

# **Institutionalizing the Measurement of Volunteering: Insights from the European Volunteer Measurement Project**

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## **Introduction**

Nearly 1 billion people throughout the world volunteer their time in a typical year through public, non-profit, or for-profit organisations, or directly for other people, making “Volunteer Land,” if it were a country, the country with the second largest adult population in the world, behind only China (Salamon, Sokolowski, and Haddock, 2011). This is the conclusion that flows from the first-ever empirically grounded, though still preliminary, estimate of the global scale of volunteer work.

This volunteer effort produces a wide array of impacts—on the volunteers themselves, on the beneficiaries of their activities, on the organisations through which at least some of the activity is carried out, and on the quality of life more generally in the societies in which the volunteers operate.

Unfortunately, however, few of these impacts are now captured in any systematic form. With the exception of a few industrialized countries, volunteering has not been covered in official statistics.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, what little is known about volunteering is scattered, partial, and not comparable either from place to place or from one time period to another (Howlett 2011; Rochester, Colin, Angela Ellis Paine, and Steven Howlett, 2009; and Lyons, Wijkstrom, and Clary 1998). As a consequence, even such basic questions as the share of the population engaged in volunteering is unknown in most places, or worse, is reported by various studies to be at wildly different levels in the same country due to differences in definitions or research methodologies.

Fortunately, important steps have recently been taken that give promise of correcting this situation. This article describes the background of these steps, the breakthrough that has recently been made in developing an approach for generating systematic data on at least the scope and scale of volunteering in countries around the world, and the important progress that has been made in moving this approach into implementation in at least one region of the world—Europe.

To do so, the discussion here proceeds in four steps. First, we examine the peculiar methodological, cultural and policy challenges facing the development of a common approach for measuring volunteer work in Europe and elsewhere. Second, we outline the approach taken for measuring the amount and value of volunteer work in the development of the *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) recently issued for use in countries around the world and explain how it addresses and overcomes many of these challenges (International Labour Organisation, 2011). Third, we describe the collaborative effort being made by the European Volunteer Centre, the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, and SPES - Associazione Promozione e Solidarietà through the European Volunteer Measurement Project (EVMP) to promote the adoption of the ILO *Manual* in Europe. Finally, we identify the next steps

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<sup>1</sup> Regular surveys of volunteering have recently been conducted by the statistical offices of Australia, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United States.

needed to fulfil the promise that this ILO *Manual* presents for scholars and volunteer promotion organizations in Europe and elsewhere.

What emerges most clearly from this discussion are three central conclusions:

- First, despite the methodological and policy challenges to doing so, it is possible to make reasonable quantitative estimates of the scale and nature of volunteer work and the characteristics of volunteers in a region as diverse as Europe in a way that is both comparable internationally and respectful of different national conceptions and patterns;
- Second, the ILO *Manual* has struck a reasonable balance among the competing conceptions of how and what to measure initially about volunteering and has consequently won important support among researchers, the volunteer community, and statisticians in Europe; and
- Third, important work is still needed to secure the institutional endorsement of Eurostat and governments Europe-wide to ensure full implementation of the capability to generate reliable, cross-national data on volunteer work in Europe as well as other parts of the world.

## **I. Challenges to Measuring Volunteer Work**

While the scale of volunteer activity in European countries is assumed to be quite extensive, little reliable data exist on it. And what data do exist use widely disparate definitions and rely on widely varying methodologies that render the results almost impossible to interpret with any confidence. This lack of systematic comparative data on volunteering has numerous practical consequences:

- It limits the visibility, and therefore the credence, of volunteer work. “Out of sight/out of mind” captures well the neglect that lack of visibility can create for a social phenomenon, and this seems generally to have happened with volunteering.
- It makes it difficult to generate support for policies that could bolster volunteer effort.
- It complicates the management of volunteer effort and thus robs societies of the ability to make the most effective use of this precious human resource. “What can’t be measured can’t be managed” is a widespread truth in management circles, and this certainly applies to the field of volunteer management.
- It denies volunteers a full appreciation of their contributions, thus limiting the positive impact volunteering could have on empowerment and inclusion;
- It discourages volunteering by failing to acknowledge its scale and contributions and undervaluing its impact.

