



VOLUNTARY ACTION **IN SPAIN**

FACTS AND FIGURES

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to provide comprehensive information as well as statistics and data on volunteering in Spain. First of all, it gives an overview of the historical, political and social framework regarding volunteering in Spain as well as an approach to the general understanding of and attitude towards volunteering in the national context. Secondly, it explores the volunteering infrastructure and describes the actors involved in volunteering at all levels (local, regional and national). Furthermore, the study provides broad data on features of the volunteer population and the sectors in which volunteers are active. Finally, concluding remarks on recent developments, weaknesses and challenges of volunteering in Spain are given.

1. ATTITUDES TOWARDS VOLUNTEERING

Historical and social context

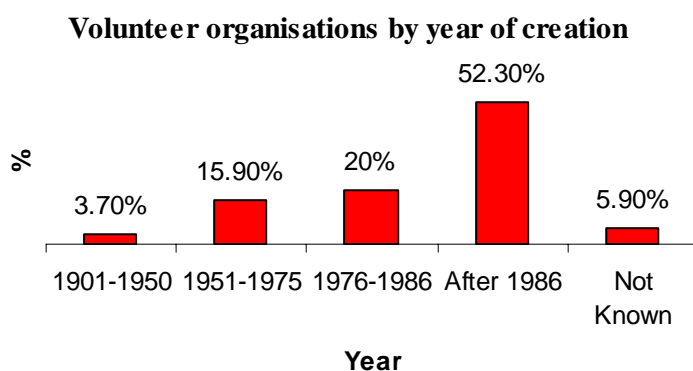
The evolution of volunteering in Spain differs to a great extent from most European countries because of its recent political history. Indeed, the fascist dictatorship of General Franco from 1939 until 1975 meant a strict prohibition of rights and freedoms related to social, political and civic participation until late 70s. In this way, although volunteering activities had existed before, it was not until the establishment of a democratic regime that the volunteer movement could really come into sight. In this context, thanks to the existence of a political landscape favourable to the emergence of autonomous voluntary organisations, a volunteer movement started to evolve. The recent history of Spain might explain why volunteering is still relatively small and weak compared to other countries in Western Europe. However, it is progressively moving forward.

During Franco's authoritarian regime, the State controlled all forms of civic participation in a direct or indirect way (Mora Rosado, 1996 cited in Osorio García 2003). In this sense, volunteering did exist, but not as it is understood today. It was mainly a form of activities developed inside of organisations monopolised by the State. The launch of a "Law on Associations" in mid 60's made possible the emergence of certain groups carrying out voluntary activities under the umbrella of the Catholic Church, like Caritas and Cruz Roja Española¹. In the beginning of the 70's there was an effervescence of civic movements claiming and acting with a view to improve the quality of life of citizens (Corral in Osorio García, 2003:94). In late 70's, however, with the arrival of the democratic regime, many of these civic movements suffered an important crisis because of the creation of political parties and the confidence on the democratic institutions and the emerging Welfare State to provide social welfare (Casado, 1994). According to Corral (in Osorio García, 2003), this thought, which remained dominant until mid 80's, implied that most social actors

¹ See www.iniciativasocial.net/evolucion.htm

adopted an attitude against volunteering since the State was seen as the responsible and capable actor to satisfy all social needs. Thus, Trade Unions believed that volunteering was a way to occupy jobs by means of low wages and Employer Organisations believed that volunteers were carrying out activities/jobs without proper qualifications. However, in the mid 80's society started to realise that the State could not guarantee the whole range of social needs and, there was a strong support and encouragement of volunteer organisations, above all from the government. In this way, the State not only legitimated volunteer organisations but also promoted them. The late 80's and early 90's represented therefore the volunteering "boom" in Spain, with a significant increase of the associative movement (not-for-profit and voluntary organisations) referring to the social, cultural, sports and educational fields (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Source: PPVE (1997) in Osorio García (2003)

This volunteering "boom" set out the characteristics of volunteering in Spain as we understand it nowadays. Since then, Spanish volunteer organisations have often become served as service providers in collaboration with the State and, accordingly, Marbán and Rodríguez Cabrero (2001) stress that, at present, volunteering is very much related to the Welfare State model². In line with this idea, Sarasa (1995) identified different kinds of relationships between volunteering and the State, depending on the Welfare State model. According to this author, in the Spanish case the relationship between volunteering and the State is characterised by: high fragmentation of volunteering infrastructure/organisations, high financial dependence of voluntary organisations on the State, competition among voluntary organisations to get public funding and mistrust in the relationships among both actors.

