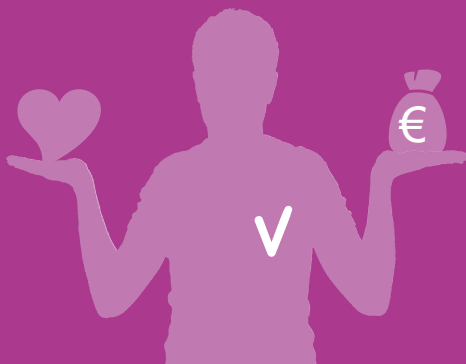


CEV General Assembly Conference

“Putting volunteering on the economic map of Europe”

Ljubljana, Slovenia | 18 April 2008

FINAL REPORT



EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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CEV General Assembly Conference

**“Putting Volunteering on
the economic map of Europe”**

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*"Not everything that can be counted counts,
and not everything that counts can be counted."*

(Sign hanging in Albert Einstein's office at Princeton)

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Abbreviations

CEV	– European Volunteer Centre
CoR	– Committee of the Regions
EESC	– European Economic and Social Committee
EP	– European Parliament
EU	– European Union
EUROSTAT	– the Statistical Office of the European Communities
GA	– General Assembly
GDP	– Gross Domestic Product
ILO	– International Labour Organisation
IVR	– Institute for Volunteering Research
UN IYV2001	– United Nations International Year of Volunteers
JHU	– Johns Hopkins University
JHU/CCSS	– Johns Hopkins University Centre for Comparative Civil Society Studies
LFS	– Labour Force Surveys
NGO	– Non-Governmental Organisation
NPI	– Non-Profit Institutions
SNA	– System of National Accounts
UN	– United Nations
UNV	– United Nations Volunteers
VDS	– Volunteer Development Scotland
VIVA	– Volunteer Investment Value Audit

Executive summary

How to value the smiles that volunteers put on people's faces? Or holding the hands of patients in hospitals? Can we measure the economic value of volunteering and, if so, what are the best methods of doing it?

Who and where?

One hundred participants from twenty-four countries, representing more than fifty local, regional and national organisations, United Nations Volunteers, as well as universities, local authorities and Slovenian ministries were trying to find the answer to those questions during the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) conference *'Putting Volunteering on the Economic Map of Europe'*. The conference was organised by the CEV – the European Volunteer Centre - in cooperation with Slovenska Filantropija, in Ljubljana, Slovenia on the 18th of April 2008.

Why?

Different actors, for example United Nations Volunteers and the institutions of the European Union as well as other bodies have been calling to accurately address the issue of economic value of volunteering. Johns Hopkins University (JHU) was one of the first academic institutions to conduct research on the contribution of the voluntary sector and volunteering to national economies, providing data on the so far invisible and not measured economic value of volunteering. Figures generated by the JHU Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project reveal for example that volunteers represent the equivalent of 3-5% of the economically active population in many countries; that they make a \$400 billion contribution to the global economy; and that if they were a nation, they would be the 9th most populous country in the world. The biggest barrier to recognising this enormous contribution of volunteering to our economies is the lack of relevant statistical data on volunteering, as well as little knowledge of the possible methods of measurement of the economic value of the unpaid work done by volunteers. Therefore discussion about this and an overview of the methods used for measuring the economic value of volunteering has been much needed.

How?

The topic posed many questions and controversies among the participants of the conference. Invited guests and CEV members explored the advantages and

disadvantages, costs and benefits and the challenges for measuring volunteering in economic terms. Also, a new historical opportunity to put volunteering on the economic map of Europe was presented – a recent project to measure volunteering through the labour surveys of International Labour Organisation.

Conclusions

At the conference's opening panel, workshops, dialogues and strategy sessions, participants voiced different views which can be clustered under three different approaches to the topic:

Should we measure the economic value of volunteering?

"No, because..."

- ➔ **"Volunteering is not about money"**: focusing on the economic value risks reducing volunteering to purely 'financial' terms, taking attention away from its immeasurable dimensions.
- ➔ **"Associating volunteering with 'unpaid work' can be dangerous and misleading"**: this could reinforce the underlying assumption of some politicians and possibly also trade unions that volunteering replaces paid work. We should be very cautious of making a case which could risk changing the perception of volunteering into one of 'working for free'.
- ➔ **"The results of measuring volunteering economically can be misused"**: policy makers might want to misuse the results of such calculations for ideological reasons, advocating that since volunteers deliver all these services for free, the state can save money on services run by volunteers.
- ➔ **"We risk unnecessary formalisation through 'monetisation' of volunteering" and may discourage or even lose volunteers"**: volunteering is about giving something to others, without counting on the reward. Introducing monetary thinking may discourage and put off those who engage for altruistic reasons and who are not interested in their contribution being measured in monetary terms.
- ➔ **"Measuring will make volunteering more expensive and complicated"**: each measurement tool requires additional resources and will add to the administrative burden of those charged with implementing them.

"It does not seem possible to have comparable results due to the different methods used": all the different methods presented are meaningful – but the outcomes are hardly comparable as changes in calculation methods influence the final results.

Should we measure the economic value of volunteering?

"Yes, but..."

- ➔ **"Yes, we should measure the economic value of volunteering, but this is not the whole story and we must not lose sight of its other impacts on society"**: measuring the financial contribution is important but it must be accompanied and complemented by indicators and methods which also measure the contribution to social cohesion, integration, social inclusion, active participation, health, personal development, social capital, empowerment etc. There should be considerable efforts to develop tools and instruments to make these impacts visible – that seem to us as the heart of volunteering.
- ➔ **"The national, European and international economic statistic must be improved"**: lack of comparable data is one of the major barriers to putting volunteering on to the political agenda and to seeing investment in volunteering. We should have a common data collected through ILO surveys – this would help to compare the results in different countries and provide a comparable overview of the sector and activities across Europe.
- ➔ **"We need discussion and decisions on how to really do it"**: in order to keep the administrative burden down and to achieve meaningful results, we need capacity building and toolkits tailored to enable organisations to run measurement easily.

Should we measure the economic value of volunteering?

"Yes, and it can have positive results..."

- ➔ Economic figures help the general public and the volunteer sector itself to develop **understanding of the enormous extent of volunteering** and to **achieve better visibility and recognition**.

- ➔ Measurement can, thus, **improve government policy**. Policy and decision-makers such as governments seem to understand the language of economic value above anything else – by collecting accurate data civil society would ‘wake-up’ decision-makers and could pledge support with a powerful message behind. Accurate statistics would help to tailor volunteering policies according to real needs, as well as encouraging the development of new policies where none currently exist.
- ➔ Economic numbers can help to clarify the issue of return on investment: what is the economic value for what volunteers contribute for each cent spent? **This can reinforce the case for a volunteering infrastructure ensuring return on investment** of public funds.
- ➔ **Measuring can improve management, accountability, legitimacy and transparency of volunteer sector** - it can result in better administration and increased value for money spent on volunteering.
- ➔ Demonstrating the economic value **can increase philanthropy and matched funding**: donors are more likely to give when they clearly see the real impact of their investment and how much the volunteer sector actually contributes ‘in kind’ to these funds.
- ➔ Demonstrating the economic value can put people off – but it can also **increase the number of people involved**: accurate data can help people realize that they are part of a huge movement having a real and measurable impact on society and economy.

Participants concluded that volunteering is much more than only an economic activity – it also does have a value that can be counted in economic terms. Measuring and presenting the economic value can be a good way of winning recognition for volunteering especially with policy makers. But it has to be employed cautiously and together with other measurement tools for the so far “immeasurable impacts” of volunteering, such as on social capital, social cohesion, personal development and empowerment. Such measurement tools should be developed in order to enable the description of the full picture of volunteering and its true value.

Introduction

The CEV General Assemblies (GA) are a forum for CEV members and partners to meet and discuss the most important issues and challenges, as well as recent developments in volunteering in Europe and the world. For one day they bring together representatives of volunteer centres, volunteer development agencies, volunteer organisations and associations, governments and business, as well as of European institutions and international organisations, providing an opportunity to exchange policy, practice and information on volunteering.

The General Assembly conference “Putting volunteering on the economic map of Europe” was organised by the European Volunteer Centre and one of its members – Slovenska Filantropija on 18th of April 2008 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. There were more than 100 participants from 24 countries, representing local, regional and national volunteer centres and organisations, United Nation Volunteers, the University of Zagreb, local authorities from Slovenia and Spain, and Slovenian ministries. The meeting brought people together to discuss questions of why and how should we measure the economic value of volunteering.

The main objectives of the General Assembly were to:

- Present and discuss the inclusion of the economic value of volunteering figures in national statistical accounts (macro level)
- Present examples of good practice from CEV member organisations on assessing and measuring the economic value of volunteers’ contribution (micro level)
- Facilitate discussion between different stakeholders on how to move this debate forward
- Adopt a CEV position and action plan to take advantage of the current window of opportunity for measuring the economic value of volunteering arising with the ILO conference in November 2008.

During the General Assembly conferences, as well as the panel session, there were 4 simultaneous good practices sessions, the Dialogue Café and 3 strategy sessions. During the Panel Session Prof. Lester Salomon from the Johns Hopkins University, Adriana Mata Greenwood from the International Labour Association (ILO), Edith Archambault, emeritus professor of Paris Sorbonne University, Renzo Ranzano President of the Italian volunteer development agency Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio (SPES), as well as Davor Dominkuš,

Director General of the Social Affairs Ministry of the Slovene government, together provided much 'food-for-thought' for participants. They reflected on the value of volunteering, coming up with initial ideas about how this can be measured.

In addition delegates took part in the Dialogue Café. This is an interactive tool during which participants, simulating a café atmosphere, discussed potential benefits/risks to the volunteer movement of measuring the economic value of volunteer work; listed the practical challenges for organisations in measuring such value and reflected on the possible ways of dealing with them. This also provided an opportunity for people to explore their expectations of the conference and its theme.

Following, the 4 simultaneous workshop sessions took place. They were led by chosen participants who presented in small groups examples of good practice from their own organisations' experience of how to measure volunteering.

Finally, the strategy sessions provided a space for concrete solutions to emerge about how to move the debate forward.

This report summarises the conference discussions. The panel speaker presentations, workshops, Dialogue Café and Strategy Sessions results were complemented at some points by further research, helping to make certain points raised during the discussions to be better understood.

The **BACKGROUND** chapter aims to give the reader an idea of the state of play on the issue of the economic value of volunteering in the world and in Europe. It gives also a brief history and recent developments in the field. It is based mainly on CEV research work and some external resources, for example documents from the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

The second chapter looks more closely at the the question **WHY MEASURE VOLUNTEERING?** This chapter presents the arguments put forward by Prof. Lester Salomon from Johns Hopkins University during the panel session keynote presentation given at the Ljubljana conference and based on the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Comparative Civil Society Studies (JH/CCSS) research project's findings.

