

**Seminar in Wien : « Citizenship, social involvement and volunteering »
University of Wien, 18th of April, 2007**

Date	Content		Duration
	Morning : theory		
	9h30-12h30		
Wednesday 18 th of April 2007	Volunteering	<p>Govaart (M-M), Van Daal (H-J), Münz (A), Keesom (Jolanda) Volunteering Worldwide, NIZW, Utrecht, 2001</p> <p>Halba (B), Bénévolat e volontariat en France et dans le monde, La Documentation française, Paris, 2003.</p> <p>Halba (B), Schumacher (J), Strümpel (C), Work with volunteers, Leonardo da Vinci project, 2000-2001</p>	3 hours
	Afternoon : practice & research		
	14h-17H00	Work on articles : main topics and key issues in the articles selected since Monday	3 hours

Selected literature in the field of Volunteering by Prof Dr Christoph Reinprecht :

Gouldner (Alvin), “The importance of something for nothing”, in Gouldner (Alvin W.) For sociology, Penguin (1975)

1. General introduction

The United Nations have declared 2001 to be the Year of the Volunteer. This is an important acknowledgement of the significance of voluntary work and it has marked the start of a variety of activities all over the World.

The International Association for Volunteer Effort (based in the US) has organised its world conference in Amsterdam. On this occasion, a book has been published on *Volunteering worldwide*.

All over the world, people devote themselves to helping each another and their environment.

The form this takes, the specific activities, the context within which it takes place and the motivation that drives volunteers to participate can be very different but there is a common point : the voluntary participation of individuals keeps important sectors of society going if you consider the role played by volunteers

- during natural disasters,
- In the care of homeless
- In human rights organisations
- In the care of young children and older people
- In keeping cultural heritage alive
- In sport and environmental organisations

You can be motivated by positive reasons : defending a cause, being useful to others, but dissatisfaction can also be the starting point of activities. It can be political activism, rural development, church activity, sporting activity...

Volunteering gradually developed over the centuries without receiving any public attention as a phenomenon in its own right. It was simply something one did, and until several decades ago it was thought of as something so natural that it did not deserve any mention

During the second half of the 20th century, volunteering was discovered as an important social phenomenon

In the 1950s, the US were pioneers in this field. The phenomenon was studied and mapped by researchers and soon local volunteering centers were founded to support the work

In the 1970s, volunteering was discovered by national governments in European countries.

In the 1990s, a worldwide growth in interest in volunteering especially among people with an interest in the concept of active citizenship ; citizens of Eastern European countries for instance embraced volunteering as part of their regained freedom

Volunteer work in the form of active citizenship was seen as the heart of a civil society that provides an important contribution to the social debate.

2. Volunteering in perspective

Volunteering has its roots in activities linked with religion (of all denominations). Traditionally, it is associated with charitable organisations, usually linked to church, but the traditional type of volunteering in the framework of religious charities that was carried out by middle class women is diminishing.

Two contradictory movements :

- in countries with a high level of state welfare provision, volunteering has become less important while the professionalisation of social services has developed ;
- On the other hand, in countries like Sweden or Denmark, that have relied heavily on state provision of social services for a long time, volunteering has started becoming an issue when financial difficulties caused state provision to be cut.

Fewer people are willing to make long-term commitments to organisations. Whereas there is evidence that modernisation does not lead to a reduced willingness to volunteer, the pattern of volunteering is changing towards more activity-oriented types of volunteering and more self-guided tasks. The profile of volunteers is also changing as there are more and more high-skilled volunteers and traditional hierarchies that depended on the length of time spent in an organisation do not function anymore.

Volunteering in a changing society

The issue of volunteering has mushroomed as a topic of public discourse in many European countries in the last few years. It is also being picked up by the United Nations as a topic of observance in the framework of the UN- Year of volunteering 2001. Why has it become such an important theme in modern societies?

The frequently stated trend in most European countries in which social policy is moving away from state welfarism to a more pluralistic system of provision plays a very important role in the discussion on the voluntary sector as well as in volunteering. Questioning the role of the welfare state is closely connected to look for other responsible actors. However, this debate is generally taking place in connection with massive budget cuts in welfare spending.