The need for solid, systematic and comparable data on volunteering has been widely recognized for some time and was a major conclusion of the United Nations’ Year of Volunteering in 2001. However, a number of obstacles have prevented the development of such data prior to the release of the ILO *Manual*.

### **A. Definitional challenges**

A variety of definitions of volunteering are in use in Europe and elsewhere in the world (see Box 1 below), and many of these find reflection in surveys. As a consequence, widely different realities are being measured. While these definitions all emphasize the voluntary, unpaid, nature of the work, there are important differences worth noting. For example:

- A number of definitions use the word volunteering in the definition and in surveys, which causes enormous problems because of the quite different meanings and often negative connotations attached to this term in different places.

**Box 1: Definitions of volunteering in Europe according to national legislation**

“Volunteering is any activity which is:

- a) performed without compensation or obligation;
- b) exercised for the benefit of one or more persons, group or organisation or the community as a whole;
- c) carried out through an organisation outside the family or immediate private environment of the person who engages in the activity;
- d) not exercised by the same person and for the same organisation as part of an employment contract, a contract of service or a statutory designation.” (Belgium, 2005)

“Volunteering is an investment in personal time, effort, knowledge and skills out of free will to carry out services and activities for the well-being of another person or the wider public, and are executed by the persons without existence of any conditions of a financial reward or any other material benefit for the work done, unless otherwise stated by the Law.” (Croatia, 2007)

Volunteering is an “activity performed at a person’s own free will, through an organisation of which the volunteer is a member, with no aim for direct or indirect profit, exclusively for solidarity reasons.” (Italy, 1991)

Volunteering represents “all activity carried out for the public good, which is based on civic movement and voluntary action and is not paid for.” (Finland, 1987/2008)

Volunteering must “be based on free will, be carried out outside of one’s family or circle of close friends, without remuneration or financial gain and to serve the public interest, be done for a community cause and not for individual interest.” (Hungary, 2005)

Volunteering is “work done in any organised context that is carried out without obligation and without pay for other people or the community, whereby the person doing the work is not dependent on it for his or her livelihood”. (Netherlands, 1980)

“Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one’s immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.” (Northern Ireland, 2012)

“Volunteering activities are: characterised by altruism and solidarity; carried out by free will, without any personal or legal obligation; carried out without payment, without prejudice to the right to reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of the voluntary activity; developed through private or public organisations and under programmes or projects.” The law excludes all forms of voluntary action that is isolated, sporadic or carried out by individuals for family reasons, friendship or good neighbourliness, and makes specific reference to the fact that the role of voluntary activity is in no case to replace remunerated work. (Spain, 1996)

- Some definitions combine voluntary and charitable activities, which blurs the distinction between donations of time and donations of money.

- Some definitions include informal, or direct, volunteer activity, while others are restricted to organisation-based volunteering, and in some cases to non-profit organisations, or even to organisations in which the volunteer must be a member.
- Some definitions specify the motivations required to be considered volunteering (e.g. pursuing “public purposes” or “exclusively for solidarity reasons,” but motivations are difficult to detect and concepts like “public purpose” and “solidarity reasons” are open to widely different meanings at different times and in different places.
- Some definitions do not permit any financial benefit to the volunteer, while others are less strict and only say it should not be the motivating factor or that the volunteer’s livelihood should not depend on it.
- Some definitions restrict volunteering to activities done for persons who are not family members, but definitions of family boundaries vary across countries.

### **B. Imperfect or Incompatible methodologies**

Several studies on volunteering in European countries have been carried out over the years. However, as the 2010 “Volunteering in the European Union” study carried out at the request of the European Commission shows, a combination of different sample sizes, different reference periods, the failure to collect information on the hours volunteered, the inclusion/exclusion of direct or informal volunteering, differences in the number and kind of prompts used, variations in the reference period, and reliance on diverse survey platforms have made it virtually impossible to compare the results cross-nationally (GHK, 2010). Indeed, it is difficult to find consistent results even in a single country.

