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FUNDAÇÃO EUGÉNIO DE ALMEIDA

# Close to Home Volunteering Centres

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Évora, south Portugal

Founded in 1963, by Vasco Maria Eugénio de Almeida

Agro-industrial enterprise project (cattle, olive oil and wine)

About 100 permanent employees

**Mission:** culture and education, social welfare, and spirituality develop

**Values:** Human Dignity, Social Justice, Sustainable Development

## Background

- Project aligned with the **Mission and Values** of the Eugénio de Almeida Foundation;
- Consider Volunteering as a **decisive contribute for social, educative and cultural development**;
- Look at Volunteering as **contemporary practice of real and effectiveness active citizenship**.

# VOLUNTEER PROJECT

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## Vision

### **The Eugenio de Almeida Foundation Volunteer Project:**

- an national reference in social area;
- toward excellence;
- qualify volunteer practice;
- innovative management;
- creativity at social answers;
- promote knowledge starting from *praxis*.

## Key-words

- Qualification;
- knowledge;
- Partnership;
- Action-research;
- Empowerment;
- Dissemination of results and best practices.

***Social development and social change***

# VOLUNTEER PROJECT

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## Some steps...

2001 - Training Program;

2005 - Local Volunteering Centre;

2006 - Close to Home Volunteering Centres;

2010 - Volunteering Summer School and Volunteering Manuals.

# VOLUNTEER PROJECT

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## Operative axes

Axe 1 – (Local) Volunteer Centre

Axe 2 – Training

Axe 3 – Information and Promotion

Axe 4 – Knowledge management

Axe 5 – Intervention Projects

**Axe 6 – Close to Home Volunteer Centres**

# Close to Home Volunteer Centres

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voluntariado de proximidade

### Local Diagnostic - fragility's

- Fragility of informal networks;
- Lack of flexibility of social services;
- Lack of empowerment and social citizenship;
- Unqualified management of volunteering projects.

- Social (and physical) isolation of elderly;
- Depopulation in Évora historic centre;
- Lost of proximity and neighbourhood relations;
- Difficult in conciliation among professional and personal life;
- Others...

### Local Diagnostic – strengths

- Volunteering know-how of the Eugenio de Almeida Foundation;
  - Providing complementary answers to social services;
  - Higher interest from community to volunteering themes;
  - Good network with local organizations;
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- Data Base of local Volunteers;
  - Social needs identified by local organizations;
  - Local leaders identified – some where also volunteers;
  - Proximity among EAF, local organizations and volunteers;
  - Develop some social-animation activities between volunteers and possible beneficiaries;

# Close to Home Volunteer Centres

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**Close to Home Volunteering** is a volunteering practice with in a territorial perspective, based on proximity, trust and neighborhood relationships, which aims to support individuals, families or institutions, providing answers to problems that do not require a specific response of a technical and/or professional nature.

The **Close to Home Volunteering Centres** rely on the collaboration between the different entities represented on a county, supported by the counsellors' mediation that, voluntarily, organise the Centre's work, providing volunteers as required.

# Close to Home Volunteer Centres

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## This Project aims to:

- **Promote a culture of proximity** among volunteers, beneficiaries and the institutions that act locally;
- Detect the **local needs** from individuals, families or communities;
- Help meet these needs, **with close to home volunteers**, in collaboration with technical services;
- **Involve, organize and empower the local institutions** that are physically near to each other, in order to elaborate and carry out specific action plans to create social change.

## Close to Home Volunteer Centres

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In Évora, the Eugenio de Almeida Foundation has created **4 Centres, involving more than 35 organizations**. In the south, Tavira (Algarve) and Arraiolos (Alentejo), another two more centres have been created with the advisory staff of EAF.

These Centres were created as a “**pilot-project**”, and they are still improving procedures.

Almost **400 organizations** from all the country are now registered at EAF *close to home volunteering project* data base.

# What activities are supported?

### Individuals activities:

- personal accompaniment of senior citizens, including entertainment activities (entertaining, reading, walking) and social support (helping with medications, visits to the doctor, support at mealtimes);
- accompaniment of children to and from school;
- support to single-parent families;
- support to families with handicapped elements;
- others.