If we move from this theoretical model to the reality in Spain, as we will see afterwards, there is indeed a vast range of volunteer and non-for-profit organisations, rather than some peak organisations that channel all scope of associative or voluntary activities. This fragmentation of

² It is generally accepted that in Europe there are at least three different types of Welfare State: the Scandinavian, the Continental and the Southern. See Gosta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990).

organisations and the financial dependence on local, regional and national governments brought about an important competition among them when trying to get funding.

The role of government in regulating volunteering

The involvement of the State in the organisation, support and promotion of volunteering in Spain has progressively increased in the recent years. According to García Campa (2001), we can distinguish three temporal phases as to the role of the government in the regulation of volunteering activities.

1. 1970-1980: public authorities start to elaborate disperse norms regarding only partial and concrete aspects of volunteering, but not the whole phenomenon.
2. 1980-1990: the State begins to regulate volunteering from a juridical point of view , without directly tackling volunteering but regulating it through other areas (e.g. disability).
3. 1990-2000: both national and regional (Autonomous Communities) governments start to elaborate laws referring to volunteering. The first laws appear at regional level (e.g. in 1991 in Catalonia, in 1992 in Aragon, in 1993 in Andalucía, etc...) since Autonomous Communities are competent for this area. In January 1996, the national government launches the Law 6/1996 on Volunteerism, with the aim of bringing together all the regional laws. Nowadays, every single Autonomous Community has its own law regarding volunteering. Thus, it should be noted that in Spain both regional and national levels of government have competence for regulating and taking action on this field.

Generally speaking, the development of legislation on volunteering from all levels of government has made possible a general and common understanding of volunteering across the country. It should be stressed, however, that there is divergence across the several regional laws in relation to the definition of concrete contents of voluntary activities, voluntary organisations or rights and obligations of volunteers.

According to the 1996 national Law on Volunteerism, *volunteering refers to all activities of general interest being carried out by physical persons outside all kinds of paid relationships (labour, mercantile), being freely chosen and with an altruistic and solidarity character.*

Having seen that both national and regional governments in Spain have recognised volunteering from a legal point of view, it is worth exploring other policy initiatives that the Spanish government has adopted with a view to organise and support volunteering. Despite the fact that several regional governments play an active role in developing a policy towards volunteering in their respective Autonomous Communities, this research aims at providing an overview of the

reality and extent of volunteering at national level and, therefore, in this section we will cover only national initiatives.

The government recognises and assumes its role on facilitating, promoting and supporting volunteering. The first example of this motivation is the aforementioned Law on Volunteerism, which aimed at regulating and supporting volunteering on the one hand, and raising awareness in society on the other. In order to comply with these objectives, the government undertook in 1997 an additional action, the first *State Plan on Volunteering* (1997-2000). The first Plan referred to four dimensions: sensitisation, promotion, support and co-ordination. In 2001, the government elaborated the second Plan for the period 2001-2004 that followed similar structure and objectives.

In this way, the II Plan aimed to promote and raise awareness of volunteering and, for this purpose, stressed the importance of supporting actions related to volunteering such as information campaigns, events, research, major presence of both volunteer organisations and issues of volunteering in the media and the organisation of an annual National Congress on Volunteering,. It also included a set of actions related to promote and consolidate volunteering of different ages and groups. In another sense, it stated the need to support voluntary organisations in terms of means; to attain better coordination between public authorities and voluntary entities; and to achieve the social involvement of enterprises.

As the II Plan stated, the government holds an annual National Congress on Volunteering. It gathers representatives from local, regional and national governments; from regional (Autonomous Communities and provinces) and national volunteer platforms; from volunteer organisations, foundations and NGOs; from Universities and research centres, and volunteers themselves. It aims to provide room for forum, participation, exchange of information, and presentation of research studies. Through different seminars, workshops and debates, the hundreds of people who assist in these annual Congresses discuss the state of volunteering in Spain, the challenges that volunteering faces and the actions that need to be taken, elaborating a document containing the conclusions of the event.

Social acceptance of volunteering

Nowadays, Spanish society is witnessing year after year an increase in engagement of population in voluntary activities. From a social and cultural point of view, volunteering is seen as a symbol of solidarity and, thus, enjoys a positive connotation. In this sense, the negative assumptions regarding volunteering that some social actors (Trade Unions and Employers Organisations mainly) had in the 80's, as we have seen before, do not prevail at present.

