-term focus to its work based on the solidarity that has been shown towards asylum seekers and the unprecedented mobilization of citizens. They plan to investigate the origins of the crisis and what changes will be necessary to ensure that it does not happen again. They are convinced that only a sustainable and inclusive solution based on the respect of everyone's human rights can be used to address the situation.

The political situation is a challenge now and will continue to be into the future. Politics is more and more directed towards nationalism and populism instead of solidarity and tolerance. This is a challenge for volunteering and volunteer management.

2.4. Economic Context for Volunteering in Belgium

The main factors that influence volunteering in Belgium are the affordability of volunteering, transport, employment rates and the financial cost of volunteering. There is a need for more Government support through funding for volunteering including tax deductions for donations. The high employment rate that currently prevails means that people have less time to volunteer. There is also a sense that there is a lack of altruism due to the gap between the rich and poorer in society. It is also estimated that the gap between the rich and poor will continue to grow, and this is likely to call for even more volunteer activity into the future.

2.5. Social/Societal Context on Volunteering in Belgium

The main social and societal factors influencing volunteering in Belgium are a noticeable polarisation of politics which is causing a growth in societal empathy towards those who are deprived and humanitarian causes, such as the refugee crisis. The issue of disenfranchised individuals is leading to some negative reaction to Government.

The corporate world is becoming more interested and active in the world of volunteering and church involvement is also growing as a catalyst for volunteering. The visibility of volunteering is growing, and this encourages others to step forward and volunteer. The downside of this is that some believe that society and services should be responding to the various needs, causes and crises, instead of volunteers.

The growth of the internet and social media is allowing information to flow and move much more freely and easily across society. This is leading to increased social awareness which in turn is leading to changes in values and norms in society. This offers opportunities for volunteering to grow and strengthen.

2.6. Technological Context for Volunteering in Belgium

The developments in relation to the ways that technology is influencing volunteering in Belgium include the growth of the internet which allows information dissemination and the social media reach affects volunteering. The development of apps is likely to enable both more volunteering and fundraising. Into the near future people may have more time on their hands to volunteer as we see the growth of robotics and applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

2.7. Legal Context for Volunteering in Belgium

In 2005 the Law on Volunteering was established. This created a clear legal framework for volunteers and voluntary organisations which came into effect in 2006.

The Law on Volunteering was set up as a protection system for volunteers. A specific decree was issued by the Flemish government concerning the protection of volunteers in the welfare sector. The decree states that organisations must insure volunteers against accidents and make provisions for third-party liability. This means a personal claim can no longer be made against a volunteer who causes damage to third parties, i.e. the third party has to make a claim against the organisation for which the volunteer operates. The volunteer can only be held personally liable in three cases: repeated minor mistakes, serious mistake, or in case of fraud or deception. Furthermore, a cost reimbursement for volunteers is not seen as an income. Volunteers can be reimbursed (within limits) for out of pocket expenses without having to pay taxes, nor social security contributions from the reimbursement.

Other legal factors that challenge volunteering include the requirement for volunteers to complete a background check before they start volunteering and it is impossible for refugees

to volunteer without the correct papers. This can lead to deportation. There is concern that government policy is anti-volunteering and, if true, that this might prompt people to work in solidarity to push for positive change in this regard. It is illegal to fundraise on the streets in Belgium. GDPR is also proving a challenge as organisations and people get to grips with the full requirements and legal implication.

2.8. Environmental Context for Volunteering in Belgium

The main points made about the environmental factors that influence volunteering in Belgium include the growing number of people becoming more aware of, and caring more about, the environment. This can have a positive effect in that people are eager to volunteer for environmental causes. Eco volunteering is growing and the corporate world is becoming more interested in and progressive towards environmental policy and eco volunteering.

The down side is that some people are deterred from volunteer travelling due to concern about their carbon footprint.

The other point of note is that global conflict is impacting negatively on the environment. There is an increasing number of refugees and there is a belief that this number will rise even more in the years to come due to the emerging issue of 'climate refugees'. Some believe that Europe is likely to receive many migrants from African countries who are lacking natural resources because of droughts and aridity caused by global warming and climate change.

2.9. Summary Conclusions

The volunteering infrastructure in Belgium is varied based on the complexity of the makeup of the country. There is a different volunteering culture in Brussels compared to the rest of Belgium. That said the infrastructure is sturdy enough, there is a strong legal framework and there is commitment to volunteering that has built up historically. The main challenges are to develop a strong and united policy agenda/strategy, strengthen public perception and attitudes to volunteering, increase funding for volunteering, conduct robust research on volunteering and to work well with the political situation and the different ideologies that prevail. Politics is more and more directed towards nationalism and populism instead of solidarity and tolerance. This is an ongoing challenge for realising values, volunteering and volunteer management in Belgium.

Chapter Three

Report for Croatia

3.1. Introduction

This section sets out the results for Croatia. It is based on the combined analysis of the stakeholder consultations and the PESTLE analysis that was submitted by the Croatian partners.

3.2. Infrastructure to Support Volunteering in Croatia

The Volunteering Infrastructure (VI), following a definition used by the regional volunteer centres in Croatia, encompasses the different systems, mechanisms and instruments needed to ensure an environment where volunteering can grow and flourish. It stimulates cross-sectoral cooperation and the engagement of different stakeholders in an attempt to promote volunteering possibilities and citizen engagement.

The following are the key elements of the volunteering infrastructure in Croatia:

- Volunteering legislation and regulatory framework;
- Government policies on volunteering;
- Organisers of volunteering activities, organisations and networks at national, regional and local levels and local, regional and national institutions;
- Volunteering centres and the Croatian Volunteer Development Centre (CVDC);
- Volunteering opportunities and brokering mechanisms between potential volunteers; and volunteering opportunities, including on line placement databases;
- Volunteering promotion and a raising public awareness of the value of volunteering;
- Funding to ensure sustainability of volunteering programmes;
- Academic and CSO research projects.

The role of the volunteering infrastructure is to create an enabling environment (political, social and economic) in order to support, increase and develop volunteerism in the country. Although Croatia has greatly developed its volunteering infrastructure throughout the last couple of years, relevant elements of volunteering infrastructure are still missing: (I) cross-sectoral cooperation between stakeholders, in particular the involvement of businesses and universities, (II) recognition of volunteering, (III) longitudinal (academic) research projects acting as an empirical support tool for further infrastructure development.

There is a body of experience and expertise within the infrastructure in Croatia. This has been built up over many years and supports volunteering and yet the turbulent political situation is not seen as conducive to dynamic policy development and support for volunteering. Funding has been reduced in recent times and the procurement system of evaluating project proposals is changing and becoming more competitive. There are some feelings that there is less caring for, and about, civil society. Many of the smaller organisations are struggling to survive. Some of these organisations lack the capacity to apply for funding. Sometimes they employ external consultants to help them with applications and then flounder, when on their own to implement if/when funding successfully secured.

The institutional framework for the development of volunteering in Croatia is composed of the public sector, civil society sector and mixed bodies and organisations responsible for facilitating and monitoring the implementation of rules, measures and standards.

The Croatian model of volunteer development prides itself with a systematic take on decentralising policymaking and policy implementation and relies heavily on civil society organisations.

The Croatian Volunteer Development Centre¹⁹ (CVDC) was established in December 2008 by the four Regional Volunteer Centres from Osijek, Rijeka, Split and Zagreb, first as a non-formal platform, and since 2015 established as a formal national organisation for development of volunteering in Croatia. It works in four main ways:

- by influencing public policies and public attitudes to make volunteering available, inclusive, recognized and valued;
- providing professional support for the efficient and quality development and work of volunteer centres and mechanisms for quality assurance;
- linking the national and international levels for the creation and implementation of best practices with nurturing and releasing potential;
- networking and cooperation of regional and local volunteer centres.

The CVDC has a close partnership with all of the stakeholders crucial for volunteer development in Croatia and acts as one of the pioneers for the advancement of volunteering.

There are four Regional Volunteer Centres (as referenced above) and approximately thirty Local Volunteer Centres that are active across Croatia. These are civil society organisations who are specialised in volunteer development and are acting as social centres mediating between the supply and demand for volunteers at regional and local level. Each holds a volunteer database with citizens and non-profit organisations listing their interests.

The Volunteer Centres work on the following:

- matching volunteer needs and interests;
- enhancing the quality of volunteer programmes through education and counselling, and the promotion of volunteering and its values;
- rewarding volunteers and volunteer organisers; and
- increasing their visibility in their communities.

¹⁹ CVDC webpage: <http://www.hcrv.hr/>

The Regional Volunteer Centres²⁰ act as mentors and resource centres for the local Volunteer Centres.

VIOs are the basic building blocks of the volunteering infrastructure. There has been a new trend in recent years whereby the number of people active in non-formal citizens' initiatives (such as Initiative Welcome!²¹ and Are You Sirius²² which were formed when the Balkan refugee route was opened) is rising. However, the vast majority of volunteer posts are still provided by formal, registered non-profit organisations and public institutions throughout Croatia.

Public sector stakeholders are comprised of a few bodies which divide between themselves the task of advancing policy measures, financial support and overall volunteer development.