A number of other societal changes are changing the way we think about volunteering:

- demographic developments such as the ageing population that all our countries are confronted with ;
- new issues of social exclusion of groups such as migrants, people with disabilities, the long-term unemployed or even homeless people are being linked to volunteering ;
- rapid developments in employment are influencing the discourse on volunteering. These are early retirement, high unemployment rates, flexibility in working time, disparities between winners and losers on the labour market, reduction of working time over the life span and the increase of women's labour market participation.

Last but not least volunteering is a key factor in debates on social cohesion, democracy and civil society. Civil Society is seen as a further model of social order next to the community, market and state. The guiding principle of civil society is voluntariness, while associations are its dominant collective actors.

The prerequisite for taking part in civil society is commitment i.e. the willingness to bind oneself to a common course and to take responsibilities (Dekker /Van den Broek, 1998). Distinctive traits of civil society are "social capital" and public discourse. Social capital refers to "features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1995). Public discourse is the ability of a society to articulate collective values, to reflect upon social problems and to develop political goals (Wuthnow, 1991). The increasing interest in volunteering and voluntary organizations is closely connected to the expectation of bridging the gap between the citizen and the state.

Definition and Terms of Volunteering

In many languages there are many different terms used for volunteering. In the English language (compared to German for example) the term is relatively straight forward, but still there are quite different views of what volunteering encompasses. Few articles on volunteering contain definitions of it and in everyday use as well as in use in volunteering circles, there are many different meanings connected with the word volunteering (or respective words in German and French).

Generally four dimensions of volunteering are referred to in definitions:

- * The activity should be carried out of one's own accord (free choice) ;
- * It is unremunerated (without monetary compensation) ;
- * It must not only be for the benefit of the individual or his or her family ;
- * It can take place in an organised or informal frame.

However, there are varying levels of broadness or pureness in definitions in many studies. Definitions in different studies and papers explicitly or implicitly use other categories on each of these dimensions.

Since there are many different types of volunteers in a variety of areas, there has been the argument that lumping all volunteers together when talking about them is like talking about paid work without differentiating between managers and blue collar worker. Frequently volunteering is associated with women volunteering in social services and carrying out "hands-on" type of tasks. However, there are many fields of activity in which volunteering takes place as well as a variety of tasks, with different levels of social status. Also there are large differences between occasional or activity oriented types of volunteering, regular volunteering and volunteering like youth exchange programmes, where volunteers are active for a half a year or year in one piece.

An especially difficult area in practice is the dimension of remuneration or any financial compensation linked to the voluntary work. There are so many different types of reimbursement and dimensions of pay in volunteering that in practice it is sometimes very difficult to say whether somebody is a volunteer or not.

In English, volunteering is the most used and relatively clear term. In German there are several terms with different connotations: e.g. Ehrenamt, ehrenamtliches Engagement, bürgerschaftliches Engagement, Freiwilligenarbeit, freiwilliges Engagement. In French, two words exist: *bénévolat* (no status); *volontariat* (international solidarity, firemen, civil service)

Facts and Figures about volunteering

In the last few years there have been several studies on volunteering in European countries. In the following modul, you will find out about and work with the most relevant results of these studies

Fields of activity in which volunteering is carried out are sports and recreation, community development, religious groups, culture and arts, education, social services, housing, environment and conservation and many more. Types of activities can vary from care of the elderly, offering training courses for children, mentoring, organizing activities, or serving on committees.

In Belgium for example there is a strong civic dimension in volunteering involving community development, advocacy and campaigning work. In the Netherlands next to sports and recreation, many people serve on committees or are involved in fundraising.

In France, the most numerous volunteers are found in sports, leisure and culture associations. Fundraising is important but not the main activity. It depends on the type of organisation considered, some of them rely on the membership fees and don't have to waste a lot of time on financing. It is on the other hand a key issue for the associations which want to develop projects or have paid-staff.

An outstanding element of volunteering in Great Britain and Ireland is the amount of time dedicated to fundraising. Also many people serve on committees and help run organisations. Predominating fields of activity in Great Britain and Ireland are social services, education and the religious context.

In Sweden and Denmark there is less emphasis on social welfare and more on sports and recreation in voluntary activities.