According to a national survey on solidarity attitudes in Spain (CIS, 2001 cited in Alemán and Trinidad, 2001), most of Spanish population (74%) consider that engagement in volunteering shows interest in social problems and is therefore seen as a positive trend. Accordingly, 79% of Spanish people value the tasks and activities being developed by NGOs as “very good” or “good”. It should be stressed that although an NGO is not a voluntary organisation in a strict sense, in Spain

in 2001, 78% of the people working in social action NGOs were volunteers (Cabra de Luna, 2001). A similar percentage of citizens consider that the increase of volunteering and NGOs in Spain shows that our society is every time more supportive and keen on values such as solidarity. As we can see, there is a great social and cultural acceptance of volunteering in Spain since the majority of Spanish people regard volunteering activities in a very positive way.

2. EVOLUTION OF VOLUNTEERISM (recent developments)

Recent trends

As pointed out before the number of volunteers in Spain is increasing every year. It is interesting to note that in 2001 the Council of Ministers³ fixed the average growth of volunteers in Spain with 125.000 persons par year. The estimated number of volunteers is of 1.073.636 (2001).

It should be stressed, however, that over the recent years the nature of volunteering has slightly changed. Indeed, not all volunteers engage in a formal way within an organisation, since there are other kinds of volunteering that need to be also taken into account. In fact, this positive trend of major civic involvement and engagement in voluntary activities has also been shown in a new form of volunteering as a response to recent tragic events taken place in Spain. An example of this spontaneous and informal volunteer involvement is the reactions motivated by the “Prestige” oil disaster in the North coast of Spain in 2003. In this case, thousands of volunteers from all over the country (and to a lesser extent from Europe) went to Galicia to clean the coast from the black tide.

Another new form of volunteering that can be also observed in Spain is the so-called “online volunteering”. In other words, volunteering from the distance using Internet tools. This alternative offers the possibility of volunteering from our houses or work places assisting with research, translations or consultancy. According to the Foundation Solired, the profile of the online volunteer in Spain is a busy employee, with university studies and vast professional experience (Osorio García, 2003). Several Spanish websites contain databases on online volunteering.

Main actors in the promotion and support of volunteering

As Osorio García (2003) points out, apart from all levels of government, which play an important role in raising awareness and encouraging volunteering, there are other key actors in the promotion of volunteering; private entities and universities.

- *Private Entities*

³ Communicate from 22/06/2001.

In 1986, the *Plataforma para la promoción del voluntariado (PPVE)* was created on a national level. It comprises several entities engaged in volunteering (voluntary organisations and regional volunteer centres from the Autonomous Communities and the provinces) and its aim is to consolidate and to represent the volunteer movement towards public authorities and other stakeholders. Its activities range from advice and research on volunteering to awareness raising campaigns and training.

There is another volunteer association at national level called AEVOL (*Asociación española de voluntariado*, Spanish volunteer association), which focuses its activity more at international level.

At regional level, almost every Autonomous Community counts with volunteer centres or Federations. In a similar way, many provinces (a territorial subdivision within the Autonomous Communities) have also volunteer platforms or agencies.

Additionally, many NGOs, foundations and voluntary organisations (national ones with solid implementation like Caritas or Red Cross) also promote volunteering and offer training.

- *Universities*

The educative community is perceived as a key actor in the promotion of volunteering. The last National Congress on Volunteering (November 2004) stressed the need to involve educative institutions in the spread of volunteering values and promotion of this activity, from school to university.

At present, many Spanish universities promote social and cultural volunteering among their students through courses on volunteering, sensitisation activities or research. According to the recent study report “Spanish universities’ structures of solidarity: organisation and functioning” (Arias and Simon, 2005), Spanish universities are more and more promoting solidarity values and developing volunteering activities with a view to integrate disadvantaged groups in society. Almost 89% of Spanish university centres carry out activities on sensitisation of society regarding solidarity values. In this sense, departments responsible for the promotion of solidarity values and the development of a culture of peace have been set up. The most common activities of these areas are related to development cooperation, volunteering and disability issues.

3. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

As we have seen, the role of the government in Spain in relation to volunteering is mainly to be an agent for promoting and supporting voluntary activities. Examples of governmental actions are the State Plans on Volunteering and the annual National Congress of Volunteering. At national level, however, there is no governmental department focused on volunteering issues. The *Minister for Work and Social Affairs*, through the *Secretary of State for Social Services, Families and Disabled*, is the main actor in the promotion of volunteering and the development of awareness raising campaigns. The *Ministry for Youth* also takes part in the promotion of volunteering targeting young people and coordinates the International Voluntary Service in Spain (Osorio García, 2003).