The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy²³ is the government body with responsibility for monitoring and facilitating volunteer development in Croatia, according to the Law on Volunteerism since 2007. It coordinated the creation of all binding legal documents regulating volunteering and since 2008. A goal for the future would be to strengthen the human resources working on volunteering at a policy level and to introduce volunteering policy horizontally across all government departments.

The National Board for Volunteer Development is an advisory body for the Croatian Government composed of 19 experts from both national and local government bodies as well as civil society organisations and academia.²⁴ Its mandate is regulated by the Law on Volunteerism. It proposes and implements measures and activities with the purpose of promoting and further developing volunteerism through measures for the advancement of volunteers' status in society; regulations on volunteer privileges; deciding on the winners of the National Volunteer Award; initiating new regulations or changes to existing ones concerning volunteerism; electing the Ethics Committee in charge of the Ethical Code of Volunteering.

The Government of Croatia Office for Cooperation with NGOs²⁵ and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development²⁶ have contributed to the creation of a series of policy measures

²⁰ Regional Centres webpages:

Osijek: <http://vcos.hr/english>

Rijeka: <http://www.volonterski-centar-ri.org/>

Split: <https://www.udruga-mi.hr/english>

Zagreb: <http://www.vcz.hr/english-info/>

²¹ Welcome! webpage: <http://welcome.cms.hr/index.php/en/>

²² Are you Sirius? Facebook page: <https://web.facebook.com/pg/areyousirious/about/>

²³ Ministry webpage: www.mspm.hr

²⁴ <http://kansalaisareena.fi/Volunteering-infrastructure-in-Europe.pdf>

²⁵ Office webpage: <https://udruga.gov.hr/en>

²⁶ Foundation webpage: <https://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/en/foundation>

which have supported volunteering. This has linked volunteering more closely to various social fields such as social policy, health, youth and education. Both of them participate in the work of the National Board for Volunteer Development. One of most notable contributions of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs was leading the process of standardisation of documentation for tenders published by local, regional and national authorities. While contributing to the quality of the documentation used it also strongly advocated for giving additional points in the evaluation procedure to the NGOs which multiply financial resources through engaging volunteers.

Both are bodies accredited for publishing calls and contracting projects funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in the years before the Croatian accession to the EU. The National Foundation supports the Croatian Volunteer Development Centre through its institutional grant. The Office for Cooperation with NGOs has in turn played a significant role in programming tenders in the scope of ESF to enable the allocation of a significant amount of resources towards the development of quality volunteer programmes and education of volunteer coordinators.

There is work ongoing in relation to quality in volunteering, including an on-line platform for volunteering which will better connect volunteers with VIOs and businesses. This will also grant higher visibility to volunteering.

Connecting volunteering with EU values is deemed important in the world of volunteering and particularly the organisations interested in and responsible for the development of volunteering. The values within the Ten Value Framework are in line with the Code of Ethics for Volunteering that have been applied since 2007. There is a belief that the values and their connection with volunteering is of less interest to the current government. Croatian society is polarised and so the values seem only of interest and relevance to those who align with them.

Volunteering is generally considered important and valuable for education. The depth of experience of this *civic* education is somewhat dependent on the person and/or their political preferences. The view is that the humanitarian aspect of volunteering is generally accepted and valued. Civic engagement is less popular and active citizenship as a value is not widely accepted.

Originally resources were allocated to create a special department dedicated to volunteering in the Ministry of Family, Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity. This was later merged with a number of other domains and since 2014 the development of volunteerism has had a very low profile. However, the Ministry still provides resources for the work of the National Board for Volunteer Development, the online system for the annual volunteer organizers reports, the ceremony of the annual State Volunteering Award as well as certain ad hoc

initiatives and the production of materials relating to volunteering.

Furthermore, since 2008 the Ministry regularly publishes calls for local and regional volunteer centers, covering the basic infrastructural costs of volunteer centres so that they are available for citizens to access. Since 2013 there was one-year based support for the local volunteer centers (total budget around 280,000 EUR) and also a three-year based support for the Regional Volunteer Centers (total budget around 130,000 EUR) which is unfortunately changing in 2018 to one-year support and significantly less financial support.

These financial resources have been included in the yearly national budget, approved by the Croatian Parliament and Government and announced in The Official Gazette. These financial resources do not fully cover all the volunteering activities within the country but allow for proper implementation of basic activities as defined by the Law on Volunteering.

3.3. Policy Context for Volunteering in Croatia

The Law on Volunteering (The Official Gazette NN 58/07) was adopted by the Croatian Parliament on May 18th, 2007. The amendments on the Law on Volunteering were adopted (The Official Gazette NN 22/13) by the Croatian Parliament on February 8th, 2013.

The Law on Volunteering provides the following definition of volunteering: “volunteering is an investment in personal time, effort, knowledge and skills out of free will to carry out services and activities for the well-being of another person or the wider public, and are executed by the persons without existence of any conditions of a financial reward or any other material benefit for the work done”²⁷.

The Law on Volunteering contains: a definition of volunteering, principles and conditions for volunteering, the rights and obligations of volunteers and VIOs, the conditions for conclusion of volunteering contracts, the adoption of the Code of Ethics for volunteers, the issuing of the volunteering certificate, national volunteer award as well as means for supervising the implementation of this Law.

The Law on Volunteering has encouraged other organisations (particularly social care institutions) to open their doors to volunteers. Furthermore, there are also individual cases of local, regional, and national public bodies involving volunteers.

Along with the Law on Volunteering, there are other regulations of volunteering, which together form the national policy on volunteerism development:

²⁷ Article 3, p.1.

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- National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012- 2016 and its Operational Implementation Plan.
- National Program for Volunteerism Development 2016-2019. This is in the process of adoption and provides guidelines/priorities for the future development of volunteerism in Croatia.
- National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2017 – 2021 is currently being developed. CVDC is involved in the process.
- Volunteer Code of Ethics (The Official Gazette No. 55/08) prescribes rules of conduct for volunteers, VIOs and beneficiaries in accordance with the principles of volunteering from the Law on Volunteering.
- Certificate of competences gained through volunteering is an official instrument for recognition and validation of competences gained through volunteering prepared and published by the Ministry responsible for volunteering in cooperation with the National Board for Volunteerism Development.
- Regulation on the content and form of the Report from Volunteer Involving Organisations (The Official Gazette No. 106/07, 121/07, 101/08, 104/15) on accomplished services and activities for VIOs, the period and deadline for delivering the reports as well as other related issues.
- The Regulation on the National Volunteer Award (The Official Gazette No. 106/07) regulates the procedure, how to publish the call of proposals, selection criteria, amount of the prize, the awarding of medals and certificates.
- The National Youth Programme

The political situation in Croatia is turbulent and this is having a negative impact on volunteering, the development of the infrastructure and related policy. There is little political interest in volunteering and thus it is tending to be on the margins. Funding for volunteering has been reduced in recent years and is offered within a shorter time frame. This all weakens the infrastructure and jeopardises long term planning and policy development in relation to volunteering.

In 2015, during the European refugee crisis, Croatia showed a very positive example of humanitarianism when accepting a large number of refugees. Since then the policy of open borders has changed and the number of cases of discrimination at the Croatian borders is increasing. There is more limited volunteer engagement in helping refugees and migrants.

Research is important to inform the development of volunteering and the infrastructure. The signs are that more research is on the way with recent calls for applications through EU funding.

3.4. Economic Context for Volunteering in Croatia

The main factors that influence volunteering in Croatia include the labour market (i.e. whether employment levels are up or down) and the ways in which volunteering is viewed and valued.

Stable economic conditions are considered conducive to volunteering, whereby people can gain experience through volunteering that may prepare a person for work, etc. However, in a buoyant labour market volunteering can decrease as people are more attracted to paid work opportunities.

There is no statistical data yet to show the economic value of volunteering. There is keen interest in developing mechanisms and tools to collect data on volunteerism, valuing volunteering and impact assessment. Research is imminent in this regard with partnering projects involving civil society organisations and universities.

The involvement of businesses in volunteering is developing. The corporate world is beginning to recognise the benefits of social responsibility programmes for competitiveness. Regional Volunteer Centres inform businesses on volunteering-related issues through several promotional activities. The aim is to show how any investment in community may have a positive return for the company, and also build a bridge between a business and the local community. Additional investments have been made by Regional Volunteer Centres for the validation and valuing of volunteering experiences by employers. In 2015, 23 different employers signed the Charter for Recognition of Competences gained through volunteering. This is an expression of readiness for the introduction and promotion of good practice in recognition of competencies acquired through volunteering at the workplace and/or educational environment.

3.5. Social/Societal Context for Volunteering in Croatia

The main social and societal factors influencing volunteering in Croatia are the *perception* of volunteering within civil society, how it is valued and how volunteering can and does respond to humanitarian crises and more general societal issues. Civil society is becoming more aware of and interested in volunteering.