In post-communist countries like Bulgaria and Slovakia, where a comparatively low level of volunteering in the population was found, there is less recreational volunteering, less fundraising and less participation in committees than in other European countries. However, more emphasis is placed on service delivery, teaching training and advice. An interesting fact is that in Bulgaria there is more involvement in environmental issues and animal welfare than in other countries (Gaskin/Davis Smith 1995).

Poland is considered as a leader in the field of volunteering in Eastern and Central countries. It has been the first country in the region to publish a handbook on volunteering. Polish voluntary centers have benefited from many American foundations willing to support civil society in ex-communist parties (such as the Soros foundation).

How many people volunteer?

The large differences in drawing the boundaries of volunteering and in defining volunteers described above lead to difficulties in stating the exact numbers of volunteers in each country. In Germany, studies have found percentages of volunteers in the population between 13% and 38% (von Rosenblatt, 1999). In the US the percentage of volunteers was reported between 16-55% in the same year by various studies. According to the World Values Study 1990 the USA and Canada have the most volunteers, followed by Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands (Dekker / Van den Broek, 1998). 27% of the population in 9 European countries volunteer on average, with Netherlands, Sweden and Great Britain being above average and Bulgaria, Slovakia and Germany being below average.

Who volunteers?

Concerning who volunteers, studies show that men and women volunteer roughly to a similar degree. However, this varies from country to country. Whereas, more men volunteer in the Netherlands (except for the social field), Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Austria, more women volunteer in countries like Belgium or Great Britain. Of course participation of women and men in volunteering depends on the field of activity as well as on the type of voluntary activity.

Also, in most countries there is a positive link between income, education and employment status, which has important implications for issues concerning volunteering and social inclusion. Sweden is an exception in that there is less of a middle class bias for volunteering and it seems that people over all levels of income volunteer to the same extent. There is also evidence that informal volunteering shows less of a middle class bias in general.

People who have strong religious beliefs are more likely to volunteer than those that are not religious because they are more solicited (priests, imams, rabbis ask for direct support of their churchgoers). People of all age groups volunteer to more or less the same extent. However, people between 35-55 show a tendency towards more volunteering than other age groups. Also, it has been shown, that volunteering tends to taper off after retirement. This is interesting in the context that a lot of attention is being paid to senior citizens' volunteering in public discourse in many European countries.

The motivations of the volunteers

To understand volunteering, you must forget the traditional paradigm of selfishness in economy which can be expressed by : any individual wants to maximise its own utility with a defined budget. The new paradigm is altruism : you are looking for the welfare and wellbeing of others.

On the volunteers side , who are the touchstone in the organisations of the third sector, there is no material compensation in their work : they are not paid staff. But there is an immaterial reward , this is the Latin “do ut des” motto : I give to make you (or someone else) give.

Pure altruism doesn't exist in reality. But quasi-altruism does as shown by a British searcher David A. Kennett (1981), who proposed 6 different types of quasi-altruism that correspond to immaterial goals :

- Quasi- altruism with intangible compensation : you give your time to obtain respect from the person who benefits from your gift or from a witness of this gift ;
- Quasi- altruism in the games theory perspective : you give to impress a third person or to make things be positive for you in the future,
- Quasi- altruism in the socio-biology context : you give because your parents or your family have shown you the way, you have received some kind of “altruistic gene” or biologic predestination,
- Quasi- altruism and the Rotten Kid Theorem : in a group, there is a social income which is bigger than all the incomes gathered, if you want to benefit by this synergy you’d better act as a volunteer,
- Quasi- altruism and the social pressure : to avoid social costs and psychological guiltiness, you prefer being a volunteer,
- Quasi- altruism and sponsorship : you give to promote a positive image of you and so a complementary profit in the near future (in your profession, social life)

If you keep in mind the hidden motivations of volunteers, which are often mixed and unconscious, you better understand how the third sector is run.

The main reasons for volunteering given by volunteers themselves are :

- Willing to defend a cause ;
- Willing to use usefully my free time ;
- To meet people I wouldn’t have the opportunity to meet elsewhere ;
- To acquire or develop skills and competences ;
- To open new horizons.