Due to the constitutional distribution of power between the State and the decentralised Autonomous Communities, there are directorate generals and public institutes or centres dedicated to promote and support volunteering, which depend on the regional government. In this sense, the different Departments for Social Affairs from regional governments dispose of agencies that promote, facilitate and support volunteering; organise training courses for volunteers and offer information and advice on these issues to both organisations and volunteers. Finally, at local level, authorities of many cities carry out actions to inform and train volunteers.

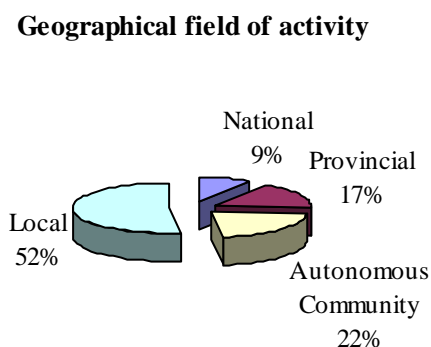
Moving to the private sphere, in Spain there is no national volunteer centre in a strict sense. As mentioned before, since 1986 there is the PPVE, which integrates sixty organisations (voluntary organisations and regional federations) and, more recently, the AEVOL, another national volunteer association more active at international level. You can find in most of the seventeen Spanish Autonomous Communities regional federations or centres that gather volunteer associations and organisations active in their territory with a view to promote and support volunteering. Their main activities are the organisation of training for volunteers, organisation of events, research on volunteering and awareness raising campaigns.

The number of volunteer organisations being members of regional centres varies across the different Autonomous Communities but broadly speaking it ranges from less than 50 to 300 (e.g. Federació Catalana del Voluntariat Social). The number of volunteers, therefore, is also different across regions, varying from 20.000 to 300.000.

Furthermore, it should be stressed that even in those Autonomous Communities with a regional centre, many provinces (other existing territorial subdivisions) have associations in representation of the voluntary organisations within their territories.

Thus, looking at the geographical field of intervention, most volunteer organisations focus their activities on their local communities (52%) and their Autonomous Community (22%). 17% of these associations have the province as geographical scope. The percentage of organisations that carry out activities with a national scope is the smallest one, with only 9% (Figure 2).

Figure 2



With regards to funding of volunteer organisations and regional volunteer centres in Spain, financial resources come, first of all, from public authorities and to a lesser extent from private donations such as membership fees, contributions, individual sponsors, foundations and private companies.

In relation to public funding, more than a half of Spanish volunteer organisations (56% of them) get 50% or more of their total funding from public authorities. This number even increases for small and medium volunteer organisations, since 89% of them are mainly dependent on funding from public authorities (Corral in Osorio García, 2003). Public funding comes from local, regional and national governments.

Looking at private sources, 66% of volunteer organisations receive regular funding from their members; 50% of them get contributions from individual sponsors; 25% receive donations from private companies and 19% of them from Foundations. Finally, 10% of volunteer organisations do not get any kind of public funding (Corral in Osorio García, 2003).

4. GENERAL DATA ON VOLUNTEERING

In Spain, there is a lack of official data on volunteering at national level, since there are no official statistics (e.g. national surveys) on this issue. As a result, the data available comes from research carried out by private entities or universities and is, accordingly, limited and not easily accessible. Taking into account this situation, the most recent data being published in Spain dates of late 90's or 2000/01, which will be the years of reference in this study.

4.1. Sectors and Activities

As we have seen in previous sections, the number of volunteers in Spain is growing. However, there are different types of volunteers; those who carry out voluntary activities within an organisation and those who volunteer in a more informal way (eg. people who volunteered due to the Prestige oil disaster). This last kind of volunteers is not counted on statistics since, despite spending several days or weeks on a full-time volunteering basis, they do not carry out voluntary activities regularly and within the framework of an organisation.