Volunteering first appeared as part of humanitarian relief efforts in the newly formed Republic of Croatia. This was largely an anti-war response formulated through the Anti-War Campaign of Croatia, and followed with many other civil society organizations devoted to human rights protection, peace building, democratisation, social services, etc. Most of them were created through the volunteering efforts of their supporters. These efforts were mostly

spontaneous and motivated by the lived experiences of citizens, with very little or no intervention on behalf of the government. Before the elections in 2000 the very existence of the liberal wing of the civil society was seen as a foreign intervention inconsistent with the predominant national values.²⁸

Since then, a strong positive trend has emerged relating to the way in which Croatian society values volunteering. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine with any level of precision which factors contributed to this change due to a lack of robust, nation-wide scientific research. However, consulting empirical evidence gathered by volunteer centres working directly in the field as well as through data gathered by other relevant stakeholders, it is possible to estimate the main, obvious benefits of having a legal, institutional and financial framework for volunteering in place. This also provided a platform for shifting public opinion towards a more positive outlook when it came to valuing people engaged in volunteering and their efforts. Activities such as marking the International Volunteer Day and creating volunteering festivals (such as Croatia Volunteers) and recognition events at a local, regional and national level (such as the State Volunteering Award), help to bring volunteers and their stories to the reach of mainstream media.

The concept and perception of volunteering is shifting from the pure “doing good” to being seen as an activity of mutual benefit through which volunteers can gain valuable knowledge, skills and competences as well as a real, firm social network facilitating their professional and personal development.

The concept of volunteering in Croatia is becoming associated with values based, civil society related actions and less related to the labour market.

There has been a shift in the last ten years in that public institutions now accept volunteers and invest in the professional development of those employees who work with volunteers. This change has been positive and has initiated a wave of school volunteer programmes. This is good as civic engagement in schools had been rare. The shift in attitude and practice within public bodies has also clarified mutual rights and obligations of volunteers and volunteer organisers, in particular the financial aspect of that relationship. There is now reimbursement of incurred costs to volunteers and this means the relationship is fairer and more open to volunteers from all social backgrounds.

Civil society is interested in, and participates in, volunteering and yet there is room for development and strengthening.

²⁸ Discussion Paper for the *Development of Volunteerism* Conference (2017), Prishtina.

In the past decade several pieces of research in the field of volunteering have been conducted, which, generally, indicate a positive attitude and interest amongst respondents for volunteering. However, empirical insight into volunteering is difficult because the research is carried out on convenient samples and there is a lack of comparative research across time. A further problem is also the different definitions and the different understandings of volunteering that exist amongst citizens.

Research results show that in Croatian society, volunteering has not generally accepted as a social value, and further research into this is necessary. The lack of research linking the tendency of individuals to volunteer with their characteristics (gender, age, level of education, field of education, religion, financial status, etc.) prevents a clear picture of the profile of volunteers being established.

The individual efforts of civil society organizations on the one hand, and universities and international donor agencies on the other side, to launch and conduct research projects has certainly made a valuable contribution to the advancement of volunteerism. However, the results of systematic and coordinated research should be the basis of public policy, in order to promote change and take measures in the development of volunteering in Croatia.

A research study Youth in times of Crisis²⁹ analysed, among other things, voluntary youth activities in the community to provide insight into the structural dimension of their social capital. The results show that about 13% of young people had the experience of volunteering during the previous 12 months. Over one third (36%) of adult volunteers in Croatia highlighted altruistic motivations and a sense of commitment to helping others as their primary reason for volunteering. Around a fifth expressed a general desire for social engagement, and around a tenth had a specific reason for volunteering, for example it provided a solution to a problem. Less than 10% of young volunteers did so because it was a family tradition. Around 5% of the volunteers attributed volunteering to religious beliefs, and about 2% noted a pragmatic reason such as an opportunity to meet future employers. Socio-political beliefs were a motivation for less than 1% of the participants.

The individual efforts of civil society organizations on the one hand, and universities and international donor agencies on the other side, to launch and conduct research projects make a valuable contribution to the advancement of volunteerism. It is also important that the results of systematic and coordinated research form the basis of public policy and the development of volunteering in Croatia.

3.6. Technological Context for Volunteering in Croatia

²⁹ Ilišin, V., Bouillet, D., Gvozdanović, A., Potocnik, D.; *Mladi u vremenu krize*; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Zagreb, 2013: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kroatien/12580.pdf>

The developments in relation to the ways that technology is influencing volunteering in Croatia include the enhancement in IT literacy coupled with wider access to the internet. These factors have positively influenced the development of volunteering through increased visibility of Volunteer Centres and the dissemination of information about volunteering opportunities via an online volunteer database.

Croatia is keen to begin conducting (longitudinal) research projects on volunteerism, so as to gain relevant empirical data.³⁰

3.7. Legal Context for Volunteering in Croatia

The Law on Volunteering made volunteering regulation part of the Civil Society and Philanthropy regulatory schemes rather than it being placed under the Croatian Labour Law system. However, it is interesting to note that the first time volunteering entered a regulatory act in Croatia it was done so under Labour Law. Until 2009, this law contained the notion of “voluntary work” which presented the unpaid activity undertaken by young professionals who needed work experience to pass the state or professional exam. Little of it was truly voluntary.

The legal framework for the development of volunteering is contained within several legal texts enacted by the Croatian Parliament or the Government of Croatia between 2007 and 2015. These include:

- Law on Volunteerism, Official Gazette No. 58/2007 and 22/2013;
- Ethical Code on Volunteering, Official Gazette No. 55/2008;
- By-law on the State Volunteering Award, Official Gazette No. 106/2007;
- By-law on the Content of the Reports on the Volunteer Activities and Services Conducted, Official Gazette No. 104/2015.

In addition to these legally binding documents, a number of ‘soft’ law and policy documents have provided an invaluable contribution to volunteer development in Croatia. These include strategic documents contributing to civil society development at various levels of government and concrete tools facilitating the work of volunteer organisers. These were created by official government bodies as well as prominent civil society organisations dedicated to volunteer development. There are several articles proclaiming volunteering an activity in the interest of the Republic of Croatia and that children and young people should learn the values relating to volunteerism through the educational system.

3.8. Summary Conclusions

³⁰ *Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe*, European Volunteer Centre: <http://kansalaisareena.fi/Volunteering-infrastructure-in-Europe.pdf>

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Volunteering is considered somewhat on the margins due to the current turbulent political context in Croatia. Funding arrangements have changed with a reduction in the amount of funding for volunteer centres and shortening of the funding time frame, e.g. from three years to one year. Key organisations within the infrastructure are operating on a low profile and waiting hopefully for a change in the political climate.

At present, there is uncertainty in Croatia regarding the volunteering infrastructure and policy development. The future of the volunteering infrastructure seems dependent on the government in power and the prevailing ideology. There is a National Strategy for Volunteering in the final stages of preparation and awaiting approval by government. This requires political will and impetus to drive this forward to implementation.

Chapter Four Report for Ireland

4.1. Introduction

This section sets out the results for Ireland. It is based on the combined analysis of the stakeholder consultations and the PESTLE analysis that was conducted through a facilitated workshop, with representatives from VIOs, on 5th November 2018 in the Mansion House, Dublin.

4.2. Infrastructure to Support Volunteering in Ireland

Volunteering is strong in Ireland and there is a long history of community involvement and communities supporting each other in both urban and rural settings. Ireland is ahead of other countries in terms of participation in volunteering according to the World Giving Index 2018. In 2018, Ireland was the number one country in Europe in terms of volunteering time and number seven in the world³¹. Volunteering is becoming more and more visible and there is a keener interest in tracking and researching the power and impact of volunteering on communities, wellbeing and participation.

The lead government department for volunteering in Ireland is the Department of Rural and Community Development. The Department's Statement of Strategy 2017-20 declares under Goal Four - Support the Community, Voluntary and Charity Sectors that it will expand and support the role of volunteers in civil society. The first action under this goal is to develop a national strategy on volunteering in Ireland. The second is to continue to support Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Information Centres.

The Department funds I-VOL, the national volunteering database which is managed by Volunteer Ireland. This is an important aspect of the volunteering infrastructure in Ireland. The Census and national quarterly household surveys provide some data about volunteering patterns and yet there is scope to develop and use this data more productively.

Volunteer Ireland (VI) is the national development organisation for volunteering in Ireland and the centre point of the infrastructure. VI is mainly funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and is the voice for volunteering and the national support and development organisation for Volunteer Centres and Volunteering Information Services³² in Ireland. Their vision for Ireland is an Ireland where everyone who wants to volunteer can volunteer to create a better society³³.

³¹ World Giving Index. Charities Aid Foundation 2018

³² The Volunteering Information Services are transforming into Volunteer Centres so as to ensure coverage in every county in Ireland.

³³ 'Connecting Communities through Volunteering' Strategic Plan 2018-2022, Volunteer Ireland:

According to the VI Strategic Plan (2018-22) one of VI's objectives is to support the volunteering infrastructure in Ireland to maximise its positive impact on volunteering (p.11). This is being achieved through actions such as training, leading out on best practice, supporting the Volunteer Centres, working in collaboration to pilot innovative projects and initiatives to raise awareness, enhance best practice and support good volunteer management.

Volunteer Ireland supports and conducts research into volunteering and recent research shows volunteering is an enriching experience and brings feelings of wellbeing to those who volunteer³⁴. These benefits include social inclusion, cohesion, personal empowerment and transformation, lifelong learning and improved employability. Volunteering also benefits the organisations who involve volunteers in their work, 60% of whom say they could not survive without volunteers. This research and other research into the future validates the power of volunteering and positions it in a number of policy areas including health, community and social inclusion (VI, 2017).

According to the VI Strategic Plan (2018-22) the organisation holds four high level values that weave through their work and commitment to volunteering. These values are *inclusion, respect, integrity and courage*. They differ slightly and yet align, in spirit, with the Ten Value Framework for the Project.

Volunteer Centres and Volunteering Information Services are vital to volunteering in Ireland. There is a Volunteer Centre in each county in Ireland and they work on the ground providing a placement service between individuals and groups who want to volunteer and organisations that are seeking to involve volunteers.

The White Paper Supporting Voluntary Activity (2000)³⁵ defined volunteering as 'the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person's own free will, without payment (except for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses)'.

4.3. Policy Context for Volunteering in Ireland

The results of the PESTLE analysis showed that there were mixed views and familiarity with the current policy context in Ireland, as it relates to and informs volunteering. There was a sense that the policy context is in need of strengthening and that this is imminent. This is fuelled by expectations of a national volunteering strategy for Ireland that is currently being

³⁴ The Impact of Volunteering on Health and Wellbeing of the Volunteer (2017), Volunteer Ireland.

³⁵ The White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity in Ireland (2000). Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

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developed, driven by the Community and Voluntary Supports and Programmes section of the Department of Rural and Community Development. There was a general call for submissions to inform this strategy in December 2018. A National Advisory Group was convened to steer the completion of the strategy. This strategy is deemed an important step forward to give structure, clarity and context to volunteering in Ireland. It is expected that it will provide a high-level vision for volunteering in Ireland and invite cross-departmental recognition and commitment.

Volunteer Ireland and the network of Volunteer Centres and Volunteering Information Services have been advocating for a national volunteering strategy for many years and the call for submissions is the first step in this process. Volunteering in Ireland faces many challenges, such as changing demands from volunteers, demographic changes and lack of resourcing. A national strategy is the chance for people who live and breathe volunteering every day to influence the development of volunteering in Ireland.

There are high expectations of the national volunteering strategy that is being developed. It is believed that this strategy will confirm government support for volunteering, it will affirm volunteering and strengthen the infrastructure, including funding. It is likely to be later in 2019 when this strategy is finalised.

The role of Volunteer Ireland was noted as shaping and informing volunteering in Ireland through its presence, information, guidance, training, volunteer quality standards, research, etc. VIOs also have their own in-house policies and guidelines that influence the way that they work with regards to volunteering.

The main policies and guiding documents currently informing and relevant to volunteering in Ireland are:

- The White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity in Ireland;
- Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, September 2000;
- Tipping the Balance - Report of the National Committee on Volunteering 2002;
- Active Citizenship (2007) - Report from the Task Force and Action Plan;
- Volunteer Ireland (VI) Strategic Plan 2018-2022, 'Connecting Communities Through Volunteering';
- Department of Rural and Community Development - Statement of Strategy 2017-20;
- Befriending networks standard;
- Investing in Volunteers – Best Practice;
- Garda Vetting Act 2016;
- Children First 2015;
- Governance Code (launched by the Charities Regulator in November 2018);

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR);
- Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP);
- Each VIOs own polices/guidelines, e.g. finance, fundraising, recruitment and selecting of volunteers, etc.

The strength of current arrangements is that there is freedom to self-organise and organisations can develop their own systems and policies mindful of the requirements of regulations such as GDPR and SORP. That said, the results of the PESTLE analysis and consultations suggest that better shared understanding of relevant policies, supports and standards is necessary to ensure that all are fully informed and working to best practice volunteering. One example is where people stand in relation to social welfare payments and volunteering, i.e. can they continue to receive benefits if they are volunteering whilst seeking work? It seems that there is variation across local offices of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DESP) in how this is managed. There is a need for clarity and consistency on policies and procedures otherwise mixed messages are being given to those in receipt of social welfare benefits who also wish to volunteer.

There has been a growth in interest in evidence informed actions which has led to an intensification of the requirements for more precision **measurement of the impact** of volunteering.

4.4. Economic Context for Volunteering in Ireland

There are a number of economic factors that influence volunteering in Ireland. The main factors are the buoyancy in the Irish economy (at the time of this research) and the pros and cons of this, as well as funding and resources.

4.4.1. Employment Rates and Trends

The general view is that fluctuations in employment rates and trends affect volunteering. The economy in Ireland is showing a return to full employment after years of recession. This is affecting the availability of staff and volunteers as there is full employment and people have less time to volunteer. There is an increase in career changing, transitions and staff turnover in many organisations and people are less available to volunteer. There were some instances cited where volunteers are being asked to fill in roles that are actually paid roles.

Full employment is also affecting programmes such as TUS and Community Employment (CE)³⁶. There is a noticeable reduction in the number of retired people presenting to volunteer. This is attributable, to some extent, to the fact that grandparents are choosing to

³⁶ TUS and CE are government funded schemes to support people to move from unemployment to employment.

spend their spare time looking after their grandchildren. This is a more affordable form of child care for some working parents and this is also a societal factor.

Other factors affecting the number of and availability of volunteers include Ireland's ageing population and people who have come to Ireland and are yet unable to work as they do not have the necessary visa or work permit. Volunteering is viewed as a stepping stone towards employment and a good way to spend time in lieu of or whilst waiting for work and/or a work visa.

4.4.2. Funding and Resources

The view is that the financial resources to support volunteering are currently not enough or as stable as they could be to truly support volunteering in Ireland. This is due to a number of factors as outlined below.

Funding for organisations in general is considered tight, and this seems most apparent in health care and disability services. That said there are signs of some increase in funding in recent times, e.g. awards and small grants available to fund projects.

Funders are requiring more documentation and data from organisations in receipt of funding. Funding is not always available for volunteer departments/ programmes. There is a belief that funding drives trends, e.g. themes can change based on new policy or funding priorities e.g. addiction services shifting to focusing on mental health.

There are some signs of competition, between organisations, for funding and the application processes for funding tend to be onerous, in terms of administration skills and time. This is particularly true for smaller organisations. There is a concern that there could be increased reliance on volunteers to lead services as funding gets tighter and/or there are less people to fulfil the roles.

The poor public perception of charities, in recent years, means that there has been a drop-in donations and this has had a negative impact on resources. This negative perception also impacts negatively on the willingness of people to step forward and volunteer in the charity sector.

There is an increase in the interest in corporate volunteering whereby organisations are volunteering rather than donating money to charities/organisations.

4.5. Social/Societal Context for Volunteering in Ireland

The main social and societal factors that influence volunteering in Ireland are listed below:

- Irish **culture** which is considered to be community oriented by nature and there is a view held that Irish people are good at volunteering and that as a society, Ireland has a lot of volunteers, although notably fewer males than females;
- **Time** has an impact on volunteering and there is a view that people were more motivated to volunteer during down turns in the economy when they had more free time. During times of economic stability and growth people are busy working and seem to have less time to volunteer;
- The **Media** has an impact on volunteering and the way that the public understand volunteering. There is a sense that volunteering is being increasingly portrayed as a good thing to do and that it has a positive effect on wellbeing;
- **Large corporations** are becoming more interested in volunteering and view it as something that provides a feel good factor (a physiological factor that is becoming more known and appreciated) and has a positive impact on wellbeing;
- The **Charities regulator** which has been a positive development for volunteering in Ireland;
- **Volunteering is becoming more understood** and people view it as a good thing to do and to have on your CV in terms of career progression;
- With the rise in wealth in Ireland there is a bigger **gap** between those who are experiencing poverty and those who are wealthy. This has an impact on volunteering and the issues that attract people to volunteer, e.g. homelessness, consent, women's issues, migrant rights, etc.

Volunteering is seen to have an influence on Irish society, particularly as more people are becoming active and speaking out, and responding to, societal issues and challenges. Many people want to help by volunteering their time to support causes that they connect with and are close to their hearts. There is a growing trend towards being less self-focused and to give to the world in which we live. People are seeking experiences, and young people in particular are looking for experiences that will enable them to contribute to society and also contribute to their own growth and development as citizens. It is a reciprocal arrangement.

There was a consensus, from the consultations for this research, that values play a part in prompting people to volunteer and also in shaping the way volunteering is viewed and managed. On a positive note there are many strong and worthy values that underpin volunteering in Ireland, including commitment, sharing, giving back, contributing to society and wishing to make a difference. Some concerns were also voiced about the way volunteering can be used negatively, such as instances where it is seen as doing work for free or work that should more rightly be funded by government. There are challenges in this regard and this is where good information, communication, standards and funding play their part.

There was some sense that there are differences between volunteering in rural settings and urban settings. Sometimes volunteering occurs in very informal ways and whilst this is good, it means that there is a mystery or invisible aspect to this type of volunteering. It was also noted that volunteering is evolving all the time and that values will change as society changes. It was deemed important to hold onto the core values of volunteering.

It is anticipated that there will be changes and challenges in the way people want to volunteer - it is always evolving. Ireland depends on volunteers and they are needed to sustain the levels of voluntary activity. It is important to recognise this and the challenges it presents to those organisations that rely on the contribution of volunteers.