Thus, as Box 2 shows, recent studies of the volunteering rate in Hungary put this figure at 5.5 percent, 10.8 percent, and 40 percent, all within the space of four or five years. These differences seem to have had less to do with any variations in the actual performance of Hungarians than with variations in the definitions and measurement methods used by researchers. Thus, for example, the Hungarian National Volunteer Center got the 40 percent figure by including all manner of voluntary activity, formal and informal, as well as long-term voluntary service engagements, whereas the Hungarian Statistical Office came up with its 5.5 percent figure by focusing narrowly on NGOs that engage volunteers.

**Box 2: What is the volunteer rate in Hungary?**

Source	% of adult population volunteering	Notes
Czike, Klára and Kuti, Éva, Hungarian National Volunteer Centre, 2005 – Nonprofit kutatócsoport	40%	Includes informal/direct volunteering, in different settings
GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, 2010 – “European Values Study 2008: Hungary (EVS 2008)”	10.8%	Includes only formal volunteering
Hungarian Central Statistical Office	5.5%	Includes only formal volunteering

The most frequently quoted data on the amount of volunteers in Europe come from the February 2007 Special Eurobarometer 273 on “European Social Reality”, which yielded an estimate of “around 100 million European volunteers.” The data were collected based only on answers to one

question included in a section of the survey related to “Leisure time activity and voluntary work”, namely “Do you currently participate actively in or do voluntary work for one or more of the following organisations?” The inclusion of the term “participate actively in” in addition to “do voluntary work” makes this question nebulous and imprecise. In addition, the reference period is vague and there is no information on the amount of time spent doing voluntary work or the frequency of the activity, minimum data points needed to depict the scale and impact of volunteering.

### **C. Resistance to Measurement**

In addition to the definitional and methodological challenges to measuring volunteering there is also active resistance to it in some quarters. For one thing, statisticians have conveniently defined volunteering out of basic economic statistics by defining much of it as outside “the production boundary of the economy.” This makes it easy for policymakers to ignore volunteering and refuse to allocate resources to measure its scale because it is assumed to have an economic value equal to zero.

Somewhat surprisingly, resistance to measurement of volunteering, and certainly to measurement of the possible economic value of volunteering, is also common among volunteer leaders, who advocates worry that placing an economic value on volunteer work will actually undervalue it by ignoring the deeper and broader impacts volunteering has in terms of building self-respect, fostering solidarity, providing a sense of self-worth, deepening feelings of altruism, contributing to social capital, and promoting democracy. There are also concerns that putting a “price” on volunteering may demean it and rob it of its human qualities as an expression of pure empathy and solidarity. Additionally, there are concerns that policymakers will see estimates of the value of volunteering as an invitation to cut back on public sector support for needed services and assume that volunteers can handle the chores. This may be especially the case in countries where volunteers are seen as service providers. Moreover, a different type of resistance is noticed in countries in which the voluntary community is quite nascent, such as countries with communist regimes before 1989, where the concept of volunteering had been blurred with “patriotic” or obligatory forms of participation in community work, and where popular attitudes towards volunteering remain somewhat sceptical as a consequence, making it potentially premature to carry out research until people can come to understand what “real” volunteering is all about.

Labour groups also have concerns about too visible an appearance of volunteer activity, particularly when that activity is identified with “work” and assigned at least an implicit “wage.” Here as well the concern is that politicians will feel justified in cutting back on public-sector workforces or on support to cover the paid staffs of non-profit organizations. Such concerns are particularly intense given the current high unemployment rate in Europe.

### **D. Lack of clear guidance on volunteering in European Union (EU) policy**

Whereas the European Commission recognises “insufficient data” as an obstacle to volunteering, and states that “Better comparable data on volunteering in the Member States can help identify best practices and improve policy making” (European Commission Communication, 2011), pg. 3), and recommends that “Research and data collection on volunteering should be encouraged at the national level” in EU Member States (Ibid pg. 11), such recommendations made to Member States are non-binding. Moreover, EU’s competences in volunteering are limited to cross-border volunteering and to the mobility of volunteers, with responsibility for domestic volunteering resting with the Member States.

