

**Seminar in Wien : « Citizenship, social involvement and volunteering »
University of Wien, 19th of April, 2007**

Date	Content		Duration
	Morning : theory	Afternoon : practice & research	
	9h30 – 12h30	14h00-16h00	
Thursday 19 th of April 2007	Volunteering, involvement and social inclusion Migrants volunteering Involve project (Cev & alii, 2005)	Research on initiatives in the field of social participation, active citizenship, Burgerarbeit (cf Ulrich Beck) in Europe	5 hours

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

Text of reference : Putnam (R-D), “Bowling alone : America’s declining social capital”, in Journal of Democracy, 1995

Volunteering in a changing society: Specific issues

Volunteering and Social Inclusion

Volunteering also provides opportunities within a concept of social inclusion which is not merely focused on integrating disadvantaged groups through paid employment. In the project "Volunteering into participation" which was carried out in the Netherlands (coordinated by Community Partnership Consultants), Austria (European Centre), Finland, Great Britain and Italy the main finding was that volunteering has many advantages for people who are socially excluded (e.g. migrants, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities).

Whereas one of these advantages can or cannot be the integration into the labour market, it was shown that volunteering per se, can offer people a social community, lead to improved self-confidence and empowerment. One of the main findings was the different approaches and openness for volunteering as a means for social inclusion in different countries. It became clear, that this is a very prominent issues in the Netherlands, Great Britain and Finland. However, it was very difficult finding fitting projects in Austria and Italy, due to the lack of awareness of volunteer activities by (an not for) people from disadvantaged groups (Münz, Kinds et al., 2000).

Migration – Integration – Volunteering

According to the latest United Nations figures, more than 191 million people in the world have left their countries in order to find a new home and to start a new life (GCIM 2005). They do so for a many reasons: poverty, political persecution, lack of a perspective for life, dignity and liberty ...

The European Union has welcomed some 20 million "third country nationals", i.e. persons with a nationality other than one of the EU-25.

Immigration is more and more seen to be necessary in countries facing an ageing society and labour shortages in certain areas of the economy. The EU has been developing an increasing number of policy initiatives in the field of immigration and integration.

Very often, the question of immigration is discussed in the light of border protection, control of migrant flux to the EU, "desired migration" versus "illegal migration", human traffick etc. Regularly, the phenomenon of immigration triggers discussions on integration, which are rarely objective but influenced by public debates on national identity and more generally the fear of the strangers "invading" the country.

When looking at the data the currently emerging term of "migration management" (OECD 2006) shows that governments at present have to manage migration flows of which immigration is just one pattern. Migration as a phenomenon has become much more complex in terms of movements involving 'circular' and 'return' migration. The number of countries of origin of migrants in Europe has increased drastically. In addition, the already settled traditional immigrant communities in Western European countries experience internal diversification owing to the different integration routes of the second and third generations. Furthermore, the undocumented migration is hard to define, the so-called "invisible" migrants. The new patterns of mobility are hardly taken into account in current integration policies,

which tend to focus on an old paradigm, that of the immigrant who comes with the intention to settle and has to adapt and be integrated into the host community.

The term integration is very much controversial. There is an ongoing debate on whether the thrust of understanding should be more on assimilation or multiculturalism or if those two concepts have not proved to be outdated. The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union as a “dynamic, long-term, and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the host society” (European Commission 2005) may be a step in the right direction to solve this debate. It underlines that integration is a mutual and collective process and not the individual responsibility of the immigrant alone. The limitation of this understanding is that it does not yet capture as to what a future-oriented concept of integration could mean in the view of current migration flows.

The interest in migrant volunteering has been rising in the past years especially in those countries with a strong civil society tradition and longstanding awareness of the key role that volunteering has for the social fabric and cohesion of society.

Civic participation and voluntary action are important touchstones in a democracy : are immigrant communities part of this touchstone and if not so, what must be done to encourage civic activities in these communities.

Voluntary action as the sum of all activities which citizens do for each other unpaid and based on their free will is considered to be a resource for this two-way integration process, which has not yet received full recognition.

Migration, integration and volunteering are phenomena that are controversially discussed in our societies but often discussed separately. The INVOLVE project aimed at linking these debates and finding the interfaces –

How can volunteering be better used in order to facilitate integration that is needed as a consequence of migration?

The INVOLVE project

The INVOLVE project has been set up to explore innovative solutions to the question of the “social integration” and “active participation” of third country nationals – focusing on volunteering as an instrument.

The project partners addressed the lack of knowledge about migrant volunteering, including third country nationals' concepts of, and attitude towards volunteering and investigated national policies and actions that facilitate these activities.

Finally, a trans-European network of national contacts in the field of migrant volunteering for increased transnational dialogue between stakeholders.

The following **9 partner organisations** have run the INVOLVE project:

- European Volunteer Centre, CEV – Project coordination (www.cev.be)

- Community Partnership Consultants (www.community-partnership.nl) and CIVIQ National Volunteer Centre (www.civiq.nl), the **Netherlands**
- Menedek, **Hungary** (<http://www.menedek.hu/>)
- Volunteering **England** (www.volunteering.org.uk) and the Institute for Volunteering Research IVR in England (www.ivr.org.uk) was responsible for the external evaluation of the project
- “INBAS Sozialforschung” research institute, **Germany** (www.inbas-sozialforschung.de)
- University of Vienna, institute for sociology, **Austria** (www.univie.ac.at/sowi/index.php?id=19)
- FUNDAR, Foundation for Solidarity and Volunteering, Valencia, **Spain** (www.fundar.es)
- IRIV Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering , **France** (www.iriv.net).

In order to remedy to the above-mentioned challenges, the project comprised the following activities:

National “Action research”

- a **national expert group** of up to 10 experts in the field. Third country nationals were involved at all stages of the project. Representatives of the national expert groups contributed to the preparation of and participated at the three INVOLVE seminars.
- Research collection through the use of existing literature, surveys of relevant actors, personal interviews and in the case of Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands, Germany, England and Spain accompanied by small primary research projects.
- The results and conclusions of this work were presented at each of the INVOLVE seminars, in order to instigate a transnational debate.
- **Themes of the research included:**
 - Facts and Figures on volunteering and immigration in the 7 countries
 - The concept of integration and the attitude of migrants towards volunteering
 - Barriers that prevent migrants from volunteering
 - Good practices that help to overcome these barriers
 - Role of local, national and EU policies & programmes to support migrant volunteer involvement
 - Partnership models between stakeholders.

Definitions and glossary of terms

Immigrant / Migrant / Newcomer A person who expects to stay in a country other than his/her country of nationality for a certain period of time other than for tourism or for seasonal work. “migrant” ; immigrant or emigrant may be confused or used interchangeably (exception: France, see 2.7.)

Third country national	Any person who is not a national of one of the EU Member States and who is granted legal residence in the territory of a Member State
Refugee	Person living outside the country of his/her nationality because of the fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion and who is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.
Asylum seeker	A person who has applied for asylum status and whose application is under consideration.
Volunteering	Refers to all different forms in which citizens do unpaid activities for others based on their free will and serving the general interest of society. Volunteering englobes “voluntary action” (comprising informal volunteering and volunteering in an organised context), “voluntary work” (work done in an organised context for mainstream or migrant organisations) and “voluntary service” meaning fulltime and short term voluntary work (normally not more than one year), often specifically targetted to young persons.
Good practice	projects and activities that foster the engagement of third country nationals in volunteering and contribute to a better integration of them to the host society.
Mainstream organisation	Organisation available to all parts of society not targetting by definition specific social or ethnic groups. Examples are organisations such as the Red Cross or Volunteer Centres.
Migrant organisation	Organisation run essentially by migrants focussing on advocacy work and / or providing social services for the migrant (sometimes as well for the host) community.
Integration	A dynamic, long-term and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the host country.
Assimilation	One-way process of adaptation: Immigrants are supposed to give up their distinctive linguistic, cultural or social characteristics, adopt the values and practices of the mainstream receiving society, and become indistinguishable from the host country population

Multiculturalism

Concept acknowledging the fact that different cultural or ethnic groups may co-exist within society without major efforts of rapprochement or mutual integration.

3. Barriers towards integration and criteria of good practices to overcome these

Many facets to the definition of integration in Europe, concepts and realities concerning volunteering vary to a great extent from country to country, migrants are far from being a homogeneous group and migrant volunteering is not on the agenda in all countries.

How volunteering can contribute to a better integration of migrants who are third-country nationals. The perspectives towards integration depend not only on the country and its history and traditions regarding immigration and integration policies but as well on the stakeholder itself: Governments tend to prioritise the **acceptance of a “set of rules”** to be conditional to integration whereas the voluntary sector and migrants themselves put the focus rather on a **rights based approach** where a sense of belonging, safety and welcome, fair and equal treatment and having access to services and employment balance a rather “obligation-based” approach.

Integration is a “dynamic, long-term, and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the host society”. This definition allows to identify criteria of good practice. Different stakeholders need to accommodate their practice in order to foster integration: the host society (government, civil society and the corporate sector) and the migrant population. Good practice fosters dynamism, is aimed to contribute on a long-term basis and understands integration as a continuous process.

Indicators of integration

In what way can good practice of volunteer organisations foster integration? A significant difference between governmental and voluntary sector approach to integration is that for the former, integration only starts when a **legal status** is granted to the migrant.

Voluntary sector organisations and migrants themselves underline that the process of integration to the host society starts **with the day of arrival** regardless of the status that the migrant will or will not be given. Given especially the lengthy and cumbersome asylum procedures with their uncertain results, time should not be lost waiting for the final decision: Time is precious when it comes to integration and much can be lost for a successful integration process if migrants experience hostility and frustrating treatment in their first months of stay.

Indicators of integration could be:

- Employment
- Access to education
- Attainment of the host community language
- Contact with migrant community organizations
- Contact with host society
- Citizenship
- Political participation
- Housing standards
- Reporting of racial, cultural or religious harassment
- **Volunteering**

Interestingly, the UK has named **Volunteering** in its integration policy strategy 2005 to be one of these indicators. Volunteering does not only contribute to different indicators of integration (see 5.), it is an **indicator of integration in itself**, as it fosters social bonds between members of a society and creates a feeling of belonging. It has to play a major role in government's, the voluntary sector's and businesses efforts to promote integration.

Barriers towards integration

Volunteering as an indicator for integration is a brand new idea for most governments in Europe which haven't used so far this instrument in their integration policies. There are different barriers of migrants to get involved in volunteering, barriers on an individual level, on an organizational level (both "mainstream" volunteer organizations and migrant community organizations) and on policy level.

Different kinds of barriers have been underlined by the Involve's partners:

a) Barriers on an individual level:

- Poor knowledge of the host community language
- Perceived lack of education and skills needed for volunteer placements
- Lack of a network of family, friends, neighbours, colleagues who already volunteer and could act as an intermediary towards volunteer organisations;
- Being unfamiliar with the concept of volunteering in the host community, because of own different traditions of voluntary action and/or lack of experience with the functioning of a civil society in the country of origin (applies especially to first generation immigrants)
- Priority of paid work, since this is a key reason for migration for non-refugees and those who do not migrate for family formation or -reunion purposes only. In addition, paid work renders status whilst volunteering does not.
- Being too busy with responsibilities of caring for family members or other informal help
- Poverty, not being able to pay expenses related to volunteering
- Lack of confidence to take over a volunteer job
- Fear of prejudice
- Gender roles; not being allowed by family members to volunteer. This refers especially to lower educated Turkish and Moroccan women.
- Fear of tokenism, being misused as a showcase

Especially in the case of refugees:

- Anxiety about the future
- Fear of expulsion
- Depression
- Feeling of being in transit, not knowing whether commitment is appropriate.

Specially in the case of undocumented migrants

- The fear of being caught and expelled.

b) On the organisational level –

with respect to mainstream volunteer organisations:

- Impersonal recruitment – lack of targeted outreach into immigrant communities
- Formalised selection and recruitment procedures owing to ‘professionalisation’ of volunteer organisations
- General organisational routines, such as planning, meeting, reporting, which may appear as a too strong contrast-culture to immigrants in the context of their voluntary action
- Lack of contact, knowledge about and experience with immigrant communities and existing diversity within communities;
- Excluding and rigid definitions of volunteering that do not match with the concepts of volunteering migrants have (organisational ⇔ informal volunteering)
- Prejudices
- Lack of intercultural competences
- Lack of attention for building relationship, too focused on meeting targets
- Fear of and resistance to change with respect to the running of the organisation and the composition of the membership
- Lack of childcare facilities, which can hinder women to volunteer
- Gender roles; men and women work together which may hinder participation of some women
- Lack of attention for recognition and rewarding of volunteers
- Lack of suitable work placements for migrants that value their skills

With respect to undocumented migrants:

- Fear of the consequences to involve immigrants without legal status and therefore not wanting to take any risks.

With respect to migrant organisations:

- “Bureaucratization” of legal provisions for organizations to obtain legal status or funding: Lack of knowledge and capacity of migrant community organisations to obtain this status or respective funding
- Lack of resources (time, human resources, finance) to invest in organisational development
- Lack of leadership and volunteers with skills and networks to build the organisation
- Organisational structure, that is not attractive for the young generation.
- Gender roles; women not participating on all levels of the organisation.
- Lack of cross-sector contacts which could help to open up new areas of activities and work
- Cultural and religious values which may hinder co-operation with other groups and organisations both from the host community population and other immigrant communities;
- Experience with and/or fear of being misused as a recruitment pool for immigrant volunteers by mainstream volunteer organisations

- Prejudices
- Suffering from lack of trust and suspicion by the public owing to the hardened integration debate.

c) On the policy level

- Legal status questions: Interdiction for some groups of migrants to do “unpaid work” or to volunteer;
- Legal barriers for immigrants where the status has not yet been decided upon and who seek residence permit on the grounds of labour or asylum as well “undocumented” migrants.
- Overlong procedures concerning asylum applications and the mental insecurity in which refugees as a consequence have to live in, which may hinder voluntary commitment.
- Lack of public attention for the role volunteering may play for integration
- Lack of a targeted volunteering infrastructure
- Rules and regulations pertaining to the combination of benefits and volunteering: specifically those where citizens receiving social benefits are not entitled to volunteer.
- Lack of an elaborated integration policy on local level in which volunteering has a firm role
- Lack of a co-ordinated approach between different governmental agencies responsible for integration and volunteering to promote volunteering as a means of integration
- “Democratic impatience” (Penninx); expecting integration to take place within a few years, not embarking on a generational process.

d) On a “societal” level

- Barriers here are related to the public debate on integration and migration: Very often these debates are linked to terrorism and criminality rather to the positive effects that migration can have. This creates a barrier of migrants towards their host community and will have a negative effect on their willingness to integrate
- Important and popular sections of the media have tended to take a hostile stance towards asylum seekers and other immigrant groups. Reporting very often is unbalanced and inaccurate, with the potential to increase community tension

Criteria of good practice

In the context of the INVOLVE project a variety of projects have been identified that promote the involvement of migrants in volunteering – they will be presented in the next chapter. They present all or at least some of the following common features:

- **Accessibility:**
Volunteering needs to be easily accessible for migrants. This can mean to provide information material in the language of targeted migrant groups and the payment of travel expenses for volunteers. Especially mainstream organisations might need to be more creative in locations and forms of recruitment. This requires knowledge about migrants’ attitudes towards volunteering as well as their social habits.

- **Diversity:**
Developing targeted programmes and financial support to increase diversity in (mainstream) voluntary organizations and to recruit migrant volunteers. Diversity needs to be promoted as a win-win situation for both sides: Mainstream organisations will learn from their migrant volunteers and benefit from the skills, competences and creativity they bring.
- **Clarity and quality of the volunteer placements:**
Both the organisation and the migrant volunteer need to have a clear understanding of what volunteering is about (in general), what the volunteer placement consists of (concretely) and about the objectives of the volunteer placement. The clearer the context of the placement is the higher will be the probability of success for both sides. Individual attention and guidance may be necessary especially for migrants that are not familiar with the organisational environment they are working in. Finally, time needs to be invested to match the migrant volunteer's needs and expectations to those of the organisation he or she will work with.
- **Skills development:**
Volunteer placement shall develop migrant volunteers' skills and potential to integrate. They shall furthermore take advantage of the skills the migrant volunteers bring with them such as the knowledge of a foreign language, a foreign culture etc.
- **Valuing:**
Acknowledgment of the role and the achievements of migrant volunteers by the organisation and the wider public are crucial to counterbalance lack of confidence and the negative public perception of migrants in the society (recognition can happen through thanking ceremonies, awards, etc.)
- **Visibility:**
Good practice gives higher visibility of migrants and their contribution to the host society through volunteering – to the wider society and to the migrant him- or herself (information campaigns, publishing articles in local papers on successful projects etc).
- **Community empowerment:**
Good practice links volunteer placements to the local community life to foster integration. Migrant volunteer placements shall ensure direct contact between the local community and the migrants and shall enable migrants to make a real difference to the place they live in. community.
- **Networking – Building bonding and bridging social capital:**
Social capital is defined as the sum of ties between citizens, both informal and formal interpersonal networks they create and shared feelings of social belonging, trust and reciprocity. With the help of social networks of which they are part of, people can create opportunities for themselves in the medium- or long term. A difference is being made between bonding and bridging social capital, the latter in the case of immigrants being networks that are formed across ethnic boundaries. The generation of both bonding and bridging capital is vital for migrant communities in the different phases of the integration process (even if government policy very often focuses merely on the bridging aspect of social capital). Migrants' organizations play a key role in

welcoming and giving help to new migrants. They can help in giving information about volunteering opportunities both within the migrant and the mainstream volunteer sector. Finally, they may help host community voluntary organisations to better understand migrants' problems and needs, and to better organize the services they provide. Good practice can, thus, focus both on both networking within the migrant community and between migrant and mainstream organisations.

- **Sustainability:**

Develop a long-term perspective: Integration will not be attained through one-off projects but needs long term commitment from the voluntary and the government sector. Promoting diversity needs a long term and sustainable strategy.

- **Transferability**

Good practice examples may be transferable to other contexts: They can be applicable to other migrant target groups, to other geographical areas or to a wider range of mainstream organisations.

Conclusions

The INVOLVE project has confirmed that there **is little if any research on volunteering of migrants and its role to integration**. Some partners have done primary action research to address this lack of data. Main findings suggest that while volunteering is generally perceived to **contribute to a better integration**, there are still **major barriers** towards a higher involvement of migrants in such activities – at personal, organizational and societal level.

To remove these barriers is a **common effort** of all stakeholders: Volunteer organizations and migrant organizations to improve knowledge on the possibilities that volunteering offers to migrants; mainstream organizations to be accessible to migrants, to commit to diversity and to offer quality and empowering volunteer placements; Government to tear down legal barriers connected to the status of migrants; and Migrant organizations fostering both bonding and bridging social capital in migrant communities.

Third country nationals are **far from being a homogenous group** – which makes it impossible to find solutions towards integration that fits them all. On the other hand they are just one immigrating group and it appears sometimes to be somewhat “artificial” to focus only them: When promoting migrant volunteering, mainstream organizations do not tend to have strategies on third country nationals in particular but want them to embrace different immigrant communities. Moreover, even naturalized persons of immigrant origin having obtained citizenship might still well need to be target integration efforts – even if by definition they are no more third country nationals. Reality proves to be too complex in order to fit in clear-cut categories.

In the same way it is impossible to find good practice **that fits all country realities and gives answers to challenges identified**. This report proposes some common criteria of good practice making it likely that volunteer organizations succeed in recruiting migrant volunteers. Nevertheless, good practice both on policy and organizational level can obviously only be transferred after thorough consideration of the targeted groups and the context in which the

practice is to be transferred. The INVOLVE project tried in this sense to instigate discussions and learning processes based on the experiences shown above.

Even considering all differences – volunteering is has been found by all country partners to play a role as an indicator for integration – and contributes to several other indicators as it enable migrants to acquire basic knowledge on the host society, to participate in society through non-formal and informal education and to improve their employability on the labour market. It generellay contributes to empower migrants and activates their capacities for self-help.

But volunteering enables as well the host society to deal with increasing diversity and accommodate change and is a means by which both immigrants and non-immigrants meet and to take civic action on community issues that matter to both of them.

In this way, volunteering is a major element in the Common Basic Principles on Integration as put forward by the European Commission – promoting integration as a two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the host country.

The **potential of volunteering for integration** is, however, not unleashed automatically but requires targeted policies and efforts by all stakeholders to ensure equal access to organisations and institutions and the openness of the host society to facilitate this access and accommodate the immigrant in ways that help to break down existing barriers.

Networking between migrant and mainstream organizations has been named as a key feature for success. And **Government at different levels should help create an enabling environment** both for volunteering in general and for migrants to get involved in volunteering. The best initiatives start bottom-up – but need a framework in which to emerge.

Generally, volunteering can be seen as both an **instrument towards integration** and an **indicator of integration** itself. It is a complex and changing reality, which is still far from being researched sufficiently in order to make use of its full potential in integration policies.

Some of the following recommendations will help in this regard:

All levels of government and within mainstream organizations shall **commit to diversity** – through a ‘top down and bottom up’ approach. Governments shall provide the provisions that **acknowledge volunteering to be a legal right to every migrant regardless of the status – available as off the day of arrival**. Integration policies shall in general **recognize volunteering as an instrument and as an indicator of integration**. Existing formal and informal volunteering conducted by migrants and migrant organisations need to be publicly recognized and acknowledged.

The institutions at European level shall se to it that volunteering is **included as an instrument and an indicator of integration in one of the next Handbooks on Integration of the EU** and that special attention is attributed to **volunteering in the implementation of the Common Basic Principles of Integration**. In order to strengthen the role of volunteering in integration issues, the EU shall develop a comprehensive **strategy on volunteering and its role in European societies**.

Finally, some of the above mentioned concepts might have to be reconsidered or extended in their meaning. Volunteering needs to be defined more broadly in order to embrace activities especially informal and non-organisational volunteering that corresponds with many migrants' attitudes and understanding of volunteering. Furthermore, there is still no common understanding of integration even if the European Commission seems to have found the lowest common denominator with its definition. A particular focus on political and **social participation** might be helpful in integration debates – with volunteering in its different forms being a major instrument.