The third chapter uncovers the most recent project of JH/CCSS, which targets national statisticians and aims at measuring volunteering through International

Labour Organisation's (ILO) surveys. Since this topic is controversial as it links volunteering with unpaid labour, the chapter analyses in detail the arguments for and against the question **WHY MEASURE VOLUNTEERING THROUGH LABOUR FORCE SURVEYS?**, as well as providing an overview of **the JHU/ILO Measurement Project**.

The fourth chapter moves from the macro to the micro scale on the measurement of volunteering. It summarises findings from the workshops, where different organisations presented measurement tools used in their daily work to measure volunteering. It gives an overview on **HOW TO MEASURE THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING**. It also goes beyond the good practise sessions to provide a broader overview of the different methods currently used by voluntary organisations and governments to measure the economic impact of volunteering.

Eventually, the **CONCLUSIONS** chapter provides the main findings of the conference in answer to the question **SHOULD WE MEASURE THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING?** The chapter presents three different answers to this question by exploring the advantages and disadvantages, risks and benefits of measuring the economic value of volunteering for different actors – volunteers, the volunteer movement, policy-makers and community as a whole. All the issues in this final chapter were highlighted as important in relation to the economic value of volunteering.

This publication also aims to facilitate further discussion on the measurement of the economic value of volunteering. Therefore, it provides the reader with three appendixes - an **ADDRESS BOOK** of the organisations involved, the **PARTICIPANTS LIST** and a list of **RESOURCES** and a **BIBLIOGRAPHY**.

CEV would like to thank all the speakers, presenters and participants at the Conference as well as Christopher Spence for their valuable contributions to this publication.

Kamila Czerwińska

Markus Held

CEV – the European Volunteer Centre

Brussels, November 2008

Programme

CEV General Assembly Conference
 « **Putting volunteering on the economic map of Europe** »

18 April 2008
 City Museum, Gosposka 15, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

09.00 – Registration

Welcome and opening plenary:

- **Tereza Novak**, Executive Director, Slovenska Filantropija
- **Dr. Marijke Steenbergen**, CEO MOVISIE, CEV President
- **Keynote speech: Lester Salomon**, director of the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Civil Society Studies, USA

09:50 – **Panel discussion – Putting volunteering on the economic map of Europe: challenges and ways forward**

- **Edith Archambault**, Economist, Professor, Paris University I – Sorbonne
- **Davor Dominkuš**, Director General of the Social Affairs Directorate, Slovenia
- **Adriana Mata Greenwood**, International Labour Organisation ILO
- **Renzo Razzano**, President of SPES and CEV Vice-President
- **Lester Salomon**, Director of Johns Hopkins University Centre for Civil Society Studies

11:30 – Coffee Break

12:00 – **Dialogue café** – CEV members and volunteer organisations across Europe discuss their vision on measuring volunteering

13:30 – Lunch

Good practice session 4 parallel country workshops on measuring volunteering at the micro level

- **Joanna Machin (Volunteering England)** *“The economic approach: assessing the impact of volunteering using two measurement tools”*
- **Karl Monsen-Elvik (Volunteer Development Scotland)** *“Measuring a Smile – the Value of Volunteering in Modern Scotland”*
- **Elaine Bradley (Volunteering Ireland)** *“Using Economic Measure - ment to Promote Volunteering in Volunteer-Involving Organisations”*
- **Cristina Rigman (Pro Vobis)** *“Alternative ways of measuring the economic value of volunteering”.*

16:00 – Coffee Break

16:30 – **Strategy session** – how to move the debate forward at European level?

18:00 – **Final plenary**: Conclusions of the day; Chair: Dr. Marijke Steenbergen, CEV President

Reception at the Town Hall: speech by the Mayor Mr. Zoran Jankovic



Background

The latest figures on volunteering give an amazing picture - more than 100 million Europeans engage in voluntary activities, live solidarity and make a difference to our society. A Eurobarometer survey in 2006 revealed that three out of ten Europeans claim to be active in a voluntary capacity and that close to 80% of respondents feel that voluntary activities are an important part of democratic life in Europe.¹

The contribution of volunteering to our societies is manifold. Volunteering can be relevant in any number of policy areas. These include social inclusion, the provision of life-long learning opportunities for all, policies affecting young people, inter-generational dialogue, active ageing, integration of migrants, intercultural dialogue, civil protection, humanitarian aid, sustainable development and environmental protection, human rights, social service delivery, increasing employability, the promotion of active European citizenship, fighting the "digital gap", and is an important component of corporate social responsibility.

Yet the involvement of volunteers and the contribution they make is often taken for granted by policy-makers. Only a few European countries support volunteering through targeted policies, strategies and investment of public funds and few include data on volunteering in national statistics.

There is insufficient knowledge and recognition of the cost and economic value of volunteering. The efforts of volunteers and people working in the voluntary sector often remain invisible.

Johns Hopkins University research as a driving force

A driving force in promoting and measuring the economic value of volunteering in our societies has been the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Comparative Civil Society Studies (JHU/CCSS). JHU/CCSS's mission is to work on improving understanding and the effective functioning of not-for-profit, philanthropic or "civil society" organisations in the United States and throughout the world, in order to enable people to understand what contribution these organisations can make to democracy and the quality of human life. The Centre is part of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies and its activities include research, training, and information-sharing both domestically and internationally.²

The Centre has carried out a number of research studies on different aspects of the private non-profit institutions (NPI) sector, its scope, structure, financing and role in a cross-section of countries around the world. One of

the primary objectives was to gather data about the NPI sector. In the Comparative Non-profit Sector Project the researchers created a common framework and set of definitions as well as information-gathering strategies. In the project's surveys volunteering was defined as 'work which in some way helps others outside of one's own family or friends for no monetary pay'. A team of Local Associates in the target countries and a network of national and international advisory committees collected the data and on this basis were able to produce an empirical comparative study. The Project was based on the assumption that despite the growing importance of private, non-profit organisations, they remain poorly understood. Consequently, it is difficult to see their role and appreciate their contribution to the modern

societies.

On the basis of the first findings of the Project, the Centre assisted the United Nations Statistics Division in formulating the UN Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts. The UN Handbook was published as a response to widespread concerns about the lack of reliable data on the growing civil society sector around the world. The main objective of the publication was to provide national statistical agencies with data on the non-profit sector and help them to portray non-profit institutions, philanthropy and volunteering more explicitly in national economic statistics. From 2003, both UN and CCSS have been advocating and encouraging implementation of the Handbook in various countries.



The UN Non-profit Handbook Project seeks to improve the treatment of non-profit, or civil society, organisations in national economic statistics. A major barrier to improved understanding of the non-profit sector is the lack of basic statistics on the scope, structure, financing and activities of this set of organisations. The lack of information reflects, in part, the way non-profits are treated in the System of National Accounts (SNA), the set of international guidelines for compiling national economic statistics.

Under SNA guidelines, many organisations identified as "non-profit institutions" are grouped together with for-profit corporations or government agencies in national statistics, leaving only a small percentage assigned to a separate sector called "Non-profit Institutions Serving Households," or NPISH. In addition, national economic statistics do not now count the work of most volunteers. This makes it difficult to gain a comprehensive view of the scale and contribution of non-profit organisations.

A unique opportunity exists at the present time to put the civil society sector, philanthropy, and voluntarism more squarely on the policy map of the world. This opportunity arises from the 2002 acceptance by the United Nations Statistical Commission of a new Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National

Accounts developed by the Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies in cooperation with an international team of statistical experts.

The Non-profit “Satellite Account”

This Handbook calls on national statistical offices to prepare a “satellite account” on the non-profit sector and philanthropy as part of their regular economic data gathering and reporting. These satellite accounts will pull together a much more comprehensive and reliable picture of the civil society sector than has ever been available. As part of this process, statistical agencies are also called on to estimate the scale and value of the volunteer effort these organisations mobilize and to include this in estimates of economic activity.

The completion of this Handbook will thus produce a quantum leap forward in the basic information available on civil society organisations, philanthropy, and voluntarism around the world, increasing the visibility and credibility of these organisations and making it possible to gauge their contributions and track their evolution. Among the information that will become available through this process will be data on:

- The number of civil society organisations, by field;
- The number of civil society workers, paid and volunteer;
- The “value added” by civil society organisations;
- The value of volunteer contributions, by field;
- Operating expenditures;
- Sources of revenue, including philanthropy, fees, and government support, both domestic and cross-national;
- The size and distribution of foundation grants.

Such information will be available on a broad range of civil society organisations, including development organisations, schools, health clinics, social service agencies, environmental groups, human rights groups, sport clubs, professional associations, foundations, and many more.

Source: The UN Non-profit Handbook Project, CCSS
<http://www.jhu.edu/ccss/unhandbook/>

The United Nations Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts includes guidelines for national statistical offices to prepare regular “satellite accounts” on the non-profit sector and volunteering as part of their official economic data-gathering and reporting. Twenty-eight countries in the world have committed to implementing these guidelines and 8 of these countries have already produced the satellite accounts called for in the Handbook. Belgium, France and Czech Republic are the first countries in the EU to have regular satellite accounts.



Edith ARCHAMBAULT, one of the panel speakers and a Professeur émérite in Université Paris 1 - Panthéon-Sorbonne, is an expert and researcher on the non-profit sector both in France and in Europe. During the Johns Hopkins University Comparative Non-profits Sector Project, she was the person behind the research on the economic value of the French third sector and contributed to creation of the satellite accounts of the social economy in France.

Her main work include such publications as:

Le secteur sans but lucratif. Associations et Fondations en France, Paris, Economica, 1996
The Non-profit sector in France, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997
Comptabilité Nationale, 6^e édition, Paris, Economica, 2003

Prof. Archambault also contributed a number of other articles on the non-profit sector, more specifically on the economic value of this sector and on the theme of volunteering in France and in Europe. She is a member of a number of associations and bodies e.g. Conseil National de la Vie Associative (CNVA) or l'Association de Comptabilité Nationale (ACN).

During the conference Prof. Archambault shared her experience of the research on the economic value of volunteering, underlining the importance of measuring it as, according to her, this has a leverage effect for the whole voluntary sector. Volunteers are the suppliers of the special ‘workforce’; special, she says, because they become involved in their activities for the sake of the ‘others’. The question ‘who are the others?’ is important as these are not only members of our community, but of the society as a whole and thus all of the global environment is changed.

UN efforts

The United Nations role in the process of putting volunteering and its economic value onto the political agenda must be also recognised. Prof. Lester Salomon, director of the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Civil Society Studies and a guest speaker at the Conference in Ljubljana, underlined the role of the United Nations, saying that in 2001 in the Resolution reporting the results of the International Year of the Volunteer it had identified volunteering as “an important component of

any strategy aimed at...poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management, andovercoming social exclusion and discrimination.”³ Later the United Nations Development Programme’s Deputy Administrator called attention to the “potential of volunteering and civil society”⁴ in advancing the Millennium Development Goals.