Overview of volunteering in Austria

General Background

In Austria there has been a *long tradition of voluntary activities* in many different areas. There is a substantial amount of activity in organisations as well as informally. According to the most recent study on volunteering in Austria (Badelt/Hollerweger, 2001), 51% of all Austrians are engaged in some type of volunteering (formal and informal).

According to this study, the most popular area of volunteering is the social sphere, and then culture. An Austrian specificity is the reliance on volunteers in fire fighting and in rescue services. As in other countries, those involved in volunteering and participating actively in the associations are those who are *socially integrated*: Those in employment, with a higher education and a higher income are more likely to be active than others.

Despite the large extent of volunteering, a *public debate* on the changed conditions of volunteering and on developing a public policy on volunteering have just begun in the last few years. In 2001, the ÖVP (Christian democratic party) has started a debate on civil society, that entails a growing interest in volunteering. The Social Democrats in Austria have until now, had a negative view on volunteering and mainly stress that it poses a threat to paid jobs. Lately, there has been a process of reflection going on within the Social Democratic Party.

Legal Framework

There is no law on volunteering as such in Austria. Volunteers do not have a legal status. However, there are several laws that touch on volunteering in different contexts.

In connection with *volunteering in the framework of fire fighting and rescue services* there are specific laws on national and (in some provinces) on provincial level (e.g. „Niederösterreichisches Landesfeuerwehrgesetz“, „Sanitätergesetz“). Another relevant law is the Associations Act („Vereinsgesetz“) which regulates the operation of associations with respect to their structure, tasks, taxability etc.

According to the *national law regulating employment* (§1152 „Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch“ and § 6, Abs. 1 „Angestelltengesetz“) it is not whether somebody earns money or not which distinguishes an employee („Arbeitnehmer“) from a non-employee, but whether the person is „personally dependent“ on the organisation. Criteria for „personal dependency“ are the mandatory character of the work, the type of control over the employee etc. Prerequisite for somebody being an employee is a contract, which can be written or oral.

Also, in the work laws no difference is made between payment in money or in kind (food, apartment, use of vehicles). That means, that persons who do not earn money but only receive payments in kind are to be treated the same as those who earn money. In this context volunteers are those who receive neither monetary nor other payments.

Since the majority of volunteers in Austria does not have a contract and is not „personally dependent“ on the organisation, the work laws do not apply to them. However, some laws like those regulating employment of foreigners („Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz“) are also relevant for people who are „quasi-employees“ („arbeitnehmerähnliche Personen“). It is not quite clear under which circumstances volunteers belong to this group.

Volunteers are not subject to *mandatory social insurance* according to the Social Insurance Laws („Allgemeines Sozialversicherungsgesetz“). Thus, in their role as volunteers, they do not receive health or pension insurance. However, if they receive some sort of regular remuneration, they might be subject to social insurance.

According to the *tax laws* somebody receiving reimbursements under 3830 ATS (280 Euro) a month is not in employment („Dienstverhältnis“). That means that the organisation the person is working for does not have to pay taxes or any other additional payments. For the individual volunteers, after subtracting travel costs (up to 1000 ATS a month = 73 Euro) and a general amount that is tax free (12.000 ATS a year = 875 Euro) an income over 10.000 öS (730 Euro) a year is subject to income tax.

Public sector

Volunteering in the public sector does happen, but is not very common. In schools, parents' associations are common. Otherwise, volunteers in schools are not the rule. In the last few years there have been several efforts to introduce volunteers to hospitals and old persons

homes. This happens either through existing organisations (e.g. Red Cross), through teams that are organised as associations or as a part of the organisation of the hospital or home.

Jury duty is common in Austria, but is mandatory. Also, there are volunteers in the organisation responsible for prisoners on parol (Bewährungshilfe).

Structures, Measures and Programmes Designed to Promote Volunteering in Austria

Public Sector

On the Local Level

The local level is very important for volunteering in Austria. Here networking and promoting volunteering mostly happens at an informal level.