4.6. Technological Context for Volunteering in Ireland

The positive developments in relation to the ways that technology is influencing volunteering in Ireland are:

- Mobile phones and Social Media connections are opening-up communication;
- More options for online advertising/marketing of volunteering and volunteer roles;
- Electronically supported management;
- Garda vetting online – much easier and quicker to manage;
- Assisted technology for people with disabilities;
- Micro volunteering opportunities (online/one-off volunteering).

The ways that technology is challenging volunteering are:

- Fast pace of changes and therefore continued need for training;
- Cost of training and technology;
- Instant response is expected from volunteers;
- Apps – expectations from funders to track & measure the impact of volunteering;
- Expectation that technology works around Ireland – challenges with internet/broadband connection in rural Ireland (i.e. people have no access);
- Uneven and unequal access to, and use of, the internet, smart phones, etc. There is still a proportion of the population who either do not have access to, or who do not want access to, the internet, mobile phones, etc.

4.7. Legal Context for Volunteering in Ireland

There is no formal legal context or framework in Ireland that is specific to volunteering. This is deemed a good thing in the main as it offers freedom for the sector to evolve organically. There are, however, regulations and requirements that have legal and compliance aspects that are relevant to good practice volunteering and volunteer management. The two most

noted during discussions relate to data protection, i.e. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and insurance policies.

4.8. Environmental Context for Volunteering in Ireland

The main environmental factors that influence volunteering in Ireland are:

- Weather changes – availability of people in times of serious weather conditions;
- Snow – more people willing to help in crisis situations;
- Public transport issues, particularly in remote parts of rural Ireland;
- Electronic vehicles/mileage and the need to adapt to vehicular and environmental changes over time.

There is a sense that Ireland has some work to do to respond to the environmental needs and challenges that are becoming more and more a reality.

4.9. Summary Conclusions

Volunteering is strong in Ireland and has historical roots in the community. In the past, volunteering has tended to be relatively invisible and informal in nature, and yet in recent years the infrastructure to support volunteering has become stronger and more structured. This follows a period of recession when funding and support was limited. The work of Volunteer Ireland in collaboration with the 26 Volunteers Centres is pacing along in relation to training, quality standards, research and IT. The policy context for Ireland is strengthening as evidenced through the commencement in 2018 of the development of a National Volunteering Strategy for Ireland. The signs are that volunteering is growing and evolving, particularly informal volunteering and corporate volunteering. There is a need for more resources to ensure a full capacity infrastructure that is ready to respond to the needs arising.

Chapter Five

Report for Scotland

5.1. Introduction

This section sets out the results for Scotland. It is based on the combined analysis of the submitted reference materials, stakeholder consultations and the PESTLE analysis that was submitted by Volunteer Scotland³⁷.

5.2. Infrastructure to Support Volunteering in Scotland

Volunteering is recognised as vitally important to Scotland, not only for the benefits it confers to beneficiaries, but also to communities and the volunteers themselves.

The supporting infrastructure for volunteering has been developed and strengthened in recent years. In particular, the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2018-19 has become more explicit and positions volunteering as an important part of Scottish society. Volunteering has been written into various sections and strategies of the Programme for Government, for example its commitment to developing a creative, open and connected society.

The Scottish Government has a designated governmental post overseeing volunteering in Scotland (the Head of Charity Law and Volunteering) and supports the volunteering sector through the following ways:

- Providing direct funding to national (Volunteer Scotland) and local (Third Sector Interfaces³⁸) intermediaries to support the national and local infrastructure;
- Impact Funding Partners (on behalf of the Scottish Government) deliver the Volunteering Support Fund (VSF) to local community grass-roots organisations to support and promote volunteering amongst a variety of groups, with a focus on engaging volunteers from disadvantaged groups. A total of £3.8m over a four-year period (2017-18 onwards) was allocated to the VSF in 2017;
- Young Scot are funded by the Scottish Government to work collaboratively with a range of organisations, such as Police Scotland, sportscotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Creative Scotland and YouthLink Scotland to create and promote volunteering opportunities for young people.
- The Saltire Awards are the Scottish Government's youth volunteering award for 12-25 year olds. The awards aim to strengthen the links between volunteering and schools and to increase opportunities for young people to volunteer locally.

³⁷ Previously known as Volunteer Development Scotland Ltd

³⁸ Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs): <https://www.gov.scot/policies/third-sector/third-sector-interfaces/>

As the national centre for volunteering in Scotland, Volunteer Scotland plays a central role in the country's volunteering infrastructure to:

- research, demonstrate and measure the impact made by volunteers;
- develop skills through training and useful volunteer development tools, policies and guides;
- oversee the Investing in Volunteers (IiV) quality standard in Scotland;
- offer a one-stop digital gateway to anyone looking for volunteer opportunities;
- support organisations to advertise volunteer opportunities and events online;
- provide an expert disclosure service (criminal records check) for voluntary organisations;
- promote and grow volunteering through partners, funders, Government and policymakers;
- work with others to support projects, innovation and creativity in volunteering.

Volunteer Scotland leads the national discussion on how to develop and promote volunteering in Scotland and works in partnership with other bodies such as the Scottish Volunteering Forum (SVF), the Cross-Party Group on Volunteering and other national campaigns such as Volunteers Week, #iwill campaign and many others. The Scottish Volunteering Forum is a large network of national organisations striving to develop growth in volunteering through various consultations and campaigns. The Cross-Party Group on Volunteering is a cross party (political) group with over 100 members ensuring volunteering is at the forefront of policymakers' agendas.

5.3. Policy Context for Volunteering in Scotland

Volunteering plays a role in many policy areas in Scotland, with some more explicit and recognised than others. For example, the growing social problem of loneliness and isolation, health and wellbeing, skills development and employability, the preservation of the historic and natural environmental and the development of cultural and creative policy.

The Scottish Government's (2018) newly reviewed National Performance Framework³⁹ (NPF) has the overall purpose of building opportunities for all through increased wellbeing and sustainable and inclusive economic growth, led by values such as kindness, dignity, compassion and transparency. The third sector in Scotland has a role in supporting the 11 National Outcomes, which include: 'we live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe'; 'we are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society'; 'we tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally'; and 'we are healthy and active'. The National Outcome focusing on inclusive communities specifically mentions volunteering within its vision:

³⁹ The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

“We live in friendly, vibrant and cohesive communities which value diversity and support those in need. We are encouraged to volunteer, take responsibility for our community and engage with decisions about it. Our communities are resilient, safe and have low levels of crime” (Scottish Government, 2018).

The Scottish Government recognises the numerous contributions that volunteers make, as carers, providers, mentors, leaders and in many other roles. Scottish Ministers have been clear that they want to continue to support people to volunteer and contribute to the issues that matter to them. They have also been clear that this is crucial to the wider aim of creating a fairer, smart, inclusive Scotland with genuine equality of opportunity for everyone. Volunteering in Scotland is already making a crucial contribution to key strategic priorities including Community Empowerment⁴⁰ and Public Service Reform⁴¹, through building social capital, fostering trust, binding people together and making our communities better places to live and to work.

The Scottish Government’s ‘A Nation with Ambition: The Government’s Programme for Scotland 2017-18’⁴², stated the following commitments:

“We will be bold in realising our vision for volunteering and the role volunteers can play in shaping the lives of their communities. Volunteering is transformational: for the volunteer, for the beneficiary and for communities.

We will do more to support groups currently facing barriers to engaging in their communities, including disabled people, older people and people out of work.

Building on positive trends for youth volunteering, we will work with young people throughout the Year of Young People 2018 to better understand opportunities and motivations and ensure young people can contribute on issues that matter to them.” (Scottish Government 2017: 110)

The Scottish Government’s ‘Delivering for Today, Investing for Tomorrow: The Government’s Programme for Scotland 2018-19’⁴³ further built on these commitments, noting that:

⁴⁰ The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>

⁴¹ The Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (2011): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-future-delivery-public-services/pages/1/>

⁴² A Nation with Ambition: The Government’s Programme for Scotland 2017-2018: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/nation-ambition-governments-programme-scotland-2017-18/>

⁴³ Delivering for Today, Investing for Tomorrow: The Government’s Programme for Scotland 2018-19: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/delivering-today-investing-tomorrow-governments-programme-scotland-2018-19/>

“We have made progress on our drive to increase participation in volunteering across society, building on the growth of youth volunteering during the Year of Young People by investing in the establishment of a National Youth Volunteering Design Team who will make recommendations to the Scottish Government early next year on actions required to grow participation rates⁴⁴.

We have also invested in the development of our volunteering evidence base and maintained our funding to support third sector organisations to engage with those facing barriers to participation, providing £3.8 million over the period 2017-20 through the Volunteering Support Fund.

In the coming year we will publish a National Volunteering Outcomes Framework that will set out a coherent and compelling vision for volunteering and identify the key evidence and data to drive an increase in participation for all.” (Scottish Government 2018: 93)

The Scottish Government’s objective in developing the National Volunteering Outcomes Framework is to:

- Set out clearly and in one place a coherent and compelling narrative;
- Define the key outcomes desired for volunteering in Scotland;
- Identify the key data and evidence that will inform, indicate and drive performance at national and local level; and
- Enable informed debate and decision about the optimal combination of programmes, investments and interventions.