He also added that the UN General Assembly, in the resolution resulting from the UN International Year of Volunteers (IYV2001), had called on member countries to “enhance

³ General Assembly Resolution A/Res56/38, 2001.

⁴ Speech of Hon. Ad Melkert, October 4, 2006 (<http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2006/october>).

the knowledge base" about volunteer work and to "establish the economic value of volunteering." (General Assembly Resolution A/Res/56/38, 2001). In his 2005 follow-up report to the UN IYV2001 the Secretary General of the United Nations reiterated this appeal, reminding Member States that "One important recommendation to have emerged from the International Year of Volunteers was to integrate volunteerism into national development planning." But the Secretary General also pointed out that "[a] major constraint continues to be a limited availability

of specific data on volunteer contributions..." (Statement of the Secretary General of the United Nations, May 2005 (A/60/128, 2005).

Prof. L. Salomon, together with the United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations Statistics Division convened the "Global Assembly on Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering", in September 2007 in Bonn, Germany, bringing together statisticians, researchers, economists and decision makers. It was a major step forward towards raising awareness of the economic value of volunteering.

"Statistics, empirical data, are the lenses through which we see the world. The non-profit sector and volunteering have long been the invisible subcontinent on the social landscape of our world."

Prof. Lester Salomon

CEV and the EUROSTAT campaign

The European Volunteer Centre joined the efforts of the UN and Johns Hopkins in recognising the value of volunteering and in campaigning for implementation of the Handbook. CEV decided to target the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT - <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>). It provides data for the European Union and promotes harmonisation of statistical methods across the member states of the European Union. Convincing EUROSTAT to collect data about non-profit sector and volunteering therefore seemed important. In its Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe issued in March 2006, CEV called upon the European institutions to 'include alternative economic indicators in the Statistical Accounts of EUROSTAT which make the contribution of the non profit sector and especially of volunteering to national economies visible;' (CEV Manifesto 2006). However, until now, the Office has not included this data in its work.

EUROSTAT not only does not include the data about the non-profit sector, but also does not perceive its collection as an important activity. In answer to the CEV letter inviting representatives of EUROSTAT to the General Assembly in Ljubljana on measuring the economic value of volunteering, it was stated that the topic is not 'a priority in the Community programme' and that

'EUROSTAT activities in this field are very limited'.

The reason for this might be that EUROSTAT collects data from the National Statistic Institutes and other bodies, which often do not have this information. EUROSTAT, as a statistical 'arm' of the European Commission, could however ask the national offices for this data and thus instigate the measurement of the non-profit sector. Moreover, in Europe such countries as Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany and Portugal are committed implementers of the UN Handbook, so they do already possess the necessary statistical data. One of the main problems with putting volunteering on the EU political agenda is the lack of reliable and comparable fact and figures on volunteering in Europe. Including data on volunteering in the EUROSTAT statistics could greatly facilitate the process.

European Union's efforts

Despite EUROSTAT's inaction, some efforts are made at the EU level to address the issue of the economic value of volunteering. Already two European advisory bodies - the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR), as well as the European Parliament (EP) have pointed out the need to gather 'reliable and comparable statistics on the scale, importance and socio-economic value of voluntary activity.'⁵

⁵ Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Voluntary Activity: its role in European Society and its Impact [2006/C 325/13], Point 1.8.

The Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Voluntary Activity: its role in European Society and its Impact states clearly that 'Voluntary activity also makes an essential contribution to our economies' output. This contribution is often overlooked in national statistics (...).⁶

Moreover, the report of Marian Harkin, an Irish Member of the European Parliament, on *the role of volunteering*

in contributing to economic and social cohesion adopted by the European Parliament in April 2008 states that 'volunteering not only has a measurable economic value but may also lead to significant savings for public services'.⁷

Finally, the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the *Contribution of Volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion* recommends, 'to immedi-



2006 the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Voluntary Activity: its role in European Society and its Impact [2006/C 325/13]

1.8 At European level we need reliable and comparable statistics on the scale, importance and socio-economic value of voluntary activity.'

2.5 Voluntary activity also makes an essential contribution to our economies' output. This contribution is often overlooked in national statistics, as it does not always involve the exchange of goods of monetary value and because there is no single accepted method for measuring its economic value. Where it is measured, however, the economic value of voluntary activity and its contribution to the economy has proved considerable (5). For example, in the United Kingdom the economic value of voluntary activity is estimated at 7.9 % of GDP, with 38 % of total population engaged in voluntary activity. In Ireland and Germany more than 33 % of the population are involved in voluntary activity in one form or another, compared to 18 % in Poland.'

4.3 To the generally used quantitative indicators for a country's development (essential economic indicators like economic growth and financial balance) new, alternative indicators need to be added, which measure social capital and social cohesion as well as the contribution of voluntary activity. The economic value of voluntary activity should also be quantified, as proposed by the United Nations in its Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts.'

ately address the lack of complete and accurate EU-wide or national statistics on the economic contribution of volunteering'; it 'encourages the Member States to collect accurate statistical information on volunteer involvement at a local and regional level (...) and 'calls on the European Commission to develop more systematic data collection on volunteers and the services they provide and supports the inclusion of

volunteering as a specific category in the Statistical Accounts of EUROSTAT to accurately assess the economic value of volunteering'.⁸



2008 Report on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion [A6-0070/2008] European Parliament, Committee on Regional Development , Rapporteur: Marian Harkin

I. (...) volunteering not only has a measurable economic value but may also lead to significant savings for public services; whereas, in this context, it is important to ensure that voluntary activity is additional to public services and not a replacement of them,

The Economic Value of Volunteering

According to the Johns Hopkins University Report, 'Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering', released on September 25th 2007, the Non Profit Institutions N.P.I sector contributes about as much to gross domestic product in a wide range of countries as do the construction and finance industries and twice as much as the utilities industry. This means that it accounts for 5-7% of the GDP in the countries surveyed. These findings emerge from data generated by official statistical agencies in eight countries, (Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Japan, New Zealand and the United States). It is worth noting that twenty additional countries, both developed and developing, have committed to issuing these satellite accounts and a number of others are about to begin implementation. This clearly indicates that more and more countries are recognising the importance of including volunteering in their National Accounts.

⁶ Ibid Point 2.5.

⁷ Report on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion [A6-0070/2008] European Parliament, Committee on Regional Development , Rapporteur: Marian Harkin, Item I.

⁸ Opinion on the Contribution of Volunteering on Economic and Social Cohesion, Committee of the Regions, Rapporteur: Councillor Declan McDonnell ECOS-IV-017, Item 15, 16, 17

i **Opinion on the Contribution of Volunteering on Economic and Social Cohesion, Committee of the Regions, Rapporteur: Councillor Declan McDonnell ECOS-IV-017**

Policy Recommendations:

Lack of research and statistical data on volunteering

15. highlights the need to immediately address the lack of complete and accurate EU wide or national statistics on the economic contribution of volunteering. The Committee of the Regions therefore welcomes the Belgian, French, Czech Republic, Italian and Slovakian commitment to implement the UN Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts;
16. encourages the Member States to collect accurate statistical information on volunteer involvement at a local and regional level, also to support the development of appropriate initiatives at both levels;
17. calls on the European Commission to develop more systematic data collection on volunteers and the services they provide and supports the inclusion of volunteering as a specific category in the Statistical Accounts of EUROSTAT to accurately assess the economic value of volunteering;
18. recommends that comparative research on volunteering be carried out across the EU to obtain data on its development trends, scope and characteristics at national, regional and local levels. This would enable a clear indication of cultural similarities and differences in relation to volunteer activity and infrastructure;
19. recommends that research be carried out EU-wide to identify best practice experiences in promoting and supporting volunteerism on a local and regional basis. Depending on research findings, areas with more historical experience of volunteering could support other regions and localities to develop new initiatives;

This chapter has aimed to show that on the one hand different actors are calling for the collection of accurate data on the economic value of volunteering, while on the other there continues to be political ambivalence towards this idea. We can no longer neglect the economic value of volunteering and need to work to get it firmly on to the political agenda of European-decision makers. This effort is necessary since at present only a few European countries support volunteering through targeted volunteering policies, strategies and the investment of public funding, while very few include the data on volunteering in national statistics.

Why measure volunteering?

In his keynote speech Prof. Lester Salomon said that the findings of the Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies' research and the first results of the implementation of the UN Handbook on Non-profit Institutions indicated strong arguments for creating a system to measure volunteering, as follows:⁹

1) Volunteering is quite sizable and creates significant economic value

Volunteers constitute a far more significant share of the workforce of nations than is commonly recognised. Data generated by the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project revealed that volunteer workers represent the equivalent of 3-5 percent of the economically active population in many countries. Measured as a share of the "formal" workforce, volunteers constitute an even larger proportion in many developing countries (Salomon, Sokolowski, 2004). The Johns Hopkins' findings from studies completed in 37 countries include the following:

- The number of full-time equivalent volunteers is approximately 140 million people. If volunteers were a nation, they would be the 9th most populous country in the world;¹⁰
- Volunteers represent the equivalent of 20.8 million full-time equivalent paid positions, much larger numbers than those employed by the utilities

industry and just slightly less than those employed in the transportation and construction industries.

■ These volunteers make a \$400 billion contribution to the global economy, which averages 1% of GDP in the countries in this study. In Canada, the contribution volunteers make to the GDP is more than that of the agricultural and motor vehicle manufacturing industries.

■ Volunteers are an especially sizable component of the workforce of Non-profit Institutions. Data generated by the Johns Hopkins researchers revealed that, once converted into full-time equivalent workers, volunteers account for 45 percent of the sizable workforce of NPIs in the countries for which such data are available. In Sweden and Norway it is as high as 75.9% and 63.2% respectively. This is an enormous renewable resource for social problem solving.

This was one of the main reasons for introducing by the United Nations *Statistics Division a Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts* in 2003 calling on national statistical agencies to incorporate data on volunteer work into the satellite accounts on non-profit institutions.

Early implementation of this *Handbook* has confirmed the enormous

⁹ The arguments were developed and presented by Prof. Lester Salomon in his keynote speech during the GA conference in Ljubljana and in the paper 'Proposed Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work'. They will be also developed further in the next chapter 'Why measure volunteering through labour surveys' on the JH-ILO Volunteering Measurement Project.

¹⁰ This study was conducted in 37 countries from all over the world on the basis of the questionnaires and research. In Europe, a Eurobarometer survey in 2006 revealed that in the EU countries itself 3 out of 10 Europeans claim to be active in a voluntary capacity (Special Eurobarometer 273 Wave 66.3, February 2007, "European Social Reality"). This would indicate an even bigger number of volunteers taking into account that the EU has almost 500 million citizens.

economic contribution represented by volunteering. A recent estimate by Statistics Canada put the value added by volunteer contribution to Canada's GDP at 1.4%, roughly equivalent to the share of GDP contributed by Canada's agriculture and forestry industries. Comparable estimates developed by statistical agencies in other countries put the value added by volunteers at 0.8 % of GDP in Belgium, 2.3% of GDP in New Zealand, and 1% of GDP in Japan;
(http://www.jhu.edu/~ccss/publications/pdf/Measuring_Civil_Society.pdf)

2) Despite the contribution that volunteering makes both to the volunteers themselves and to the beneficiaries of their efforts, little sustained work has gone into the measurement of the scope, scale or distribution of volunteering.