On the State /Provincial (Länder) - Level

In the last few years several *provincial governments* have commissioned studies on volunteering and have proclaimed „*The year of volunteering*“ (for example Vorarlberg, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg – All governed by the Christian Democratic Party-ÖVP). There have been public campaigns as well as a variety of measures implemented to promote volunteering. In some of these provinces there is now an information hotline on volunteering (Vorarlberg, Lower Austria). In Lower Austria, there is a Service Centre for Volunteering that provides information and has initiated several activities to promote volunteering in Lower Austria. There are no specific, systematic funding programmes to promote volunteering on provincial levels.

On the National Level

In Austria, there is hardly any national structure for volunteering. The department for Seniors' Policy in the Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations has commissioned studies on volunteering, has initiated “citizens offices” (Bürgerbüros see 2.3.1.2) and has organized working groups on volunteering for the UN-year of volunteers.

Agencies for the support of voluntary work and the placement of volunteers not attached to single associations or organisations

There is no National Volunteer Centre in Austria. A sort of volunteer centre has been founded in Lower Austria (Servicestelle Freiwillige).

Until now, volunteering has been an issue that was dealt with in the framework of the organisations or umbrella organisations within which volunteers work. Until recently there were *no volunteer centres on national, provincial or local levels*. Volunteer bureaux on a local level are starting to be developed (e.g. Freiwilligenzentrale der Volkshilfe Steiermark, Freiwilligenzentrum Innsbruck). They are usually connected to one of the larger social service organisations.

Apart from that „citizens bureaux“ for older and younger people (Bürgerbüros für Jung und Alt) are being implemented in several areas. These are modelled on the German

„Seniorenbüros“ and serve as a platform for older and younger people to become involved in a wide range of volunteer activities.

Training institutions, research institutes and consultancies focussing on issues of volunteering

There is no national training institution focussing on volunteering and no research organisation dedicated only to volunteering research. In Austria, training in the area of volunteering is mainly offered by non profit organisations or umbrella organisations themselves. Some training is offered by adult education organisations (e.g. Volkshochschule, Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung) or by academies linked to provincial governments (e.g. Niederösterreichische Landesakademie). The “Vereinsakademie” (academy for associations), that is affiliated to the ÖVP (Christian Democratic Party) was founded in 1996 and offers seminars, training courses and information for people working with and in associations. The “Volkshochschule” has been offering a course in the management of associations since 2000. The NPO-Institut, which is affiliated to the University of Economics in Vienna offers seminars and lectures for representatives of NPOs on a variety of subjects.

Research on volunteering has been and is being carried out at the University of Economics (Prof. Badelt), the University of Linz (Prof. Zapotocky), the University of Graz (Dr. Heimgartner) and at the European Centre. There is also a small independent institute, that does research on donations and fundraising (“Spendeninstitute”). Apart from that there is a working group on “civil society”, that carries out seminars and lectures regularly in this area.

Role of companies

In Austria, companies play almost no role in the area of volunteering, at least not at an official level. On the one hand, there is an emerging culture of social sponsoring. On the other hand are are very involved in associative life at the local level. Many local businesses fund the associations festivities and there are many business people involved in different fundtions in the association. However, this involvement is usually seen as a private issue. There is hardly any awareness for questions of corporate social responsibility or for the possibility of systematically promoting volunteering.

Source for the Austrian lietterature :

Badelt, C. (1999) Ehrenamtliche Arbeit im Nonprofit Sektor. in: C. Badelt (Hrsg.) *Handbuch der Nonprofit Organisation*. 2. Auflage, 433-462, Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel.

Badelt, C./Hollweger, E. (2001) Das Volumen Ehrenamtlicher Arbeit in Österreich. Working paper 6. Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien.

Ettel, M./Nowotny, C. (1999) Rechtliche Gestaltungsformen für NPOs. in: C. Badelt (Hrsg.) *Handbuch der Nonprofit Organisation*. 2. Auflage, 179-208, Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel.

Kapfer, L./Putzer, H. (1998) Verein (t). *Ein Handbuch für die Vereinsarbeit*. Wien: Politische Akademie

Runggaldier, U./Drs, M. (1999) Arbeits- und sozialrechtliche Rahmenbedingungen beim Einsatz von Mitarbeitern in NPOs. in: C. Badelt (Hrsg.) *Handbuch der Nonprofit Organisation*. 2. Auflage, 277-300, Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel.