



# **The role of virtual database in the promotion and development of voluntary work**

**Database “brīvprātīgais.lv”**

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# Who we are

Non-profit making entity (NGO) founded in 2006:

- uniting activists from different fields passionate for voluntary work
- working to promote and improve motivation of society to involve in voluntary work, facilitate dialogue between actors involved in voluntary work (volunteers, state, entrepreneurs, and organizations/NGOs)
- participant of working group for development of legal framework of volunteering in Latvia
- participant of working group preparing the program for EVY 2011 in Latvia, partner of co-ordinating authority in implementation of activities of EVY 2011
- member of Steering Committee of implementation of program of EVY 2011
- member of national Civil Society Council
- member of CEV since December 2010

# What we do

- Training - for potential and existing volunteers and voluntary work organizations - NGOs, municipal and state institutions
- Consultancy and lobbying - for volunteers and organizations (government, local government, NGOs, agencies etc.) on the matters of voluntary work
- Information/Research/Networking - seminars for different audience, researches on voluntary work policy and practice in regions etc.
- Publications – voluntary work fact sheets, publications, tool kits and handbooks on homepage useful both for volunteers, NGOs or any person concerned.
- Projects - mainly to advance voluntary work in Latvia and address different social issues

# Why voluntary work Database

Created in a framework of Capacity Building Project (2007/2008) aimed at creating and developing the internet portal [www.brivpratigais.lv](http://www.brivpratigais.lv) as a significant tool for voluntary work activities and projects.

**Objective of the Database:** To provide a platform - meeting point – for volunteers and organizations looking for volunteers, applying possibilities of modern technologies and virtual space as the most effective ways to promote education and participation of civil society.

## **Incentive behind:**

- To increase number of people involved in volunteering, specially adults and seniors
- To promote volunteering activities, to educate society about volunteering issues, to increase prestige of volunteering
- To use modern technologies to ensure communication between actors involved and ease access to volunteering



# How does it work

- Designed in PHP programming language and uses MySQL system database as data carrier.
- The greatest part of database system is programmed specifically for organizations "brīvprātīgais.lv" needs, here and there parts of the free "Joomla Framework" system are used.
- In every inquiry form protective filters are used to avoid the unauthorized placement of ads in the database.
- "Datateks" automatic copy system is used for database protective copies to guard against data loss in case of technical failure.
- It is possible to complete a questionnaire with or without registration. Registered users can change the information, update the offer.



# Facilities

- For volunteers:
  - To create profile (indicate volunteering field, time one can devote to volunteering, special skills ect.)
  - To read volunteering offers
  - To receive volunteering offers on e-mail
  - Directly communicate with organisations
  - Get assistance from “brīvprātīgais.lv”
  - Use on-line forum
  - Access resources on volunteering (library, information)

# Facilities

- For voluntary work organisations:
  - To create profile and update it
  - To look for volunteers in database
  - Send direct messages to volunteers
  - To post actual offers for volunteers
  - To send information to registered volunteers (according to certain criteria)
  - Get assistance from “brīvprātīgais.lv”
  - Access resources on volunteering (library, information, tool kits etc.)

# Profile of volunteers – total 1155

## The breakdown by sectors:

- Art/ culture = 689
- Social (work with socially excluded groups, different social problems) = 631
- Environment = 573
- Animals = 551
- Media and communications= 542
- Education = 535
- Theatre = 483
- Music = 467
- Sports = 424
- Health care = 402
- Public administration= 247
- Minorities = 222
- Politics = 187
- Religion = 137
  
- *Not specified*= 141

## The breakdown by age groups

- under 15 years = 35
- 16-25 years = 850
- 26 - 50 years = 248
- over 50 = 22

## The breakdown by regions:

- Riga region = 805
- Vidzeme region = 144
- Zemgale region = 120
- Kurzeme region= 106
- Latgale region= 41

## The breakdown by gender

- women = 996
- men = 158

# Profile of organisations

- Total = 74
- The breakdown by regions
  - Riga region = 63
  - Vidzeme region = 3
  - Zemgale region = 7
  - Kurzeme region = 6
  - Latgale region = 6



# Achievements and good example

- Considerable resource to find volunteers
- Wide use of the Database by other NGOs, state and municipal institutions
- Acknowledged in several national/municipal policy papers (State Youth Policy Guidelines 2009-2018, National Youth Policy Program 2009-2013, Riga City development program working with young people 2008-2012)
- Included in official papers as a resource of information for EVY 2011

# Challenges

- how to get more organizations in
- how to get more adults and seniors involved
- how to find a “right” volunteer for a “right” work
- how to get feedback both from volunteers and organizations
- how to ensure effective management of the database



# Debate Club and

## Debate Club

- Database **is** a good tool to promote voluntary work
- Database **is not** a good tool to promote voluntary work

(some themes to discuss: management of volunteers, technical challenges, principles of volunteering etc.)



# Discussions

Discussions – *what would we describe as a core definition and inviolable principles of volunteering that underlie this project/database?*





brīvprātīgais.lv

[www.brivpratigais.lv](http://www.brivpratigais.lv)

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