When it comes to policy making, there can be a perception (real or perceived) that policies can sometimes be ‘siloes’ and isolated from one another (rather than joined-up), and that they can even occasionally work in opposition with one another when it comes to volunteering and the benefits it can convey. For example, there has been some confusion in recent years as to whether people claiming welfare benefits can volunteer without the risk of being sanctioned and having their benefits withdrawn. At the same time, employability agendas have been encouraging benefit claimants to consider volunteering as a route back into employment. Although attempts have been made to clarify the position regarding volunteering and welfare benefits⁴⁵, this demonstrates the challenge of creating cohesive and

⁴⁴ These recommendations have now been published (March 2019): [Insight: Youth Volunteering Innovation Project](#)

⁴⁵ Volunteering and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Welfare Benefits (2017): <http://www.volunteerglasgow.org/downloads/LIVE-Volunteering-and-DWP-Welfare-Benefits-Guidance--May-2017-EG-08.05.17.pdf>. Although this guidance provides a certain level of clarification, some issues continue to remain, particularly around the impact of Work Capability Assessments (WCA). The DWP are not able to state either way as to whether confirmation of volunteering during a WCA will lead to benefit sanctions.

complementary policies and highlights the complexities that surround the translation of policies into actual practice. This can be further exasperated if policy areas must navigate between both Scottish and UK legislation. Although volunteering is a matter devolved to the Scottish Government, some of the policy areas where volunteering has a key role to play are not devolved, such as welfare benefits.

A further challenge regarding the policy context in Scotland is how to raise the profile of volunteering amongst policymakers – particularly where the link to volunteering may be less overt – so that policymakers are able to make the associational links between volunteering and the delivery of key policy objectives where appropriate. In rooting volunteering outcomes against national outcomes, the National Volunteering Outcomes Framework seeks to continue to raise the profile of volunteering across policies and to provide a mechanism for developing policies that support and enhance volunteering delivery.

5.4. Economic Context for Volunteering in Scotland

Volunteering in Scotland has an economic value of over £2bn (£2.26bn in 2016) – a figure that has been relatively stable for the past decade⁴⁶. This represents a major contribution to the Scottish economy of 1.5% of total GDP (£150bn in 2016). Although this calculation does not capture the less tangible aspects of volunteering, such as the personal, social, community and environmental benefits of volunteering, it helps to demonstrate the economic and societal importance of volunteering to the public and decision makers.

In a climate of constrained funding and cutbacks, the public sector, VIOs and those bodies involved in the delivery of the volunteering infrastructure in Scotland have all faced “having to do the same (or more) with less” (including having to work collaboratively by sharing skills and resources). This can result in the following issues:

- An increased reliance on volunteers to deliver services. This is not necessarily a problem in itself, providing volunteers receive a rewarding and enjoyable experience, but special attention needs to be paid to ensure this does not stray into job replacement, an ongoing concern in relation to volunteering;
- Increasing workloads and decreasing resources – both in terms of funding and staff capacity – can prevent the public, private and voluntary sectors from expanding or sustaining their volunteer involvement;
- Organisations can find they no longer have the resources to properly co-ordinate, support and retain volunteers. Despite the (mis)perception that volunteers are ‘free’, volunteer management and training require time and resources, and when these are

⁴⁶ Volunteering Trends in Scotland, 2017-2017, Volunteer Scotland, 2019:
<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/volunteering-trends-in-scotland/>

diminished the capacity of organisations to manage volunteers and to provide quality experiences is reduced;

- External funding for volunteer programmes (or projects involving volunteers) becomes harder to obtain and there is greater competition for these limited resources. The application processes for external funding can be onerous, further perpetuating a vicious cycle of depleted time, resources and energy, particularly amongst smaller organisations;
- *“Current funding is often project based so everything ends when the project ends...including volunteering...the trick is how to keep volunteers engaged once the project ends”* (Volunteer Scotland, 2016)⁴⁷.

The accessibility and affordability of volunteering can act as a barrier to those interested in volunteering. For example, the cost and availability of transport can prevent people from being able to access volunteering opportunities, particularly those on low incomes, from disadvantaged communities, and those living in remote areas of Scotland. This is further compounded if VIOs have limited (or no) funding to cover volunteers' travel expenses or any other associated costs incurred by volunteers, such as subsistence or child care costs. Indeed, during the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and the European Championships Berlin/Glasgow 2018, some of the volunteers involved in the Games were only able to afford to take part by accessing funding made available through the 'Volunteer Support Pot'⁴⁸ and the 'Volunteer Support Fund' respectively.

Employer-supporting volunteering (ESV) or corporate volunteering is another route through which volunteering is being made more accessible. The Scottish Government's Scottish Business Pledge⁴⁹ calls on businesses across Scotland to demonstrate their commitment to Scotland's communities by "supporting volunteering by your employees". The Scottish Government itself currently offers all staff up to 3 days volunteering per year.

National/local government and other key decision makers need a greater appreciation and understanding of the support and funding that is required to engage volunteers and provide a good experience. However, despite the challenging current economic climate, the Government has shown an ongoing commitment to safeguard and strengthen the volunteering infrastructure in Scotland, including establishing initiatives such as the Volunteering Support Fund (delivered by the Impact Funding Partners) to make volunteering more inclusive and accessible to those who require financial assistance.

5.5. Societal/Social Context for Volunteering in Scotland

The Scottish Government defines volunteering as *“the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries,*

⁴⁷ Volunteering and the Historic Environment (2016), Volunteer Scotland:

https://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/852506/hes_final_report_2016.05.31.pdf

⁴⁸ Evaluating the Impact of the Volunteer Support Pot on Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Volunteers, University of Strathclyde: https://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/436164/vsp_final_report.pdf

⁴⁹ Scottish Business Pledge, Scottish Government: <https://scottishbusinesspledge.scot/>

groups and organisations, communities, environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary".

In 2017, 28%⁵⁰ of the adult population (16 years and above) in Scotland had volunteered at least once in the past 12 months – a figure that has remained relatively stable for more than a decade despite the significant commitment of time and resources by the Government, public and voluntary sectors. This so-called 'flat-lining' of adult volunteering participation in Scotland is possibly due to changes in society which have resulted in people having less time to volunteer. For example, more women are working full-time, people with children are also taking on the commitment of caring for elderly relatives, people are working longer before they retire, people who retire are choosing to help look after their grandchildren, there are more single-parent households, more people are living in low income households, people are working longer hours, and are struggling to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

That said there is evidence to suggest that volunteer participation can follow a life-cycle model whereby people dip in and out of volunteering at different stages of their life for different reasons and to fulfil different needs. Society is changing, for example due to our ageing population, and there are more pressures on people in day-to-day life. Volunteering can sometimes seem like an additional stress. Furthermore, people's motivations and expectations of volunteering are also evolving. For example, 'baby boomer' retirees tend to be interested in more 'professional' volunteering opportunities which allow them to put their talents and skills to good use by providing meaningful, fulfilling and rewarding assistance to others. This is unlikely to be achieved through the more traditional forms of volunteering such as filling envelopes, answering phones and donating food.

In comparison to the adult population, young people are bucking the trend with over half of young people in Scotland volunteering (52% of 11-18 year olds in 2016)⁵¹. They are volunteering to improve their skills, to be socially active and to feel they have a voice within society. It will be interesting to see what impact these young people will have on the adult volunteering participation rate as they move into adulthood. However, despite the positive engagement of young people in volunteering, there are still those who have a relatively negative perception of volunteering, viewing it as being "boring", "too goody-goody" or "old-

⁵⁰ Volunteering Trends in Scotland, 2017-2017, Volunteer Scotland, 2019:

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/volunteering-trends-in-scotland/>

⁵¹ Young People and Volunteering in Scotland 2016, Volunteer Scotland:

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/young-people-and-volunteering-in-scotland-2016/>

fashioned”⁵², and in deprived areas there can be a real stigma attached to volunteering, particularly amongst young males who think it is “not cool”⁵³. This perception or stigma must be redressed so that volunteering is seen as the norm in both formal and informal settings. The aspiration is that volunteering in Scotland becomes ‘the norm’ with significantly higher participation, particularly amongst those who are the most disadvantaged in Scottish society.

Overall, there is a subjective view that volunteering does have an impact on the 10 values highlighted within the Project, but more work needs to be done to demonstrate this. For example, there is significant scope for the greater promotion of Scotland as a volunteering nation and to showcase the benefits of volunteering. Volunteering can be a tool to change society, particularly around the values of *equality, fairness, kindness and wellbeing*, and this is now being reflected in the language and narrative used by the Government and policymakers referring to the values of *equality and fairness* and *kindness and well-being* of citizens becoming more acknowledged⁵⁴. The value of *solidarity* is less used and normalised, possibly because it holds political over/under tones.

5.6. Technological Context for Volunteering in Scotland

Digital technologies are influencing volunteering in Scotland, including making new forms of volunteering possible such as 'virtual volunteering', providing wider access to volunteering opportunities online and providing other ways for volunteers to communicate and engage, notably through social media.

There is some debate over whether 'virtual volunteering' has turned out to be as impactful as first expected. Figures (in terms of formal volunteering opportunities being created) suggest that the level of virtual volunteering is still low. However, this may grow in popularity as younger 'digital natives' drive demand for these experiences such as through helping others to develop a website, help with marketing via social media, or offering 'virtual' support, etc. It is also possible that virtual volunteering is taking place in informal settings and is hidden from view (not part of formal volunteering measures).