The efforts that have been made to measure volunteer work have been sporadic and frequently uncoordinated, leaving us without up-to-date, reliable data on the scope of this important social and economic phenomenon. This limits our understanding of volunteering.

3) Finally, not only do existing data systems fail to capture volunteering, but to the extent that these data systems do address voluntary activities, they do so inconsistently.

Currently only volunteer work that leads to the production of goods or services for market enterprises or for non-profit enterprises operating in the market (e.g. some schools and hospitals) is considered within the so-called production boundary of system of national accounts, and therefore counted as "employment." This leaves out many other volunteer activities, such as the services of volunteers in non-profit enterprises not operating in the market or for households.

This produces the anomaly that providing voluntary services to a public or community school is not recorded in employment statistics, but doing exactly the same activity for a private (fee-paying) school would be included.



Adriana Mata Greenwood, one of the panel speakers, works in the Bureau of Statistics in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and is involved in the common ILO/JHU Measurement Projects from the side of ILO.

During the conference Ms Mata Greenwood explained an important term - the so-called **production boundary**. The term was established by a system of national accounts, after the second World War. It includes the production of all individual or collective goods or services. The statisticians decided that production boundary would only show goods or services which can be measured through established indicators, leaving outside what can not be not measured. The production boundary has been extended over time, adapted to the activities for which new indicators were established.

Ms Mata Greenwood also provided participants with more information on labour statistics. She said that their main objective is to provide accurate descriptions of the size, structure and characteristics of the various participants in the labour market, as well as changes taking place. She also explored the possible advantages and limits of measuring volunteering through the (labour) statistics:

- Labour statistics are useful as information for a general audience but also as basis for analysing the labour market and for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating employment and social programmes and policies.
- Labour statistics aim to reflect reality as closely as possible - this means that they should cover relevant aspects of all actors in the labour market and describe their different types of work situations with sufficient detail.
- However, is it impossible to do it 'perfectly'. Statistics are simplifications of the reality. The production of statistics requires codification into synthetic categories which highlight certain aspects of this reality while suppressing others.
- Those aspects, which are highlighted or suppressed, will depend on such variables as: the priorities and objectives of each country's statistical bodies, the methods of data collection, and the intrinsic perception of a society about how the labour market functions. Therefore, data collection methods are faced with a range of limitations¹¹.

¹¹ For further information on the statistics, have a look on other A Mata Greenwood publications e.g.: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/download/genderwp.pdf>

Why measure volunteering through labour force surveys?

The JHU/ILO Volunteer Measurement Project

As has been shown a growing number of international stakeholders have come to recognise the contribution and importance of volunteering and its economic value. As well as the United Nations and United Nations Volunteers, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament and the International Labour Organisation have all recognised that volunteering has an important economic value. As S.Young, the ILO's director of statistics has noted: "Given its interplay and its substitution relationship with economic work, the volume and value of volunteer work is required to better understand the volume and characteristics of the participants in the labour market as well as the dynamics of the labour market, and to plan and implement labour market and other social policies."¹² Prof. Salomon highlighted in his speech that not measuring volunteering poses problems for our understanding of volunteering, but also for more general understanding of the labour market. The recent project of Johns Hopkins University targets national statisticians and aims at measuring volunteering through the ILO labour surveys.

The question posed by participants during the General Assembly, was why measure volunteering through labour force surveys, which dangerously links volunteering with unpaid labour and wakes up the fears of volunteers replacing or substituting the paid workers?

In the implementation process of the UN handbook on Non-Profit Institutions (calling on countries to measure volunteering), the researchers from the Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies found out that data on volunteering is very much a hit-or-miss affair in countries throughout the world. This is because the national accounts staff in charge of implementing the Handbook in most countries are not the same units which are in charge of basic data collection. Thus national accountants have included data on volunteering where it is available to them, but have not been able to push for its collection in places where it is not already done.

To address this problem the JHU worked on the strategy for generating the needed volunteering data in the maximum number of countries. The approach was to find existing, official statistical processes that can be lever-

aged to generate additional data on civil society and volunteering. The best available option was to target official labour force surveys done by national statisticians and collected by ILO.

According to Prof. Salomon, the arguments in favour of creating a system to measure volunteer through ILO labour force surveys are as follows:

1) Volunteering is a major component of unpaid labour, which has become the focus of increased attention by policy makers throughout the world.

Unpaid labour has increasingly come to be recognised as a major economic reality generating far more significant benefits to the economy and society than are now recognised, particularly in developing countries;

Reflecting this a recent survey of national statistical offices and institutes conducted by the U.K. Office of National Statistics on behalf of the United Nations Statistical Commission revealed that "the non-observed economy and informal employment" was one of the "three top priority areas for labour statistics" identified by member countries as needing attention. On the basis of this finding, the ONS report recommended that the International Labour Organisation establish a working group on this topic.

Volunteer work is the component of unpaid labour that may be easiest to capture since it can be differentiated from household activity and much of it takes place through institutions that

are considered to be well within the production boundary of the economy (i.e. non-profit institutions, or NPIs).

2) Establishing a system for improving the data available on volunteer work would thus serve a variety of useful purposes

- It would document the scale of an important component of the informal labour market, and, in the process, potentially offer some clues about how to document some of the other parts;
- It would bring into view a sizable part of the actual labour force which is currently invisible in existing labour statistics;

- It would clarify the economic impact of NPIs, which draw particularly heavily on volunteer labour;

- It would help improve public and private interventions designed to stimulate volunteer activity;

- It would make it possible to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions;

- It would make it possible to complete the "satellite accounts" on non-profit institutions called for in the United Nations' Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts;

- It would aid in identifying the economic impact of unregistered NPIs, many of which rely especially heavily on voluntary labour; and

- It would fulfil the mandates set by recent United Nations General Assembly Resolutions promoting volunteering and underlining the need for

greater data on volunteer activities.

3) Labour force surveys (LFS) provide an unusually effective statistical platform for measuring volunteer work, for a number of reasons.

- They cover other aspects of work, making the coverage of volunteer work a natural extension;
- They allow conceptual clarity by capturing volunteer work which complements, but which does not overlap with, paid work;
- They are household-based, rather than organisation-based, making it possible to capture volunteer work that is not done through easily identified, registered organisations;
- They offer a highly cost-effective alternative to stand-alone surveys;
- They are managed by highly professional staff equipped to classify categories of work in a reliable fashion using internationally developed norms and criteria;
- They are among the most regular and reliable data-gathering programmes in the world. Most countries conduct such surveys at least annually and many have rolling monthly or quarterly samples to account for seasonal variations;
- They already gather important demographic data on respondents and most cover the entire population over age 15;
- They use large samples, reducing error rates.
- The major disadvantage of us-

ing labour force surveys to measure volunteer work is that the range of questions that can be fitted into a supplement to a labour force survey is highly constrained, making it difficult to examine all facets of the volunteer phenomenon. However, even a highly constrained set of questions will vastly improve the current state of knowledge about his important phenomenon.

4) Labour force and other surveys have already been successfully used to measure volunteer work in a number of countries.

Data on volunteer work have been successfully collected using supplements to the LFS in Australia, Canada, and the United States, with high response rates and volunteer rates ranging from 24 to 27 percent;

As noted above, the major problems encountered with the use of labour force surveys to capture volunteer work have resulted from the constraints that such surveys place on the number and variety of prompts that can be used, and the range of issues surrounding volunteer work that can be explored (e.g. motivations to volunteer, consequences of volunteering);

Experience in the U.S. and Canada indicates that the use of additional prompts increases the scale of volunteer work that respondents recall. This means that labour force surveys are likely to understate the true extent of volunteer work, though the extent of that understatement is difficult to

ascertain with precision;

Countries that want to deepen their understanding of volunteer work may therefore choose to supplement their use of labour force surveys with various types of stand-alone, or time-use, surveys, as has been done in Canada, Australia, and the U.K.;

Nevertheless, labour force surveys offer a workable, cost-effective vehicle for generating at least a “first approximation” of the extent of volunteer work in a country. Compared to the gross lack of any systematic data that now exists, this can represent an enormous step forward.

The JHU/ILO Volunteer Measurement Project

In response to calls by the United Nations to measure the value of volunteer work the International Labour Organisation and the Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in April 2007 under which the ILO enlisted JHU/CCSS to produce and submit for discussion and possible consideration by the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians scheduled to convene in Geneva, Switzerland in November-December 2008:

- a) a draft of a possible ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work through official labour force surveys, and
- b) a suggested draft Volunteer Measurement Survey Module.

As part of the process of developing this Manual, a Technical Experts Group for the Measurement of Volunteer Work (TEG/Vol) composed of labour force statisticians and volunteering experts was formed. This TEG/Vol had its inaugural meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 4-6 July 2007. In the course of this meeting, the TEG/VOL reached a number of decisions about the proposed Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work - they generally endorsed the concept of using a module on volunteer work in regular labour force surveys as a platform for measuring volunteer work and they settled on a definition of volunteer work which will be used in the surveys. The Group also identified core data for inclusion in a core volunteering module. These include: the number of volunteers; the hours volunteered; the locus of volunteering — directly for individuals or for or through an organisation; and if the latter, the type of organisation, the main fields of volunteering (e.g. health, education, social services, recreation) and the types of job performed. Finally the experts endorsed a replacement cost approach to valuing volunteer inputs — i.e. volunteer time valued on the basis of what it would cost to replace the volunteer work with a paid worker.¹³

¹³ Different methods to measure the economic value of volunteering will be explored in the next chapter.



Draft Survey Module on the Measurement of Volunteer Work

Based on these recommendations, a Survey Module on the Measurement of Volunteer Work has been drafted and circulated to the Technical Expert Group. As currently conceived, key features of this draft module include the following:

Design Consistency with Labour Force Surveys. The design of the draft module has been informed throughout by the expectation that it will function as a supplement to existing Labour Force Surveys. This has implications for the possible length, the reference period, activity and field classification utilized, and the wording of questions. It is assumed that each country will use this module as a guide to harmonize the language with that of their existing survey.

Recall period. Compared to paid employment, volunteer work is often a far less frequent activity, making it possible to miss significant dimensions of it if the reference period used is too short. The reference period used to measure employment in most labour force surveys (i.e. a week) is therefore too short to capture this activity properly. Many labour force surveys use longer periods to capture other dimensions of labour force participation (e.g. unemployment). Following this practice, the draft survey module proposes a four-week reference period to ensure a long enough period to account for the infrequency of volunteer work, yet not so long as to reduce the accuracy of the recall;

Terminology. Although the term “volunteering” is used in the introduction to the draft module, it is not used subsequently. This is so because experience has shown that this term carries a great deal of baggage and is understood differently in different contexts.