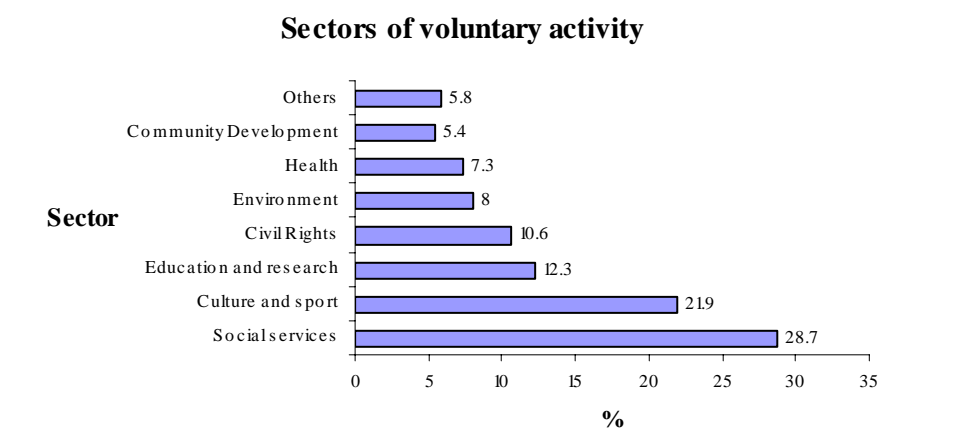
Considering those people who volunteer in a formal way within an organisation, Ruiz Olabuénaga (2001) differentiates on the one hand, *volunteering in a wider sense*, which refers to volunteers who spend at least one hour par month to carry out activities in a voluntary organisation; on the other hand, *volunteering in a stricter sense*, which refers to people that dedicate at least 4 hours par week to volunteer within an organisation. The data being presented in the following sections will mainly refer to volunteering in the stricter sense.

In 2000, the number of Spanish volunteers was 1.026.482 (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2001). In 2002, this number increased to almost 1.100.000. Taking into account only the population over 18 years old, volunteers represent between 9.5 and 15% of this population (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2001). It is worth noting that the number of people carrying out volunteering activities in a wider sense, however, was 2.900.000 in 2001 (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2001).

In relation to the sectors of voluntary activity, we can look at them from a double dimension. On the one hand, the areas of activity by percentage of volunteers carrying out their action within these sectors; On the other hand, the distribution par sectors of activity of the voluntary organisations.

As far as the former is concerned, “social services” is the main field of volunteer work with a 28.7% of the total number of volunteers; it is followed by “culture and sports” (21.9%) and “education and research” (12.3%) (Figure 3). Other areas in which volunteers are also involved include civil rights, environment and health. According to these data, we could affirm that the main type of voluntary activity in Spain is related to “social services”, being 4% of the Spanish population the percentage of people who do social volunteering (Marbán and Rodríguez Cabrero, 2001). Furthermore, if we interpret “social action” volunteering in a wider sense, and we include under this area not only social services but also civil rights, community development, health and international cooperation, then 2/3 of the total volunteer work in Spain is social volunteering.

Figure 3

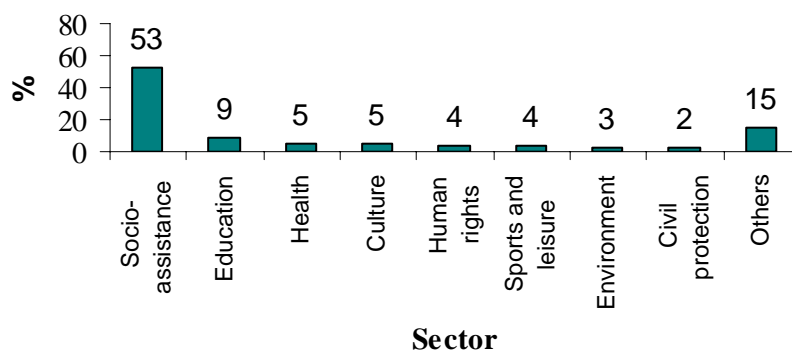


Source: Ruiz Olabuénaga (2001)

Looking at the other dimension of areas of voluntary activity, there is a similar tendency towards the social field as the main sector of activity of the voluntary organisations themselves (Figure 4). More than half of the voluntary organisations (53%) carry out their activities in the area of “socio-assistance”, which is followed in a long distance by “education” (with only a 9%).

Figure 4

Voluntary organisations by activity sector

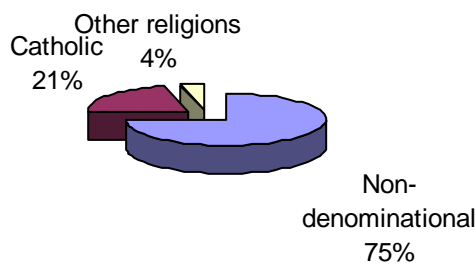


Source: PPVE (1997) in Osorio García (2003)

In another sense, it is worth noting that most volunteer organisations in Spain are not linked or related to the Church. According to Corral (in Osorio García, 2003), 75% of the volunteer organisations define themselves as non-denominational (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Voluntary organisations according to identity



Source: Osorio García (2003)