The ability to access volunteering opportunities online has widened access to volunteering for many, particularly those without existing connections to VIOs or who are looking for specific opportunities. Volunteers' experience of using online channels can be variable

⁵² Young People and Volunteering in Scotland 2014, Volunteer Scotland:
<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/young-people-and-volunteering-in-scotland-2014/>

⁵³ Youth Volunteering in Deprived Areas (2018), James Davis / Volunteer Scotland:
<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/youth-volunteering-in-deprived-areas/>

⁵⁴ A Connected Scotland: our strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections (2018), Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/connected-scotland-strategy-tackling-social-isolation-loneliness-building-stronger-social-connections/>

(which includes the lengthy time it takes some VIOs to respond to enquiries) and can result in volunteers either not finding a suitable opportunity or perhaps losing interest in volunteering.

Facebook, Instagram and other online social platforms have created an open space for people to chat more about their volunteering, connect with organisations and engage in areas of interest. All of which has the potential to inspire more volunteering.

5.7. Legal Context for Volunteering in Scotland

There is no formal legal context or framework in Scotland specifically relating to volunteering. However, there are legal and compliance regulations and requirements that are relevant to good practice volunteering and volunteer management, such as complying with:

- The regulations relating to disclosure checks and the Protected and Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme⁵⁵;
- Health and Safety regulations;
- The conditions stipulated in insurance policies;
- The guidelines of governing bodies;
- The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) / Data Protection Act 2018.

5.8. Environmental Context for Volunteering in Scotland

There has been a 3% increase in the proportion of adult volunteers engaging in 'environmental protection' activities between 2012-2016⁵⁶. Although it is anecdotally thought that young people are becoming more and more focused on environmental issues, there is no evidence at present to show that this translates into increased interest in environmental volunteering.

The main environmental factors that influence volunteering in Scotland are:

- Inclement weather – the weather in Scotland can be unpredictable and serious weather conditions can affect volunteers' availability to deliver services, etc.
- Resilience – people are often willing to help in times of crisis and adversity, such as when communities are facing environmental disasters, e.g. flooding;
- Public transport issues, particularly in remote parts of rural Scotland.

5.9. Summary Conclusions

⁵⁵ Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services: <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/>

⁵⁶ Volunteering Trends in Scotland, 2017-2017, Volunteer Scotland, 2019: <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/volunteering-trends-in-scotland/>

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The volunteering infrastructure in Scotland has developed and strengthened in recent years. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2018-19 positions volunteering as an important part of Scottish society. Volunteering has been written into various sections and strategies of the Programme for Government and a National Volunteering Outcomes Framework is currently being finalised. Nevertheless, there is still more work to be done, particularly regarding the challenges of funding, the interface between volunteering and the public, private and voluntary sectors, supporting smaller VIOs as they try to continue and sustain their work, ensuring that volunteering is valued and deepening the understanding of the contribution that volunteering makes to Scottish society.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

The Project has provided a valuable and timely contribution to current discussions on the ways in which volunteering can support and influence EU values, citizenship and the future of the EU.

This chapter draws conclusions based on the research element of the Project. The shared features of the infrastructure within each of the four partner countries are set out and observations are made to inform future thinking and development. The purpose is to open further discussion as to how the various infrastructures can and do support volunteering in each country and ultimately in the EU. The Ten Value Framework is considered in terms of what we have learnt from the research about the ways in which the values are understood and lived out through volunteering. The possibilities for future application of the Ten Value Framework are discussed.

6.1 Features of the Infrastructure

During the European Year of Volunteering (EYV 2011), the European Commission noted that there were inconsistencies in how the volunteering infrastructure is supported and developed across the EU. The CEV report (2012)⁵⁷ provides a comprehensive overview of the infrastructure within Member States at that time. The view was that more needed to be done at a national level in the respective countries to strengthen the infrastructure and to support volunteering. This included a firm policy framework based on appropriate ideology; clarity of understanding of volunteering and its fit alongside other work such as community development, community engagement and participation and the third sector; Government support through funding, promotion and valuing of volunteering; the presence of development organisations nationally and locally, working collaboratively to provide training, continuous professional development, quality standards, applied research, information technology, ethical guidelines, etc. Further support and shared learning at EU level were also considered to be of benefit. This research contributes to this important agenda through an analysis and comparison of the various volunteer infrastructures across four similar-sized EU countries.

The surge of work that occurred immediately before, during and after the 2011 EYV created a momentum around volunteering and helped to clarify the definition, intentions, policy and possibilities. This inspired a strengthening of the various infrastructures and buoyed people up. This energy eventually started to dissipate, possibly due to the reality of everyday life in each country and without the impetus of the CEV initiative drawing people and ideas

⁵⁷ European Volunteer Centre (2012) *Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe*.

together. A true commitment to strengthening volunteering infrastructure requires a new injection of energy, leadership, process and resources.

Shared Features of the Infrastructure

The most notable common or shared features of the infrastructure, to varying degrees, across the four partner countries are:

- **Government Department(s) or ministry(ies)** with a specific section and job roles with responsibility for volunteering, including policy, strategic leadership and funding support. Each country has different ministerial arrangements with varying degrees of interest and investment in volunteering and the infrastructure to support volunteering. Given the wide-reaching impact of volunteering, e.g. across health, wellbeing, community, economy and society, it is considered preferable strategically, to have a number of departments involved and/or cross departmental commitment to volunteering. This is not the case at the moment and yet it is the hope into the future.
- **The development of National Strategies for Volunteering** in each country. These are signs of the way in which volunteering is understood and valued in each country. In Ireland this is in development with an open call in late 2018 for submissions to inform the strategy which will be finalised in 2019. The current development of the National Volunteering Outcomes Framework by the Scottish Government will provide a template for future **volunteer policy in Scotland**. A common policy agenda is currently in development by the Flemish Volunteer Centre and Croatia is in the final stages of approving a National Strategy for Volunteering. It would be interesting to conduct a meta-analysis of each of these strategies once they are all complete. This exercise would give a clearer sense of the intentions of each country in relation to volunteering and how it aligns with wider policy agendas.
- The extent to which **political interest** in, understanding of, commitment to, appreciation of and trust in volunteering is experienced differently across the four partner countries. It is clear that the prevailing political ideology is a vital determinant – whether that be positive, neutral or negative – of the strength of volunteering in each of the countries. The results of this research show that political unrest or turbulence can have a detrimental impact on the fabric of volunteering, causing division and waste of useful energy that could be better used to serve the needs of VIOs and people who benefit from the contribution of volunteers. In instances where the political ideology aligns with the values of volunteering there is much greater scope for meaningful work and progress.
- A **volunteer development agency** or a support organisation at a national level that acts as a centre point and the voice of volunteering; and is collaborative and collegial in the ways it supports volunteer centres or agencies at a local level and VIOs.

- There are **volunteer centres or a local presence** in regions or provinces, beyond the capital or large cities, that support volunteering and VIOs.
- The importance of **funding** and how fluctuations in the reliability and sustainability of funding is a challenge in each country.
- The utilisation of **databases**, digital gateways or IT systems to display volunteering opportunities and information which facilitate the matching of potential volunteers to volunteering opportunities within organisations, etc.
- The **culture** and the historical development of volunteering as part of the fabric of society has impacted on the conditioned expectations of volunteering in the mindset of the public in all four countries, and how this influences the way(s) that volunteering is understood and valued.
- There is a keen interest in **research** in each country, particularly research to convey the value of volunteering, its power and potential as a policy tool (e.g. the impact on wellbeing), and how it can be used to support voluntary activity, community development and the betterment of society. This is driven by contemporary interest in outcomes and evidence. Each country is at different stages of planning or doing research or considering how to do this and it is proving challenging methodologically.
- **The internet**, developments in social media and the power to communicate and connect was noted as a vital and emerging aspect of the volunteering infrastructure in each country. It is anticipated that this will have enormous power into the future, e.g. to increase awareness leading to changes in values and norms in society and the development of apps to enable volunteering, fundraising, etc.
- The **corporate world** is becoming more interested and active in the world of volunteering. This is an emerging component or adjunct of the infrastructure which into the future will require careful thought and management.

Differences within the Infrastructure

The main differences noted in the infrastructure across the four partner countries related to legal, insurance and political or ideological aspects. For example, in 2005 the Law on Volunteering was established in Belgium. This was set up as a protection system for volunteers and created a clear legal framework for volunteers and voluntary organisations which came into effect in 2006. There is a similar situation in Croatia where the Law on Volunteering made volunteering regulation part of the Civil Society and Philanthropy regulatory schemes instead of it being developed under the Croatian Labour Law system. The recurring themes are protecting volunteers and distinguishing volunteering as volunteering rather than paid work. Insurance followed similar themes, for example, a specific decree was issued by the Flemish government concerning the protection of volunteers in the welfare sector. The decree states that organisations must insure volunteers against accidents and make provisions for third-party liability. Neither Ireland nor Scotland have a legal framework for volunteering.