The European Union does not have a specific policy area dedicated to volunteering. Given its cross-cutting nature, volunteering is linked to Citizenship, was traditionally dealt with within

Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, is involved to a large extent with Employment and Social Policy, and interacts with many directorates. But though it has fingers in many pots, volunteering has none to call its own. Similarly, the competence on volunteering at the national level is placed under different ministries and policy areas. As a consequence, volunteering lacks a clear institutional champion in policy discussions and is regularly overlooked.

#### **E. Legal constraints**

The legal framework for volunteering varies across EU Member States. This creates two mutually exclusive types of problems. In the first place, in some countries definitions of volunteering or of voluntary organizations are enshrined in law, as detailed above. This makes it difficult to arrive at a common definition for measurement purposes since the legal definitions diverge widely (see Box 1). In the second place, other countries have no existing laws on volunteering. This causes problems since many of them are public law countries in which the state is not empowered to “interfere”, or provide support, even in the form of a survey, in the absence of a positive legal provision making such action legal.<sup>2</sup>

## **II. A Solution: The ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work***

An important breakthrough in overcoming the barriers outlined in Section I was recently achieved through the issuance by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2011 of an important new *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work (ILO Manual)*, which establishes an internationally sanctioned definition of volunteer work and a uniform method for generating regular and reliable data on the amount, character, and composition of volunteer work. Prepared by the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies in cooperation with the ILO and an International Technical Experts Group, with support from United Nations Volunteers, this new *Manual* represents the first-ever internationally sanctioned approach for official statistical agency use in gathering basic data on volunteering that is comparable across countries. This section discusses the ILO *Manual* approach to data gathering, the methodology it recommends, and explains how it addresses and overcomes many of the concerns mentioned in the section above.

#### **A. Criteria for the ILO *Manual***

A central goal in the development of what became the ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* was to integrate the measurement of volunteer work into official national statistical systems. This approach was taken in order to institutionalize the measurement of volunteer work rather than having its measurement continue to be dependent on intermittent fund-raising by private research entities.

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<sup>2</sup> The landscape is furthermore complicated by the existence of specific laws governing different areas that may overlap, intersect or be erroneously interpreted as volunteering. Such are laws on education, civil protection, employment, social care, probation etc. that may blur the concept of volunteering, extending it to grey areas or, on the contrary, leave out part of the volunteer effort. For instance, in Romania, the Law on National Education gives universities the possibilities to grant transferable credits to students participating in volunteering activities. Latvian Law on State Probation Service introduces, in reference to volunteering, the status of “voluntary probation employee” to define a person who is authorised to execute a specific probation task. In Hungary, unemployment regulations require long-term unemployed persons to do community work, and makes failing to do so a cause of eliminating or reducing their social benefits. Although this is an example of unpaid work for public benefit, the coercion aspect makes it fall out of the volunteering definition; it continues, however, to be wrongly referred to as volunteering in the absence of another term.

Given the barriers to the development of a common data-gathering approach mentioned in Section I above, five criteria guided the design and development of the ILO *Manual* (International Labour Organization, 2011):

- 1) **Comparability.** In the first place, the *Manual* was designed to permit the generation of truly comparable data on volunteering across countries and time. This required extensive work to formulate a definition that was broad enough to encompass many different national usages but still precise and understandable enough to differentiate volunteer activity from both paid work and leisure.
- 2) **Feasibility.** Comparability is of only limited value if too few countries participate. Accordingly, the preferred approach had to be implementable in the widest possible range of countries. This implied an approach that was sensitive to regional and cultural traditions and differences in language, as well as not beyond the technical or financial capabilities of the broadest set of statistical agencies.
- 3) **Cost-effectiveness.** A potential barrier to the use of surveys is cost. Accordingly, cost-effectiveness had to be a prime consideration in designing a recommended approach to measuring volunteer work. Since stand-alone surveys are expensive and time-consuming, this argued for using a supplement to an existing survey platform.
- 4) **Efficiency.** Utilizing an existing survey platform is only feasible if great care is taken to avoid over-burdening the platform. This called for a strategy of maximising the information gathered with the minimum number of questions, and exercising discipline in the range of topics to be covered.
- 5) **Reliability and Objectivity.** Finally, the chosen approach to measuring volunteer work had to be capable of yielding reliable results. This meant that the definition and indicators used had to be objective and capable of being operationalized and that the survey platform had to have sufficient coverage of the population, a reliably large sample of respondents, and a trustworthy technical content standpoint. Because volunteering occurs in many different settings, including informal person-to-person settings, surveys of individuals rather than of organisations seemed to offer the best hope of reliably capturing the full extent of this phenomenon.

