



# Local Volunteering Infrastructure

**An overview based on the  
situation in 8 countries**

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## PUBLIC POLICIES

- Since the 1970s voluntary sector and governments start to promote volunteering in **general**.
- Independent from each other in many countries (local) VCs arise with comparable tasks and functions.
- Focus on **recruitment** and **brokerage**



## Actual number of local VCs

- America: 365 (1919)
- Denmark: 75 (1992)
- England: 324 (1964)
- Finland: 37 (1993)
- Germany: 322 (1980)
- Italy: 72/346 (1991)
- Netherlands: 238 (1972)
- Norway: 275 (1991)



# Volunteering Infrastructure (VI)

- Organisations providing infrastructure to promote, stimulate and develop volunteering in general by:
  - **Volunteer** support: brokerage
  - **Management** support: consultation
  - **Community** support: proper conditions



## WHAT GIVES RISE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VI?

- Lack of volunteers, due shift from collective to reflexive styles of volunteering
- Discourses on civic engagement assign new values to volunteering



## REFLEXIVE STYLES

- Individual motives (*'self-interest rightly understood'*) are increasingly important
- Volunteering as a biographically embedded reality, with expressions appropriate to each stage of life
- Volunteer involvement is changing rather than declining
- Interests of organisations and volunteers do not necessarily agree



## PUBLIC POLICIES (DISCOURSES) ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Welfare:** service provision
- **Democracy:** active citizenship
- **Economy:** participation/inclusion
- **Community:** mutual trust & support



# DIVERGENT EXPECTATIONS

- Volunteers: offer me the best experience
- Organisations: recruit, select, train and retain the best volunteers
- Governments: involve as much citizens for at least 4 different goals (*see discourses*)
- Third parties: offer the means for inclusion, integration, service learning, Corporate Social Responsibility, alternative punishment



## LEGITIMACY VI

- VCs serve the divergent interests different parties have in volunteering
- Just brokerage and recruitment do not meet these interests
- VCs broaden out from brokerage agency to **development agency**



## **CORE FUNCTIONS VI**

- BROKERAGE
- MARKETING
- GOOD PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT
- DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES
- POLICY RESPONSE & CAMPAIGNING
- STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT



# **FUNCTIONS PROVIDE COHERENCE & DYNAMICS**

*Core Functions in The Netherlands*

- **Interpret** (vision & policy development)
- **Connect** (brokerage)
- **Strengthen** (training & support)
- **Spread** (promotion & recognition)
- **Anchor** (expertise, good practices & innovation)



## IDEAL VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

Function / Level	volunteer	organisation	community
Brokerage			
Marketing			
Good Practices			
Developing opportunities			
Policy respons			
Strategic development			



## **REAL PERFORMANCES OF VCs**

- NOT ALL OF THE SIX FUNCTIONS ARE PERFORMED IN THE EIGHT COUNTRIES



# INTERNATIONAL DIFFERENCES

function/country	VS	GB	GE	DE	FI	IT	NO	NE
brokerage	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
marketing	X	X	X			X		X
Good pr.		X	X			X		X
Developing opportunities	X	X	X	X		X		X
Policy respons		X	X	X				X
Strategic dev.	X	X	X			X		X



## EXPLANATION

- Not all of the six functions are needed for each level of support
- In some countries support is not provided on all of the three levels



## LEVELS OF SUPPORT

country/level	volunteer	organisation	community
America	X		
Denmark	X		X
England	X	X	X
Finland	X		
Germany	X	X	X
Italy		X	X
Netherlands	X	X	X
Norway	X		X



## EXPLANATION

- Each of the six functions is not wanted in the same degree for each discourse



## 2 main functions per discourse

Function/discourse	welfare	economy	democracy	community
brokerage	X	X		
marketing	X			
good practice				X
develop.opport.		X	X	X
policy respons			X	
strategic develop				



## EXPLANATION

- Discourses differ per country
- Discourses can follow each other
- Different discourses can be under discussion simultaneously
- Discourses are dependent of nonprofit regime
- **Preconditions for the providing of all functions on all levels lack, due to VC's limited scale or resources**



# RELATION BETWEEN DISCOURSES & REGIMES

<b>DISCOURSE / REGIME</b>	<b>WELFARE</b>	<b>DEMOCRACY</b>	<b>ECONOMY</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
LIBERAL	X			
CORPORATIST	X		X	X
SOCIALDEMOCRATIC		X	X	X
ETATIST				



## SCALE & RESOURCES

- Ideal VC's equipment: appropriate premises, information technology, professional staff (3 FTE), \$190.000 to \$260.000 annual funding\*
- Real average funding:
  - America: (56% VCs) \$100.000 or less
  - England: (92% VCs) \$100.000 or less

\* Volunteering England (2006)



# PRECONDITIONS

- Budget influences number of volunteer opportunities
- VCs with larger budgets keep directors in place and reap the resulting benefits
- VCs with larger budgets realise the advantages that greater tenure and more stable leadership can bring\*

\* Brudney, American Volunteer Center Survey, 2003



## Main financiers of local VI

Financier / Country	National Governm.	Regional Governm.	Local Govern.	NGOs	Charities	Businesses
America		X		X	X	X
Denmark	X		X		X	
England			X	X	X	
Finland			X	X	X	
Germany		X	X	X	X	X
Italy						X
Netherlands			X		X	X
Norway	X					



## RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE (VI)

- The significance of VI not yet is described thoroughly
- VI-workers lack a clear understanding of the divergent expectations that influence their operations
- The value of VI only is expressed in symbolic national politics, not in durable local policies