Definition. Voluntary activity was defined by the Technical Experts Group as a “work done without monetary pay or compensation for the benefit of persons outside the volunteer’s own household or immediate family without legal compulsion.” TEG/Vol clarified also a number of key features of this definition. For example:

- a) The activity must involve work, which is to say that it has some economic value for someone other than the performer. Playing a musical instrument for one’s own enjoyment is therefore not volunteering;
- b) The work must be unpaid, though reimbursement of expenses, and provision of modest honoraria significantly below the market value of this type of work, may not disqualify an activity. However, if a person receives in-kind compensation in a low-wage area, the activity is most likely not volunteering;
- c) While the volunteer or his or her family may reap some reward from the volunteer work, someone outside the household or immediate family must also benefit.

- d) The work must be non-compulsory and non-obligatory and involve a significant element of choice, even if a social obligation is involved. Court-mandated unpaid work, alternative service related to a military draft, or unpaid internships required for graduation from educational institutions would be excluded;

Both formal volunteer work (i.e. volunteering to or through an organisation) and informal volunteer work (i.e. volunteer work done directly for individuals outside the household and not to or through an organisation) are included. The institutional setting is therefore not part of the definition, though it is a characteristic of the volunteering about which information would be gathered.

Key Structure and Design Features. The module was designed on the general principle of cognitive relevance for the respondent.

Relation to other volunteering surveys. This proposed module is meant to supplement rather than replace, existing surveys that measure volunteering. Countries currently measuring volunteering, via LFS supplements or other methods, are urged to consider modifying their existing surveys in ways that will allow for international comparisons. In addition, they will be encouraged to continue their existing surveys where they tap additional dimensions of volunteering behaviour (e.g. motivations of volunteers).

The common JHU/ILO Project is an important new step towards enhanced recognition of the economic value of volunteering. It is also a sign of a new awareness of the role that volunteering plays in giving individuals a sense of satisfaction that they are making a contribution to the progress of society. As such it also contributes importantly to ILO’s promotion of “decent work,” of work as a means of promoting human agency, dignity, and a feeling of satisfaction. As the ILO director of statistics has observed: “There is no doubt that volunteer work contributes significantly to the ILO objectives. It straddles both the economic objectives...and the wider social objectives.”¹⁴

Gathering data on volunteering through ILO surveys is, as Prof. Saloman says¹ a historic step towards putting volunteering at the economic map of Europe. It is however also only a part of the wider picture. To complement the data gathered through ILO surveys, the voluntary sector as well as decision-makers should try to estimate the economic value of work done by volunteers at the national, regional, local and organisational level.

¹⁴ Hon. Sylvester Young, “Volunteer Work and ILO,” Presentation at the Global Assembly on Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering,” Bonn, Germany, September 26, 2007.

How to measure the economic value of volunteering?

The findings of the CEV General Assembly show that, despite lack of statistical data and insufficient knowledge and recognition of the economic value of volunteering by decision-makers and society, many volunteer-involving organisations do measure volunteering. Volunteer organisations have started to develop tools and instruments to attribute an economic value to their volunteers' contribution. Organisations undertake these initiatives for many different reasons: to stress that volunteers – in addition to being agents of solidarity – are an economic factor in community development, to promote volunteering in a volunteer-involving organisation, to justify the expenses, to demonstrate the value of volunteering to the management, authorities or to volunteers themselves. Often this motivation influences which methods an organisation chooses. The workshop sessions revealed that there is no single scheme but a wide range of approaches and tools.

This chapter summarises the findings of the four workshops in which different CEV member organisations presented tools used by the volunteer-involving organisations to measure volunteering. It also goes beyond these good practice sessions to provide some broader overview of the

different methods currently used by voluntary organisations to measure the economic value of volunteering.

1) Measuring volunteering at the local level – the 'minimum wage' tool

Measuring volunteering through the minimum wage tool was presented using the example of a local Barnardos organisation. Barnardos is an Irish organisation which supports children whose well-being is under threat by working with them, their families and communities and by campaigning for the rights of children. Barnardos was established in Ireland in 1962 and is Ireland's leading independent children's charity. It delivers services in Ireland both locally and centrally. Locally Barnardos has over 40 Centres around the country located in the heart of communities where they provide a number of direct family support services. Central Services are provided at national level and include services that support children and families at different times in their lives - challenging times of bereavement or law proceedings, or when families need particular support and information, for example about childcare or adoption. In addition Barnardos is also actively involved

in: vetting; advocacy and policy; campaigns; fundraising. As part of the fundraising function, it has a network of charity shops across the country. The

organisation involves volunteers in its work in the children's services and charity shops, on the Board and in fundraising efforts.



The workshop was delivered by Elaine Bradley and Jessica Ryan from Volunteering Ireland under the title *'Using Economic Measurement to Promote Volunteering in a Volunteer-Involving Organisation'*.

Volunteering Ireland (VI) is the leading national volunteer development agency in the Republic of Ireland, inspiring, promoting, supporting and facilitating volunteering as a force for social change. VI is a membership based NGO with over 160 member organisations, local, national and international. It is estimated that the organisations that VI serves, combined, have over 500,000 volunteers in a country with a population of circa 4 million. The main service offering is to volunteer-involving organisations, where we have led in the building of capacity and in the development of practice in the recruitment, selection and management of volunteers.

The workshop presented a case study based on the work one of the Volunteering Ireland's member organisations, Barnardos, The Barnardos Volunteer Manager measured the economic value of volunteering in the organisation to show to the senior management team the minimum value of the work being done by volunteers.

The method

The aim of measuring the impact of volunteering in the organisation in financial terms was to provide the Volunteer Manager with data to inform the senior management team within the organisation about the economic value that volunteers brought to Barnardos.

The objectives were:

- To ensure that volunteering was at the heart of all planning in relation to organisational matters
- To ensure that the volunteer programme was adequately acknowledged from within the organisation by decision-makers.
- To ensure that there was an adequate budget for the volunteer programme
- To develop the training and support programme for volunteers

What was measured?

The number of volunteers and the hours they worked on a monthly basis.

equation = number of hours x minimum wage

Records were kept by all those who managed volunteers within Barnardos of the number of volunteers and of the hours and days they worked. Returns were made to the Volunteer Manager who entered the information on a database.

The outcomes and challenges

■ As a result of this exercise, the Volunteer Manager was able to provide evidence that the volunteer contribution to Barnardos on an annual basis was worth hundreds of thousands of euros to the organisation.

■ In addition, the exercise showed the collective impact of volunteers over a period of time. In an organisation that involves many volunteers, some for short time periods on a weekly basis, it can be hard to see the overall impact of this involvement. But the sum total in terms of hours over a period of a year and then translated into monetary terms was quite remarkable. This in turn created awareness of the valuable role that volunteers play in the organisation as it works to achieve its mission and goals. An unforeseen outcome of this exercise was the morale boost for volunteers due to this raised awareness vis a vis the collective impact of their contribution.

■ The exercise provided data that enabled strategic decision making by

the Volunteer Manager, enabling her to do a cost/benefit analysis and invest in the part of the volunteer programme that gave the highest return to the organisation.

■ There were resource implications for the volunteer programme as the senior management team were convinced of the value of investing in the volunteer programme. In addition there was greater input from paid staff in the management of volunteers due to the recognition of the key role they played.

■ In raising awareness of the value of volunteers and in bringing the issue of volunteers to the top table, this exercise prompted the organisation to explore the measurement of the value of volunteers in ways other than economic.

The Volunteer Manager attributed the success of the exercise to:

■ Support from the top – the chief executive officer very publicly supported the volunteer programme

■ Having an indisputable figure to show to the senior management team

■ Having champions for volunteering within the organisation

■ Doggedness i.e. tenaciously chasing after managers who did not submit the monthly figures for their

volunteers and finding creative and convincing ways of getting them to comply.

Recommendations from the workshop:

■ Organisations should measure the economic impact of volunteers and disseminate the information to volunteers, board members and funders as well as to the senior management team and staff of the organisation

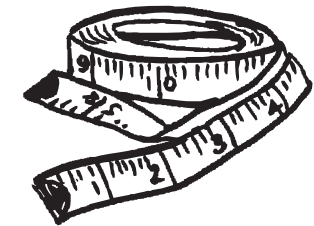
■ Don't forget to measure the qualitative impact of volunteers on the organisation

■ Give feedback to the volunteers as they love to see difference they are making

This tool was used by Barnardos to measure the economic value of volunteering for the internal purposes of the organisation. The method, which multiplies the number of hours by the minimum wage, is the most simplistic tool but it does provide an indisputable bottom-line figure i.e. this is the absolute minimum economic value that volunteers bring to an organisation. Volunteer-involving organisations working at local level tend to use such simple methods to measure volunteers' effort often due to limited time and resources. Nevertheless those simple methods can be the first attempt to quantify and demonstrate the economic weight of the work done by volunteers.

2) Measuring volunteering at the national level - the 'replacement value' and 'average wage' tool

The simple tools to measure volunteering are not necessarily relevant only to small or local/regional organisations. Also at the national level, such methods could be applied even though the data being taken into account is much bigger.





The workshop by **Volunteer Development Scotland** was presented by Karl Monsen-Elvik under the title *'Measuring a Smile: the Value of Volunteering in Modern Scotland'*. The aim was to describe the approach taken to measuring the economic value at both the national and sub-national level in Scotland.

Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) is a Scottish CEV member. It serves as Scotland's Centre for Excellence and provides a leadership role which supports decision makers in identifying ways in which volunteering can help them achieve their objectives. VDS knowledge, tools and services seek to continually enhance the quality of the volunteering experience. By adopting an evidence based approach VDS can assist others in maximising the impact and opportunities of volunteering. The vision of VDS is that people are an active power in society making a positive difference through volunteering.

Volunteering reality in Scotland

Scotland is a small country with a strong tradition of volunteering and a well-established national volunteer centre. Although the current administration's priorities are strongly focused on economic growth and sustainability, volunteering is seen as having a contribution to make according to key policy documents. There is not a "volunteering law", but the government – past and present – has supported a Volunteering Strategy (2004) that seeks to establish a robust culture of volunteering in Scotland. This is delivered by Volunteer Development Scotland working in partnership with the Network of 32 local Volunteer Centres. This "Partnership of 33" is supported financially by central government funding.

In Scotland there are in total 45,000 organisations or associations (NGOs); annual NGO income is £3.87 billion (€4.78 billion); there are 129,000 paid staff (5% of Scotland's workforce); and 1.6 million adult volunteers (32% of citizens)¹⁵. This gives an indication of the amount of money and people involved in Scottish civil society. It also justifies the need to measure the value of volunteering.