## What activities are supported?

### **Institutional activities:**

- socio-cultural activities and projects;
- small training sessions;
- social-animation activities;
- community and solidarity micro-projects;
- organization of cultural and environmental activities;
- others.

## Possible intervention areas

- **Territorial:** county or other territory that take in good care the proximity and neighbour principles;
- **Thematic:** take into consideration social, or other, theme groups, such as the elderly, children, handicapped, environment, culture among others,...
- **Any Others:** that emerges from the local context and circumstances.

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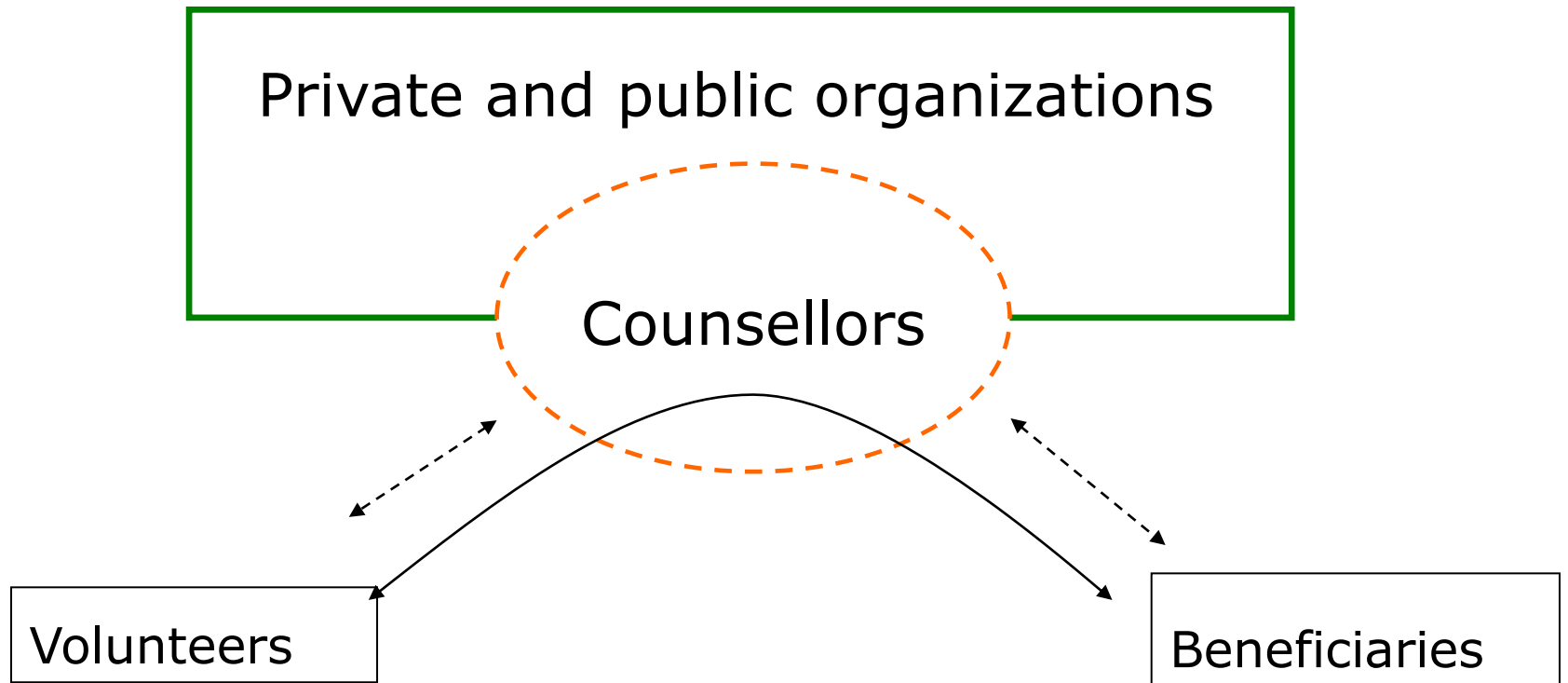
## Main functions