With regards to voluntary activity, volunteers carry out a wide range of tasks within these organisations. Corral (in Osorio García, 2003) points out that the main activities being performed by Spanish volunteers are:

- Assisting and helping with the tasks of the organisation;
- Organisation of activities;
- Being instructor (e.g. with children, disabled persons);
- Accompanying tasks;
- Health assistance;

Luque (in Smith, 1993) stresses that most volunteers prefer working close to the problems, at grassroots level, rather than doing campaigning and committee work. Thus, the more common activities are those directly linked to the target population of the organisation. According to Luque, the following are the main tasks that volunteers carry out within each area of work:

- Physic and psychic disabilities: transport, recreation, and education.
- Health and Welfare: home help, first aid.
- Homeless people, migrants and refugees: shelter, food, and social assistance.
- Children and youth: education, leisure, and prevention.
- Drug addiction: assistance, prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration.
- Older people: company, care, home assistance.
- AIDS: prevention, treatment, helps.
- Cooperation to development in rural or deprived areas.
- Civil protection: catastrophe prevention, rescue.

Another important feature of volunteer work in Spain is its high level of professionalism since most volunteers provide services or carry out tasks within their professional field as specialised professionals (Cabra de Luna, 2001).

4.2 Volunteer profiles

The general features that characterize a typical Spanish volunteer in 2004 (National Congress on Volunteering) are:

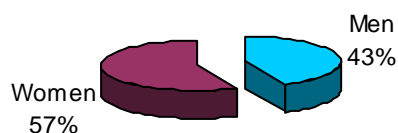
- Woman
- Under 35 years old
- University degree
- Volunteering in social services

We will now analyse in depth the different features of the volunteer population in Spain, although the most recent detailed data on volunteer profiles date of late 90's.

With relation to gender distribution in the Spanish volunteer population, more than half of volunteers are women. In the case of social services, which is the most common field of volunteering in Spain, the distribution by gender follows the same direction, 57% of the total amount of social volunteers are women (Figure 6). Furthermore, 75% of social action voluntary organisations have more women than men as volunteers (Corral in Osorio García, 2003).

Figure 6

Volunteer distribution by gender

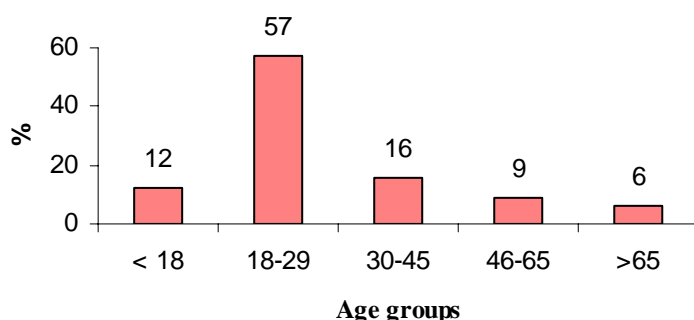


Source: Marbán and Rodríguez Cabrero (2001)

Looking at age groups of volunteers, Spanish young people volunteer more than any other age group. The average age of a volunteer in Spain is 25 years old. In November 2004 (National Congress on Volunteering), a 66% of volunteers aged less than 35 years old. In Figure 7 we can see a detailed distribution of volunteer population according to age. As mentioned, the most numerous age group is the one including young people aged from 18 to 29, which represents a 57% of the total number of volunteers. It is followed by the people aged between 30 and 45 years old, representing a 16% of the volunteer population. On the other hand, the less active group is the one integrated by people aged 65 years old and more. In this way, we can see that in Spain, volunteering by old people is still very low.

Figure 7

Volunteering population by age

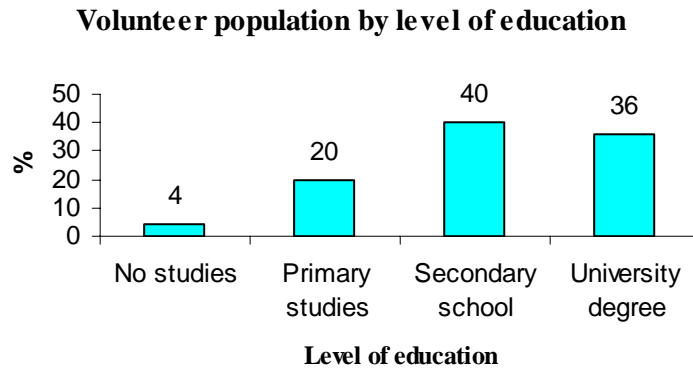


Source: PPVE (1997) in Osorio García (2003)

In terms of level of education, the biggest part of the volunteer population in Spain has at least secondary studies. In this way, 76% of volunteers have studies corresponding to secondary school (40%) or university (36%). The proportion of volunteers without any kind of education is

only 4% (Figure 8). Therefore, in Spain there is a positive correlation between educational level and volunteering: The higher the educational background the higher the likeliness to volunteer.