*"Our Purpose as Scotland's Government is to increase sustainable economic growth. ... Our future prosperity as a nation depends on everyone playing their part - as workers, consumers, **volunteers** and business people."*
Scottish New Economic Strategy

The method

The method used to calculate the economic value of volunteering in Scotland is the "replacement value" i.e. how much it would cost in salary (with the addition of employer costs) to pay a worker to do the work of a volunteer. It was decided to use the multiplying figure of the average wage since this is also the established methodology. The calculation used gives an equivalent value of the number of full-time jobs involved, based on the percentage of the population who volunteer and the range of hours given to volunteering.

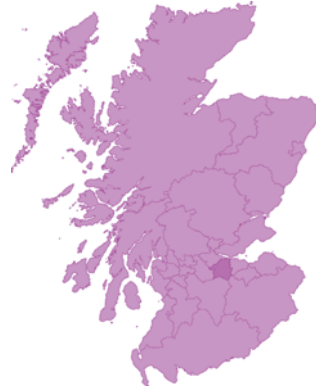
In this case the traditional measurement scheme:

- Count the hours/days of volunteer
- Select multiplying factor
- Equate the costs
- Do the sums

was processed in Scotland in a following way:

Firstly, a research study was done at the national level on "Hours worked" to verify how many hours are contributed by volunteers per month. The number of volunteers was treated as a % of population. Then the volunteer hours were counted per month - x 12 months, ÷ 35 hours, ÷ 48 weeks what gave a number of full time equivalent jobs per annum. It was multiplied by the national average weekly wage and 20% of overheads were added. For Scotland this gives the economic value of volunteering as £1.9 billion (€2.6 billion) which represents 2.3% GDP.

This scheme can be as well applied at the sub-national level. There was a case study presented covering one municipality of Scotland, Midlothian; a small area outside Edinburgh. Under a new emphasis on "localism", similar to the European principle of subsidiarity, there is an interest in pushing down accountability, including financial priority-setting, to the local level. It is seen as helpful to volunteering development agencies to know the local picture in order to inform local decision-making and advocate for resources. The case study compared the average value of a volunteer based on the national figures, against the value of those people placed through the local Volunteer Centre. It appeared that the higher value of a volunteer placement justified the investment in the Volunteer Centre since its work leads to proportionately greater economic value for volunteering arranged in such a third-party way.



The outcomes and challenges

The project to present volunteering in Scotland in terms of economic value was useful for the following reasons:

- It is what many decision-makers understand;
 - It helps people appreciate the relative "size" of volunteering;
 - It allows for measuring added value through volunteering; and
 - It leads on to discussion about other values derived from volunteering.
- So the economic argument for volunteering is high.

However, in this method variables such as definitions and levels of volunteering based on how it is counted do affect the calculations. Therefore the results might differ between countries. Thus this method does not provide the basis for comparable data on volunteering.

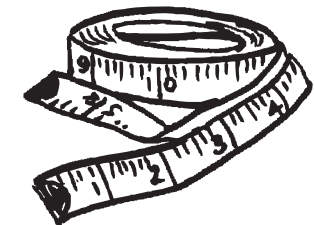
Furthermore, there are different opinions about how accurate this process is, especially in capturing the more "informal" (and therefore less accounted for) volunteering activity. In Scotland, informal volunteering levels are much higher than those for more formally arranged volunteering through a third party. Out of 32% of the population who volunteer, 69% do it "informally". Some forms of vol-

unteering appear as not "value for money". Matching the economic value might lose the "added value" element of volunteering as spontaneous and altruistic activity. For some people, determining the value of volunteering by assigning an economic value is missing the point – it is exactly because it is not undertaken for money which makes volunteering so valuable.

In Scotland, the overall image of volunteering until now has not been boiled down to purely economic figure due to the government commitment. The authorities recognise formally that volunteering contributes not only in economic terms, but that it also has an impact on health, well-being, perceived personal happiness, social cohesion, etc. The aim of measuring volunteering was to understand the real impacts and outcomes achieved through this form of activity. The government together with the volunteer centres wanted to know what difference volunteering makes, in particular what the public benefits are that cannot be achieved by any other activity. As Scotland moves into the 21st Century, it was perceived as necessary to demonstrate the central role of volunteering in proving the lives of everyone in Scotland. As the workshop presenter, Karl Monsen-Elvik concluded, the strategic aim is to count smiles – and not just to know how much each one is worth in monetary terms.

3) Measuring investments in volunteering and its impact - the Volunteer Investment Value Audit (VIVA) and the Volunteering Impact Assessment toolkit

In the 3rd workshop, Joanna Machin from the Institute for Volunteering Research said that the volunteer-involving organisations are increasingly interested in the economic dimension of volunteering. She added that the research shows that the reasons for this are that these organisations are under increasing pressure to become more efficient, transparent and accountable, with the demand for more effective monitoring of outcomes and impacts of voluntary activities by funders, stakeholders and service users (Ellis, 2000). Measuring the economic impact of these activities is identified as the most visible and most easily measured way of assessing and demonstrating the contribution and value of volunteers (Gaskin et al, 2002).





The workshop '*The economic approach: assessing the impact of volunteering using two measurement tools*' was presented by Joanna Machin from the **Institute for Volunteering Research, UK**. It explored two different approaches for measuring and assessing the economic impact of volunteering prepared by the Institute. First, Volunteer Investment Value Audit (VIVA), is a tool which measures the 'value' of, and investment in, volunteering by placing the volunteers' wage equivalent against the total investment cost to the organisation. Second, the Volunteering Impact Assessment toolkit provides tools for assessing the economic impact of volunteering (alongside other impacts) on different stakeholders - volunteers, organisation staff, service users and the wider community.

The Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) is an initiative of **Volunteering England** in association with the Centre for Institutional Studies at the University of East London. The aim of the Institute is to carry out and commission research on different aspects of volunteering at a variety of levels; disseminate findings so as to maximise the policy and practice impact; act as a focal point for research on volunteering; develop links with bodies involved in volunteering research in England, the UK and other countries, with a view to sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas; and finally to stimulate and contribute to education and training on volunteering.

The Volunteer Investment Value Audit (VIVA)

The VIVA methodology for measuring the economic value of volunteering builds on earlier approaches to calculating the economic contribution of volunteering. Previously this was estimated by calculating the number of volunteers multiplied by the average hours volunteered per week multiplied by the average hourly equivalent wage rate. In the UK the value of formal volunteering is currently estimated to be £38.9 billion (Low et al, 2007).

However it was identified that these calculations did not take account of the level investment into volunteering programmes. By assessing the 'inputs' of volunteering i.e. the resources in-

vested in volunteering in relation to the 'outputs' i.e. volunteers time, VIVA enables organisations to calculate a ratio demonstrating the value of volunteering and cost effectiveness.

To calculate the inputs to volunteering, organisations need to collect information about expenditures over a period of one year, for example:

- Salary of volunteer co-ordinator and other staff
- Advertising and recruitment
- Induction and training
- Volunteers' expenses
- Admin, support, recognition
- Supplies and equipment
- Food and accommodation
- Volunteers insurance
- Volunteer-related building costs or expenses

To work out the volunteer value organisations should match each volunteer role to an equivalent market wage rate. For example the equivalent role for a volunteer driver could be a taxi driver.



An example: the equivalent role for a volunteer driver - a taxi driver.

The hourly wage rate for a taxi driver = €8

Total weekly hours of volunteers in this role = 10

Total number of hours in year = 10 x 48 = 480

Total value = 480 hours X €8 = € 3840

You may then want to add 20% for overheads.

Then divide the total volunteer value by the total volunteer investment to produce the VIVA ratio.

The example has been adapted from VIVA – The Volunteer Investment and Value Audit: A self help guide: <http://www.ivr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C07E99EC-3818-4618-A0DB-914-ACAD28B65/0/viva2003.pdf>

The Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit

The Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit was developed by the Institute for Volunteering Research in 2004 and is designed to help organisations carry out their own research to assess the impacts of volunteering. The toolkit is based around a simple framework, which looks at a wide range of impacts on different stakeholders (volunteers, organisations, service users and the wider community). For each stakeholder group the toolkit provides a set of research methods or instruments such as questionnaires and focus group topic guides which can be used and adapted to assess the impacts of

volunteering. All of these tools are provided on a CD which means that organisations can adapt them to meet their own needs.

The toolkit looks at a broad range of impacts – physical, economic, human, social and cultural. If we focus specifically on the economic impacts of volunteering on volunteers, the tools ask questions about the costs/non payment of out of pocket expenses, value/access to free training and employability/increased earning power. For example, on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree volunteers are asked whether volunteering has increased their ability to get paid work and whether it has helped them look for paid employment.

The outcomes and challenges

The tools presented at the workshop demonstrated two different ways of measuring and assessing the economic value and impact of volunteering. The first is based on calculations and the assessment of the 'inputs' and 'outputs' of volunteer programmes through the use of the volunteer investment and value whereas the second is based on the perspectives of stakeholders on what the economic impacts are for them.

Two particular issues were raised during the discussion at the workshop. Firstly, the need to look beyond the economic impacts of volunteering and assess the other impacts as well – the human, social and cultural. The toolkit helps organisations to understand how to do this. Secondly, the participants discussed the issue of comparability. With VIVA the results are not

comparable and should not be used to judge organisations to say one is more effective than another. Organisations may have lower VIVA ratios because they invest more in their volunteering. Further, organisations take different approaches to calculating investments and volunteer value making comparisons even more problematic.

4) Measuring the value of time of volunteers - alternative ways of calculating the economic value of volunteering

The issue of comparison of the results is an important one. While using different methods to measure the economic value of volunteering, organisations obtain different results. This is clearly visible when we use different tools to measure the same variable of volunteering.



The workshop 'Alternative ways of calculating the economic value of volunteering' was presented by Cristina Rigman from Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre, Romania.

The Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organisation working in Romania. The Mission of Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre in Romania is to promote and develop volunteerism as a viable and irreplaceable resource in solving the problems the Romanian society is now facing. The vision of Pro Vobis is a society in which each and every person contributes voluntarily to the development of the community one lives in either by offering one's time, knowledge, energy, skills, talents or experience or by supporting financially the voluntary initiatives within the community. Pro Vobis offers services to promote the concept and practice of volunteerism and for developing the infrastructure for volunteering in Romania.

This workshop was not based on a specific practical experience. It was a theoretical workshop aiming to present four alternative ways of measuring the economic value of the volunteer work – through measuring the time invested by volunteers. The workshop built on the article "Valuing Volunteers: an Economic Evaluation of Net Benefits of Hospital Volunteers" by Femida Handy and Narasimhan Srinivasan, published in the Non-profit Voluntary Quarterly No. 1, Vol. 33, March 2004, pages 28-54.

The four methods presented for discussion are:

A) The Work Opportunity Cost Method

Question: How much would you gain if working extra hours instead of doing volunteer work?