- Promoting neighbourhood, proximity, trust and getting to know each other relationships among people, and among individuals and local organizations;
- Improve the solidarity of the local community;
- Identify local and personal needs, that can be met or reduced by *close to home volunteers*;

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## Who's involved



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## Needs

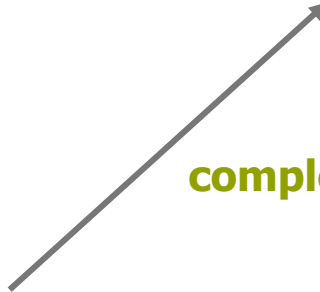
### 1. Families

Personal problems or needs, that can be solved by social services, and complemented by volunteering aid



## Resources

**complementary perspective**



### 2. Public organizations and NGOs

Provide social services, and identify other social needs.

### 3. Volunteers

Help people, and identify other social needs to be provided by social services

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## Institution compromise...

1. Delegate in **one person to be represent** in the Close To Home Volunteering Centre
2. **Spread information about activities** promoted by the Close To Home Volunteering Centre
3. **Develop and participate in activities** in order to promote and animate the Centre
4. **Identify and persons** who need help, **and identify possible volunteers** to provide this help;
5. **Assume all legal questions** when develop a volunteering project by it self.
6. **Provide information** for better answers by social services

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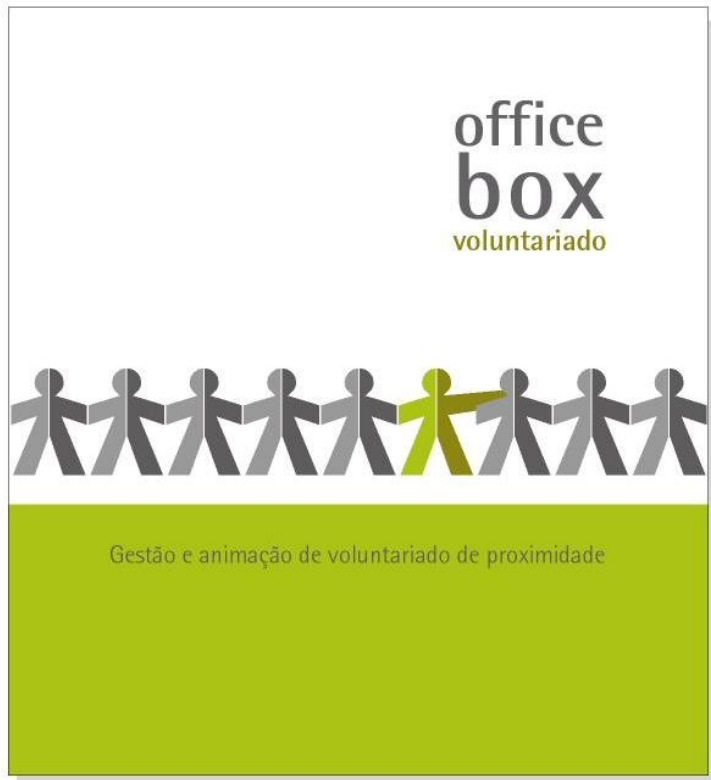
## Counsellor compromise...

1. **To be the link** between the EAF Centre staff, institutions, volunteers and beneficiaries;
2. **To represent the Centre** at local community;
3. **To organize the data base Centre** with information of volunteers, beneficiaries, and the support requests;
4. **To engage the right volunteers** to the requests of the beneficiaries;
5. **To participate in training sessions**, in order to have better performance;
6. **To network** with others Counselors;

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## Best-guide “office-box” tool



**Prize – Powering a new future/Equal Program**

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## Office-box contents

- Communication program



- Sociocultural animator program



- Training program



**Operative  
Action  
Program**

## Innovation

- Great flexibility and amplitude of possible social answers;
- Flexibility of the proposed model;
- Qualified and organized proposal for volunteer intervention;
- A vision of a *transforming volunteer intervention*;
- Management tools for project intervention;
- Empowerment of all participants.