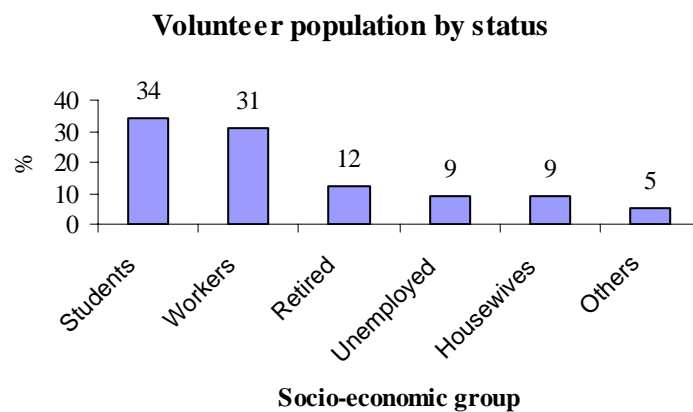
Figure 8



Source: PPVE (1997) in Osorio García (2003)

With relation to the socio-economic situation of volunteer population, students constitute the biggest group of volunteers, representing a 34% of the total number of volunteers. They are followed by the group of employees (31%). Retired people only represent the 12% of volunteer population (Figure 9).

Figure 9



Source: PPVE (1007) in Osorio García (2003)

Finally, regarding the social class of volunteers, it seems that medium and high social classes tend to volunteer in cultural, sports and leisure organisations, whereas medium-low and lower classes show a tendency towards social, civic and religious associations (Marbán and Rodríguez Cabrero, 2001).

4.3. Training of volunteers

The training of volunteers in Spain has traditionally been performed by voluntary organisations themselves. However public authorities have recently started to get involved in this field by providing structured training courses for both volunteers and organisations through “Schools of Volunteering” (eg. School of Volunteering of Madrid). Universities have also started to offer courses on volunteering issues as part of social related university degrees. All these initiatives constitute just the beginning of a process that needs to go further. Indeed, although the offer of training in Spain is increasing nowadays, it is still limited and only a few organisations have an organised training plan (Osorio García, 2003). Osorio García (2003), who reports on the results of a study of the Fundación Tomillo of 2000, states that the 67% of volunteer organisations carry out training activities for their volunteers. However, the most usual procedure is to assist to external conferences and training courses rather than offering training themselves.

As to the kind of training being provided, generally speaking, volunteer organisations or regional volunteer centres offer training seminars from a double angle. On the one hand, training courses targeting current and potential volunteers in relation to general and basic volunteering issues such as the meaning of volunteering and the acquirement/development of skills to volunteer. On the other hand, specific training courses for those working with particular groups (e.g. migrants, disabled people, prisons, hospitals).

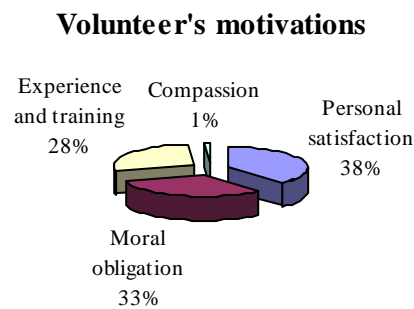
The Schools of Volunteering provide not only free training for volunteers but also for organisations with a view to improve their skills on the management of volunteers or to guide them on how to recruit volunteers and organise projects with volunteering participation.

There is no explicit data regarding the number of volunteers that receive training in Spain but thousands of them participate in seminars on volunteering. Indeed, there is a strong demand from volunteers to have access to training courses.

4.4. Volunteers' motivations

It is important to bear in mind that many people are involved in volunteering and, accordingly, the reasons that bring them to do so may be quite diverse. According to a study of voluntary entities conducted by Marbán and Rodríguez Cabrero in 1999, the main motivations of Spanish volunteers are related to personal satisfaction (38%), moral obligation (33%) and the possibility of getting experience, training, and acquiring skills (28%) (Figure 10).