This method equals the value of the volunteering hour with the actual wage the volunteer receives at his/her current work place. If not employed, the method equals the value of the volunteering hours with what the volunteer finds a "reasonable compensation" for the work he/she performs. The logic behind this method is to consider how much the volunteer would gain if doing paid work instead of volunteer work. For example, if a lawyer is paid 50€ per hour and volunteers for maintenance activities, the value of the volunteering hour would be 50€ also. If a teacher is paid 10€ per hour and volunteers for maintenance activities, the value of the volunteering hour would be 10€. If a carpenter is paid 30€ per hour and volunteers for maintenance activities, the value of the volunteering hour would be 30€.

The main problem identified when using this method is that the volunteering hour of a certain activity will be valued differently according to how much the volunteer is paid at his/her current workplace, placing different values on the same unit. Also, how to measure the value of volunteering hour of people who do not do regular work e.g. students, pupils, migrants, retired or unemployed people.? But the method emphasises the value of the volunteering hour from the point of view of the volunteer, who would gain the specified amount if doing paid work instead of volunteering and the value of that hour is the same for the volunteer regardless of the type of volunteering activity s/he performs.

B) The Leisure Time Opportunity Cost Method

Question: How much would be the reasonable compensation you would expect for this work if it were to be paid instead of volunteer work?

This method equals the value of the volunteering hour by the average reasonable compensation rate indi-

cated by volunteers. The calculations are made based on the expectations of the volunteers in terms of financial gain if doing paid work instead of volunteer work. This method is extremely biased, the value placed by volunteers on their time varying according to very different criteria, some more subjective than others. The value given by the volunteer to the volunteering hour may differ, for example, based on the specific state of mind of the volunteer when asked. If the volunteer has had a very busy day, the value of the volunteering hour may be higher just because at that particular moment the free time values more. If the volunteer just came back from holidays and feels relaxed, the value if the volunteering time may be lower because the psychological disposition supports this evaluation.

But this method does estimate the value the volunteers themselves place on their time. It is very subjective but at the same time it reflects the value that each volunteer really gives to their volunteering.

C) The Replacement Cost Method

Question: How many people would the organisation need to hire to do the amount of work done by volunteers and how much would the organisation pay for their work?

This method calculates the value of the volunteering hour by the amount the organisation benefiting from the volunteer work would have to pay

the staff they would employ to do the work done by volunteers. This calculation method raises from the very start an important question: would the organisation really hire people to perform the work done by volunteers if they had the resources? It is rarely the case in practice, as the emphasis on engaging volunteers is to add value to the activity and services provided and not to replace paid work.

On the other hand, this calculation method, as opposed to the other methods discussed here, incorporates also the administrative costs, which are left out in the other methods. Considering that the organisation provides parking facilities for volunteers, this administrative cost is not reflected in the value of the volunteering hour calculated based in the other methods. If treated similarly as the paid staff, such costs are incorporated in the overall staff cost and would reflect the true level of expenditure the organisation entails when involving and managing volunteers.

D) The Industry Wage Method

Question: If a volunteer does maintenance activities, how much is the maintenance hour paid in the market?

This method calculates the value of the volunteer hour by the average rate paid in the industry of the volunteering activity. If you look back to the example under the first method, using the industry wage method, the value of the volunteering hour for mainte-

nance activities would be 30€ (how much a carpenter is paid in the market) regardless of who is the volunteer performing the work and how much s/he is paid at his/her current workplace. This method emphasises the activity performed and not the volunteer, and does not include the administrative costs of the volunteer activity.

The outcomes and challenges

Each of the four methods described above has both positive and negative consequences. The choice of the calculation method should be guided by the purpose of the calculation and the specific group the results are targeted at. The type of information needed to be able to perform such calculations is similar for all the four methods. The basic data needed include number of volunteers, number of volunteering hours, type of activities performed, current profession and wage of volunteers, number of volunteering hours per activity per volunteer. Once we have such data, we can also use all the methods to emphasize different aspects related to measuring the economic value of volunteering by calculating the financial equivalent of the volunteering hour.

5) Other methods

In addition to these 4 good practices and methods presented by CEV mem-

ber organisations during the General Assembly in Ljubljana, there are also a number of other tools to measure volunteering. Volunteer centres, volunteer networks and volunteer-involving organisations they work with use the methods which the most suit their needs. It is not possible nor an objective of this publication to give an overview of them all. However, it is worth mentioning here a toolkit of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 'Assigning Economic Value to Volunteer Activity: Eight Tools for Efficient Program Management' (Goulbourne and Don Embuldeniya, 2002) which was created as part of the International Year of Volunteers Research programme, in order to provide Canadian voluntary organisations with a systematic method for assigning an economic value to the activity of volunteers.

The toolkit introduces 8 measures that organisations can use to demonstrate:

- how much volunteers contribute to the organisation in terms of the amount of time they give and their out-of-pocket expenses;
- how much an organisation invests in its volunteers (e.g. salaries for volunteer programme staff, training expenses, and recruitment expenses);
- the extent to which volunteers increase the human resource capacity of the organisation; and the return on the organisation's investment in its volunteer program. (Goulbourne and Don Embuldeniya, 2002, p.2)

An overview of the eight measures follows:

Eight Measures – An Overview

The eight measures presented in this manual are categorized into three strategic areas: human resource productivity measures, volunteer program efficiency measures, and community support measures.

Human resource productivity measures

These measures describe how volunteers extend your organization's personnel resources beyond your existing budget.

Estimates of the Value of Volunteer Activity (EVVA)

Document the economic (dollar) value of the time your volunteers contribute by assigning a wage rate to each hour of volunteer activity. Depending on your reporting requirements, you can calculate volunteer economic value monthly, quarterly, biannually, or annually.

True Value Added to Personnel (TVAP)

Calculate the true economic value of volunteer contributions by assigning wage rates and benefits to each hour of volunteer activity.

Full-time Year-round Job Equivalent (FYJE)

Convert your organization's total number of volunteer hours to the equivalent number of full-time positions.

Percent Personnel Value Extended (PPVE)

Demonstrate the degree to which volunteers extend the value of your organization's personnel.

Volunteer program efficiency measures

These measures provide a context for explaining the value of your volunteer program.

Organization Volunteer Investment Ratio (OVIR)

Find out your organization's return on the money it invests in its volunteer program.

Volunteers to Paid Staff Ratio (VPSR)

Shed light on the volunteer management structure of your program by comparing the number of volunteers to the number of paid staff in your volunteer program.

Community support measures

These measures describe volunteer contributions as a form of community support.

Volunteer Capital Contribution (VCC)

Calculate the out-of-pocket expenses that volunteers incur and do not claim as an "in-kind" donation to your organization.

Community Investment Ratio (CIR)

Compare the amount your organization invests in your volunteer program to the investment volunteers make in terms of their time.

Source: *ASSIGNING ECONOMIC VALUE TO VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY: Eight Tools for Efficient Program Management*, Michelle Goulbourne and Don Embuldeniya Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, p. 4.

Conclusions: Should we measure the economic value of volunteering? - Voices of the participants

The conference in Ljubljana stimulated many interesting discussions on the economic value of volunteering. During the panel session, the workshops, the dialogue café and the strategy session, speakers and other participants took up many important issues and presented different answers to the key question 'shall we measure the economic value of volunteering?'. The points raised are summarised below.

There is no simple answer to this controversial question – especially as it touches on the heart of the debate around our understanding of volunteering and its intrinsic value. The debates and issues raised by the conference participants can be clustered around three main strands:

Should we measure the economic value of volunteering?

No, because...



"Volunteering is not about money"

Do we want to reduce volunteering to an economic activity? Is its intrinsic value not precisely that it is given without financial concern? The number of volunteer hours can be counted - but isn't it more important to ask questions such as 'What is the impact of volunteering on the volunteer, the local community and society at large?' Volunteering indeed impacts in many "immeasurable ways": how to measure a feeling of being loved and cared for? How to measure reinforced mutual understanding and respect? How to measure the sense of belonging to a community, and the personal happiness resulting from volunteer activity? Focusing on the economic value risks reducing volunteering to a purely 'financial' equation, taking attention away from its intrinsic, immeasurable value.



"Associating volunteering with 'unpaid work' can be dangerous and misleading"

Measuring volunteering by multiplying working hours by a comparable wage or inside the ILO Labour Force surveys may lead to volunteering being associated

with unpaid labour. This could reinforce the underlying assumption of some politicians and possibly also of trade unions that volunteering replaces paid work. We should tread very carefully in order not to risk turning 'volunteering' into 'working for free'.


- **"The results of measuring volunteering economically can be misused"**
Policy makers might want to misuse the results of such calculations for ideological reasons, advocating that volunteers provide all these services for free – and that the state can retrieve spending money on services run by volunteers. This can also lead policy makers to become increasingly interested in enhancing volunteering and in offering incentives to volunteer, something the volunteering field should watch carefully. Volunteering should not be seen as cheap service provision nor be "polluted" with incentives that are economic rather than focussed on free will, solidarity and motivation.
- **"We risk unnecessary formalisation through 'monetisation' of volunteering" and may discourage or even lose volunteers"**
One of the keys 'success factors' is that volunteers engage in their volunteering in a spontaneous, informal and motivated manner – in a setting that is precisely not professional, nor like their place of work. If we start measuring the working hours of volunteers they might perceive their contribution more of a job duty than an invaluable contribution to society and to their fellow citizens. Volunteering is about giving something to others, without counting on the reward. There is a risk of discouraging and putting off those who do engage just for altruistic reasons and who are not interested in their contributions being measured in monetary terms.

'Measuring volunteering – it doesn't feel right!'
Conference's participant

- **"Measuring will make volunteering more expensive and complicated"**
Each measurement tool requires additional resources and will add to administrative burdens of those implementing them. Using these tools will mean that volunteer managers will have to spend time on measuring and calculating economic value – in addition to their primary role of providing quality volunteer placements. Who is going to pay the additional costs?

'Volunteering does not require money to be successful and fulfilling!'
Conference's participant

- **"It does not seem possible to have comparable results due to the different methods used"**
All the different methods presented are meaningful – but the outcomes are hardly comparable as changes in the calculation methods influence the final results. How meaningful and reliable is the calculation of the economic value of volunteering if organisations use different definitions and calculation methods?