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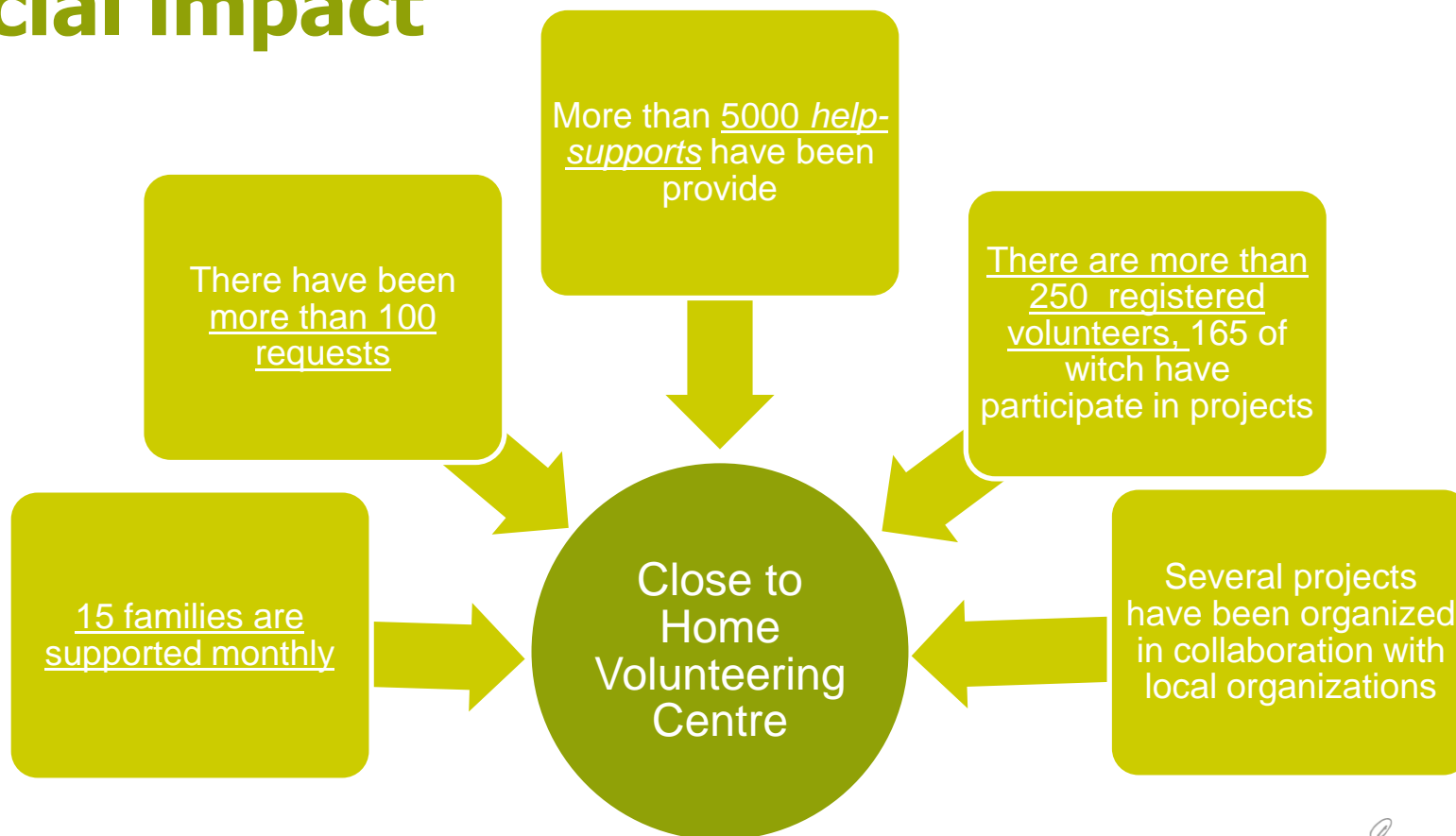
## Social impact

- Minimize social exclusion of specific groups (mostly the elderly)
- Contribute to conciliation between labour and family (single-parent families; families with handicapped people; others);
- Reinforce and improve local networks and social networks;
- Increase citizenship and participation;
- Improve social answers (complementing services provided by organizations with volunteering projects);

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## Social impact



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