Figure 10



Source: Marbán and Rodríguez Cabrero (2001)

4.5. Economic value of volunteering

Although the nature, motivation and aim of voluntary activities are radically opposed to economic benefits, it is obvious that volunteering generates an important value to national economies that is not officially counted but that exists. Thus, this section intends to provide data on the contribution that volunteering makes to Spanish economy.

To start with, we will look at the average time that volunteers dedicate to volunteer. According to different studies on volunteering in Spain, volunteers spend from 14 to 20 hours par month volunteering. Another research (Marbán and Rodríguez Cabrero, 2001) only focused on social volunteering concluded that the average time devoted to volunteer is 4.5 hours/week. Cabra de Luna (2001) mentions that 6% of the total amount of volunteers is full-time volunteers.

Ruiz Olabuénaga (2001) looks at the contribution of volunteering to national economy by different angles. One of them is to fix the equivalence between the work carried out by volunteers and the number of full-time jobs that this work implies. In this way, this author states that voluntary work in Spain is equivalent to 253.599 full-time jobs, which represents the 2.19% of the equivalent work. Table 1 includes the number of “equivalent jobs” of voluntary work par sectors of activity.

Table 1

Sector of activity	Equivalent voluntary work
Social services	73.016
Culture, sports and leisure	55.151
Education and research	31.262
Civil rights	27.031
Environment	20.408
Health	18.662
Community development	13.842
International activities	9.794
Others	4.532

Source: Ruiz Olabuénaga (2001)

Another way to perceive the economic value of volunteering is to estimate the equivalent contribution of this activity to the Gross Domestic Product. In this sense, Ruiz Olabuénaga (2001) concludes that volunteering would mean the 1.2% of the Spanish Gross Domestic Product, which amounts to around 4000 millions of Euros.

5. FINAL REMARKS/CONCLUSIONS

Due to the political history of Spain and in comparison to other European countries, volunteering can be considered a late phenomenon in this country since it has not been developed until late 80's and early 90's. Nevertheless the number of volunteers and voluntary organisations increases steadily and this civic phenomenon enjoys a high social and cultural acceptance and support. Furthermore, the different levels of government have gradually developed legislation, created infrastructures and carried out actions to support and promote volunteering. Thus, broadly speaking, national government has taken action from a macro dimension, with focuses on awareness raising and promotion of volunteering, whereas regional (Autonomous Communities) and local governments have played a more active role not only in the promotion but also in the support of volunteering and the training of volunteers, offering actions closer to volunteers.

In another sense, volunteering is still an evolving phenomenon in Spain, since it is not only attracting more people, but also is taking new forms outside formal organisations such as online volunteering and spontaneous volunteer engagement as a response to critique situations (eg. ecological or humanitarian crisis).

Having drawn attention to the positive trend that Spanish volunteering is experiencing, it we should not forget to mention the weaknesses, needs and challenges that this phenomenon faces nowadays. Indeed, there is still a need to improve several aspects that may hinder a better and further development of volunteering: First of all the fact that, despite the increase of number of volunteers, the 80% of Spanish population has so far never been involved in volunteering (Osorio García, 2003). Thus, efforts are still needed to involve more people in this civic activity. The encouragement of volunteering should specially focus on two different groups, whose participation in volunteer activities is still very low: old/retired people and unemployed. Secondly, most volunteer organisations and agencies have to face financial hardship. Indeed, there is a need of more public expenditure and funding for volunteering and volunteer agencies/organisations. Funding comes from governments of Autonomous Communities, the national government and local authorities. This funding is principally project based, which creates a serious instability to voluntary organisations. In this sense, organisations cannot design long-term work strategies, since their resources fund a concrete project and, afterwards, there is not security until a new grant has been awarded. Moreover, many NGOs and associations apply for limited funds. This creates competition among organisations and at the same time instability. Consequently, the activities and resources of voluntary organisations might be more and more limited and, therefore, lead to a diminution of volunteering in a mid and long term. Finally, national government should carry out research and

publish official statistical data on volunteering since so far research has only been conducted by universities and private entities. In this sense, it is recommended to develop periodic National Surveys on Volunteering.

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7. USEFUL CONTACTS

<http://www.mtas.es> (official homepage of the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs; in Spanish)

<http://www.iniciativasocial.net> (website with information and references on volunteering and NGOs; in Spanish)

<http://www.federacio.net> (website of Federació Catalana del Voluntariat Social; in Catalan)

<http://www.solidaridadyvoluntariado.org/index.jsp> (website of Fundació de la Solidaritat i del Voluntariat de la Comunitat Valenciana; in Spanish and Catalan)

<http://www.plataformavoluntariado.org> (national platform on volunteering; Spanish)

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