The other notable variation is the different stages that each countries is at in terms of designing and delivering 'information supports' such as IT/databases, censuses, quality standards, ethics, research and monitoring and responding to emerging trends in volunteering. There is scope for sharing learning and models of practice across the countries so that each learns from the experience of the others. For example, Scotland is pressing ahead with a National Volunteering Outcomes Framework which will set out clearly and in one place a compelling narrative for volunteering. It aims to state the outcomes for volunteering in Scotland over the next ten years and to identify the sources of evidence or data to inform and guide this measurement.

The challenges that Belgium and Croatia are encountering in response to the refugee crisis and how volunteering can respond to such crises is another area of difference in that Ireland and Scotland have not experienced quite the same level of crisis. The good work that has gone into, and the learning that has arisen from these endeavours, could usefully be shared more formally with other Member States.

6.2. The Ten Common Values

A central aim of the Project was to examine the extent to which volunteering strengthens (or not) EU common values. This was based on the premise that it is generally understood and assumed that volunteering strengthens common values. The rationale is that given the crises and challenges that Europe is currently encountering (e.g. Brexit, the migrant crisis, high youth unemployment, civil unrest) that there is a vital and powerful role for volunteering to strengthen shared values for the betterment of society.

The view is that common shared EU values and bonds that unite, rather than divide humanity, are of paramount importance for the future of the Union and the unity of her citizens. The hypothesis was that volunteering, including the way it is supported and organised, has an important role to play in strengthening, some or all, of our common values.

The results of the research confirm the importance of values and the volunteering infrastructure. Each country has its own culture and set of values that are mainly implicit, yet the way in which volunteering is understood, promoted and managed can help to make these values more explicit. The values of equality, fairness, respect, empathy and inclusion appear to be naturalised at this point. The challenge is to ascertain how they are lived out and to what extent they alter or shift as a result of a volunteering experience. The view is that volunteering has an impact on the 10 common values highlighted within the Get Connected project, and yet more work needs to be done to demonstrate this. There is scope for greater promotion and showcasing of the benefits of volunteering. Many believe that volunteering can be a tool to change society and yet it is not always clear the extent to which governments and policymakers view it in this way (yet).

The results of the surveys confirm that the Ten Common Values Framework adopted and applied by the Project was a useful exercise that prompted thought and reflection. The values that were ranked most important included *tolerance, empathy, courtesy, equality and respect*. These were understood and considered practical and possible to live out in everyday life. The values of *solidarity, environment, civic responsibility and active citizenship* appeared to be more nebulous and less well internalised or naturalised into the volunteering experience. They are perhaps more politicised or capable of being politicised than the values of empathy, courtesy and respect which are more old-fashioned and ingrained in the inherent goodness of people. Further research using the Values Framework will enrich our understanding of the role values play and ways they can be strengthened and internalised as part of a volunteering experience.

It is impossible to say at this point whether an experience of volunteering strengthens a person's values or that this in turn can realistically alter societal values for the betterment of society. The results do suggest that the purposeful act of *reflecting* on a volunteering experience through a framework of values can help people think about their values and naturalise them into parlance and expectations. There are certainly indications from the Project that the value of *self-fulfilment* shifted positively for some respondents as a result of their volunteering experience. This suggests that there is potential to influence (deepen or alter) our sense of personal values through a volunteering experience. This warrants further research and careful attention to the purpose and the ethics of such an endeavour. The results of the Project suggest that a useful starting point could be to use the Values Framework as a reflection tool pre-and-post a volunteering experience. Based on the learning from the Project, for such research to be robust and convincing it will be challenging to design and conduct.

6.3. Final Observations

The following are observations based on the themes emerging from the Project.

Sharing & Learning Together

The Project was an ambitious endeavour requiring time and thought from each of the four partner organisations. There is power in partnering together within countries and at EU level and opportunities to learn, share and grow. Involvement in the Project brought valued learning to each partner, each of whom is at a different stage of development with regards to the volunteering infrastructure within their country. Involvement brought hope to those who felt less advanced in terms of their volunteering infrastructure and/or are experiencing political and ideological challenges. The research opened-up discussions about values and volunteering and how this is conceived. This is helpful as volunteering is ever evolving and prone to different definitions and interpretations which at times can cause confusion and prevent coherence of thought.

Strategic Thinking and Intentions

The political situation and prevailing ideologies in each country have a significant impact on volunteering and how it is supported. Clashes of ideology lead to tension, confusion and in some instances exhaustion for those who have been working in the infrastructures for many years. Where right-wing governments dominate there is less of a feeling of safety and confidence that volunteering is valued and supported. The ideology, understanding and belief in volunteering by those in power is an important component of the infrastructure. Without authentic positive support, clear strategies and openness to change, the values and value of volunteering have little chance of full fruition. This is why the current work on developing volunteering strategies and/or national frameworks in each country is so important. It is opening-up dialogue and facilitating clarity of thought and intention about volunteering and how it can enrich and shape society. This aspect of the infrastructure is formative and, once done well, will lay sturdy foundations for volunteering into the future. It is important that the dialogue on values is conducted within the formation of these strategies.

Emerging Themes

The results of the PESTLE analyses point to emerging themes that warrant consideration and preparation for over the next few years. The three main themes likely to impact most on volunteering are (1) the environment and environmental issues that capture people's imaginations and consciences, (2) the openness, the connections, and the yet unknown volunteering opportunities that are offered by the internet and through social media and (3) crises relating to migration and refugees moving across Europe. The consensus is that volunteering has a useful role to play within each of these themes and further deliberation is necessary to progress this.

Purpose and Expectations

The Project draws attention to the range of intentions and expectations of volunteering. We must be careful about what we expect of volunteering both socially and politically. Traditionally volunteering has tended to be natural and organic and has worked for centuries in communities without overdue intervention or interference. Volunteering can strengthen communities and can enrich a culture of civic participation and participative democracy. The challenge is to keep volunteering pure, purposeful, enjoyable and free of exploitation. It is possible that over expecting and/or over interference could have unintended consequences. This research reminds us of the natural goodness of volunteering and points towards the need for a balanced approach towards the way in which volunteering is supported through the infrastructure and the vital funding that surrounds it. The values call us to be vigilant and remind us of what prompts people to volunteer in the first instance, and the factors and motivators that encourage people to continue volunteering and to wish to deepen their volunteering experience. The Project invites us to continue our work to discern the myriad of possible motivating factors behind volunteering (e.g. civil society, altruism, self-help,

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agency, activism, leisure⁵⁸), and to support these if society seeks more purposeful volunteering related to values and cultivating values.

⁵⁸ Rochester, C., Ellis Paine, A., Howlett, S., and Zimmeck, M. (2010) *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Appendix A

Guidelines to Support the Completion of your PESTLE Workshop

The following are guidelines to help you prepare for, run your PESTLE workshop and write up a report of the workshop to submit to Anne.

Preparation for your Workshop

- Agree a time and venue for your PESTLE workshop.
- Have a person in charge of facilitating and another person in charge of note taking.
- Allow two hours so that you have time to welcome everyone.
- Invite a mix of people to attend (between 8 and 15 people).
- Choose those who are involved in and interested in the volunteering world of policy and practice in your country.
- Issue a formal RSVP invite at least two weeks in advance.
- Provide refreshments to express gratitude to people for their contribution.
- Tell people about the purpose of the workshop, i.e. that it is to inform our research into factors that support volunteering, policy and practice, in your country.
- Tell people that it is an opportunity to share their views in an interactive space.

Running the Workshop

- Allow 1.5 hours for the discussion around the themes in Template (overleaf).
- Welcome everyone and provide a short summary of the purpose the research.
- Work through the attached template allowing people to respond to the questions and share their views
- Manage the time and allow fifteen minutes max per theme and once discussion is complete you may move on to the next theme.
- Write notes on a flip chart of all contributions.

Reporting After the Workshop

- Type up all notes using the template as your guide. This is a record of what was said by those who gave their views.
- Note any observations that you have following the workshop
- Please send your report to Anne Eustace by email to aeustace@eircom.net by 9th November 2018.

Template for PESTLE Workshop	
Themes	Questions to Guide Discussion under each theme
1 Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Please describe the policy context for volunteering in your country currently and how this has developed in recent years? 2 What are the main policies that inform and guide volunteering and the infrastructure? 3 What are the areas of strength and what are the policy areas that require further development?
2 Economic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 What economic factors do you believe are currently influencing volunteering and the volunteering infrastructure in your country?
3 Social/societal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 What are you noticing about the way that society influences volunteering and the culture of volunteering? 6 What are you noticing about the way that volunteering influences society? 7 What role do values play in the above?
4 Technological	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8 What are the noticeable features and/or recent developments technologically that are affecting volunteering and the infrastructure in your country? 9 Are these developments positive or negative?
5 Legal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Are there any legal issues or developments that are having an impact on volunteering and the infrastructure in your country now or expected in the near future? 11 What challenges will these bring?
6 Environmental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12 What are the noticeable features and/or developments environmentally that are affecting volunteering and the infrastructure in your country now or expected in the near future? 13 How does volunteering affect the environment? 14 Where do values come into play?

CROATIA

SCOTLAND



BELGIUM

IRELAND



VOLONTERSKI centar Osijek



volunteer centre
Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Cathair Bhaile Atha Cliath
DUBLIN CITY

Volunteer
Scotland