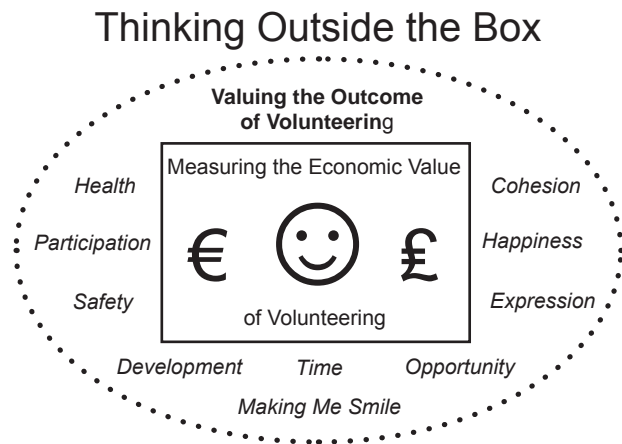
 **Renzo Razzano**, the President of the CEV Italian member organisation SPES (Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio) represented during panel session the sceptics view of the issue of measuring the economic value of volunteering. His main argument was based on the assumption that volunteering, as not having an economic goal, cannot really be measured. The 'results' of volunteers' work are its most important value. Volunteering is very much about the relations between people - how do we capture that?

Should we measure the economic value of volunteering?

Yes, but...

→ **“Yes, we should measure the economic value of volunteering, but this is not the whole story and we must not lose sight of its other impacts on society”**

Measuring the financial contribution is important but it must be accompanied and complemented by indicators and methods which also measure the contribution to social cohesion, integration, social inclusion, active participation, health, personal development, social capital, empowerment etc. There should be considerable effort to develop tools and instruments to make these impacts, which seem to us to be at the heart of volunteering, visible.



Scheme used by Karl Monsen-Elvik (VDS) in his good practice presentation

→ **“The national, European and international economic statistic must be improved”**

Lack of comparable data is one of the major barriers to putting volunteering onto the political agenda and to investing in volunteering. We should have a common data collected through ILO surveys – this would help to compare the results in different countries, as well as giving us a comparable overview of the sector and of activities in Europe.



→ **“But we need discussion and decisions on how to really do it”**
In order to keep the administrative burdens down and to achieve meaningful results, we need capacity building and toolkits tailored to enable organisations to run measurement easily.

Should we measure the economic value of volunteering?

Yes, and...

→ **“Yes, measuring the economic value can have positive results!”**

- Economic figures help the general public and the volunteer sector itself to understand the enormous “size” of volunteering and to achieve better visibility and recognition.

- Measurement can improve government policy. Policy and decision-makers seem to understand the language of economic value above anything else – having those data, civil society would ‘wake-up’ decision-makers, pledging support with a powerful message. Numbers help to tailor volunteering policies according to the real needs (or help to start developing such policies where they don’t yet exist).

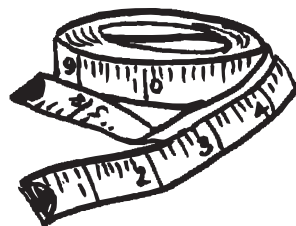


One of the panel speakers in the conference in Ljubljana was the representative of the Slovenian government – Mr. **Davor Dominkuš**, Director General of the Social Affairs Directorate in the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

During the panel session, he agreed that showing the economic value of volunteering is very important for influencing decision-makers to support the voluntary sector. He added that the supportive role of governments is crucial in order for volunteering to bloom. For example, Slovenia adopted a special programme in which support for and promotion of volunteering and voluntary sector are the crucial elements. Also, currently, a special act is being prepared to cover all those aspects – unpaid labour, household, health sectors and volunteering in the statistics.

In the end Mr. Dominkuš stated that volunteering is worth much more than the direct economic value counted as work done by volunteers. It is even more important to recognise and to measure the contribution of volunteering to social cohesion and solidarity between people.

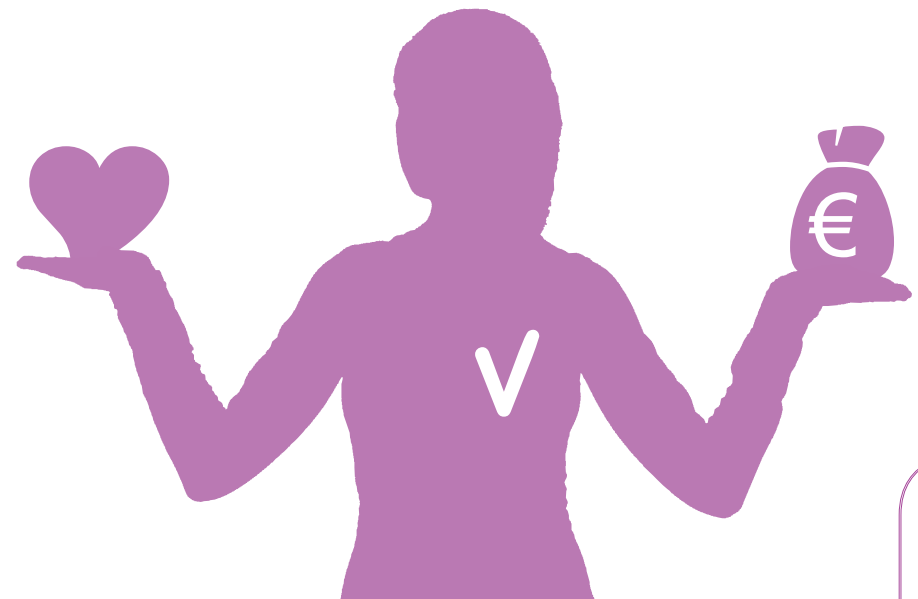
- Economic numbers can help to clarify the return issue: what do volunteers give back for each cent spent? This can reinforce the case for a volunteering infrastructure demonstrating the 'return on investment'.
- Measuring can improve the management, accountability, legitimacy and transparency of volunteer sector - it entails better administration and management of money spent on volunteering
- Demonstrating the economic value of volunteering can increase philanthropy and matched funds: donors are more likely to give when they clearly see how much impact their resources will have and how much the volunteer sector actually contributes 'in kind' to these funds.
- Demonstrating the economic value can put people off – but it can also increase the number of persons involved if people realize that they are part of a huge movement having a real and measurable impact on society and economy.



The stakeholders will look for new concepts complementing the economic value of Volunteering:

The traditional economic methods should be complemented by new concepts of value and worth. The volunteer sector, researchers and governments should work in partnership to find the best methods to understand and measure the overall impact of volunteering on the society. It is important to work on such measures and social indicators which will value the social and human impact and contribution of volunteering, apart of its economic worth.

Volunteering is much more than only an economic activity – but it also has a value that can be counted in economic terms. Measuring and presenting the economic value can be a good way of winning recognition for volunteering especially with policy makers. But it has to be employed cautiously and in conjunction with other measurement tools for the so far “immeasurable impacts” of volunteering, such as on social capital, social cohesion, personal development and empowerment. Such measurement tools should be developed in order to be able to describe the full picture of volunteering and its true value.



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APPENDIX 2

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Kujundzic	Hamdija	OSMIJEH	Bosnia Herzegovina
Laskova	Nina	NAVA	Bulgaria
Leggate	Tommy	VC NLanarkshire	UK Scotland
Leigh	Robert	UNV	UN
Lepp	Ülle	Volunteer Development Estonia	Estonia
Lerner	Jillian	Croatian American Society	Germany
Lerner	Tiomir	Croatian American Society	Croatia
Leroy	Veerle	Het Punt vzw	Belgium
Liddell	Fiona	WCVA	UK Wales
Loncar	Semina	Centre for Democracy	Croatia
Lucke	Gisela	ARBES	Germany
Lunas Masnou	Rosa	FOCAGG	Spain
Lusaka	Jillian	UNV	Germany
Macchioni	Stefania	CSV.net	Italy
Machin	Joanna	IVR – Institute for Volunteering Research	UK
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McKenna	Yvonne	Volunteer Centres Ireland	Ireland
McNeil	Mary	VC NLanarkshire	UK Scotland
Milinković	Duška	Association MI, Split	Croatia

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Murn	Karmen	Facilitator	Slovenia
Novak	Tereza	Slovenska Filantropija	Slovenia
Nexic	Neli	SMART	Croatia
Oblak	Alenka	National Agency YOUTH	Slovenia
Osti	Alberto	Spes	Italy
Petkovšek	Jana		Slovenia
Polini	Benedetta	Avm Marche	Italy
Popisilova	Karin	Lekorice, o.s.	Czech Republic
Poyatos	Juan	Fundar	Spain
Pugelj	Tadej	Facilitator	Slovenia
Raimondo	Sergio	CSG FVG	Italy
Raskovic	Biljana	NSHC	Serbia
Razzano	Renzo	Spes	Italy
Reid	Eliane	VDS	UK Scotland
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Rigman	Cristina	Pro Vobis	Romania
Robert	Colette	France Bénévolat	France
Roiatti	Giovanna	Csv Friuli v.g.	Italy
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Soucir	Michael	Croatian American Society	
Šuštaršić	Tanja	US Embassy	
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Tagliabue	Luigi	CRCS Lombardia	Italy
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UŠLAKAR	Marjeta	MINISTRSTVO ZA DELO, DRUŽINO IN SOCIALNE ZADEVE	Slovenia
Vila	Maria	Catalan Federation of Social Volunteerism	Spain

APPENDIX 3

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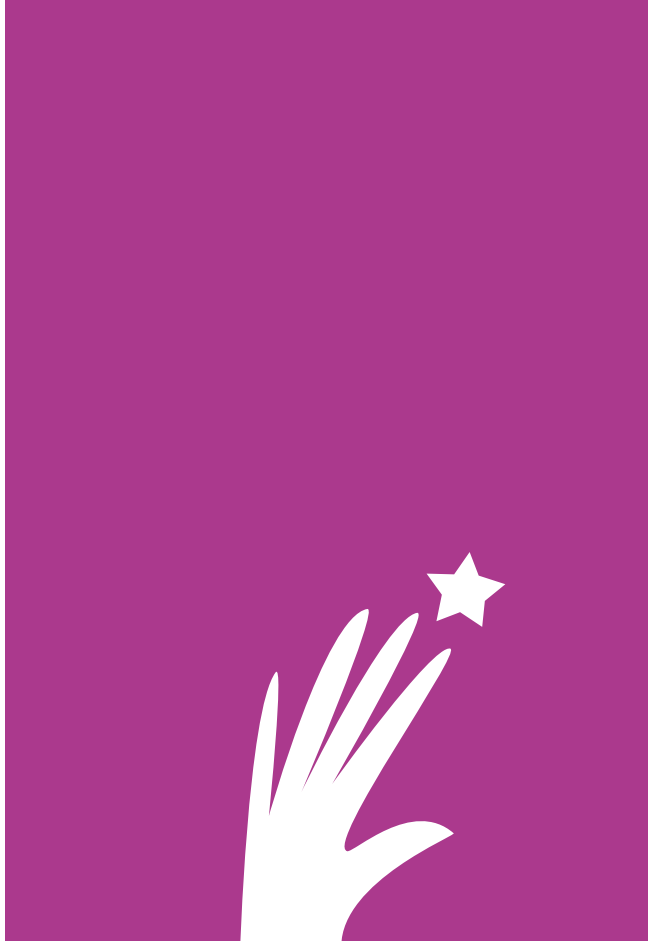
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