#### **B. The ILO Manual Approach: The Survey Platform**

After examining a number of alternative official survey platforms to which to attach a special module on volunteering in the light of these criteria, it appeared that the optimal option was to add a carefully designed “volunteering module” to existing national labour force surveys (LFS) on a periodic basis. The LFS was identified as the preferred platform for a number of reasons:

- Labour force surveys are among the most frequent and regular of all official data-collection programmes, and are quite immune to reductions in national spending.
- LFSs cover the whole population in a country, utilise extremely large samples, and gather important demographic data on respondents, making them a highly cost-effective way to capture at least a limited body of core information about the contours of volunteer work in a country.

- LFSs are conducted by personnel who are skilled in coding occupations using standard occupational classification systems that are adaptable to coding volunteer activities as well, which greatly facilitate the valuation of volunteer work (described in further detail below).<sup>3</sup>
- Very importantly, the LFS is a compulsory survey in many countries, which is vital for reducing the potential for response bias.
- Labour force surveys are carried out and analysed by highly professional personnel around the world, which increases the trust and reliability of the results.

Reliance on the LFS does limit the range of issues that can be explored, since labour force surveys can only accord limited time to the exploration of non-employment topics. Nevertheless, it offers a very useful platform for capturing crucial information about volunteer work. Other platforms, such as general social surveys, time use surveys, or stand-alone surveys also offer advantages, such as their ability to tap broader aspects of volunteering. But their potential drawbacks far outweigh the advantages, including their relative cost, smaller samples, vulnerability to being cancelled or delayed in times of budget constraints, potential deviation from the agreed-upon language of the ILO *Manual* module and resulting loss of comparability, and, in the case of time use surveys in particular, a far too narrow reference period to capture volunteer work accurately.

### **C. The ILO *Manual* Definition of Volunteering: Volunteering as a Form of Work**

Despite the differences in the definitions of volunteering in use around Europe and elsewhere in the world, it was possible to identify a number of common elements that provided the basis for devising a common definition (see Box 1 for examples of European definitions). Among these common elements were the following:<sup>4</sup>

- 1) *Free will*: Activities must be carried out by people's own free will and should not be coerced ("unselfishly" (Portugal), "on their own initiative" (Moldova));
- 2) *Not for pay*: Activities generally should be carried out without financial benefit to the volunteer ("no financial or material benefit" (Croatia), "not dependent on it for his or her livelihood" (Netherlands), "without concern for financial gain" (Wales), "not for individual interest" (Hungary));
- 3) *Nature of the Activity*: Activities should generally constitute the giving of "time and energy";
- 4) *Not directed at one's family*: It is generally understood that volunteer work benefits others, outside one's household, family or circle of close friends (however interpreted). However, the laws and national volunteering strategies in Europe vary in terms of institutional settings, some integrating informal volunteering others counting only activities carried out "through private or public organisations and under programmes or projects" (Spain), or "through an organisation of which the volunteer is a member" (Italy).

Consistent with the criteria identified above, the *Manual* sought a definition of volunteering that was:

- *Operational*, i.e., possible for interviewers to identify empirically with a limited number of questions in the field;

<sup>3</sup> The LFS has been used successfully to collect data on volunteering in a number of countries, including Canada and the United States, without negative impact on the LFS and with high response rates on the volunteer components.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview on legal frameworks for volunteering across European countries, see: European Volunteer Centre (2012). *Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe* and Box 1.

- *Broad enough* to encompass the many different forms that volunteering can take in different societies; and
- *Precise enough* to differentiate volunteering from paid work or complete leisure.

The ILO *Manual* in no way supplants or modifies national volunteering law, policy, but rather provides a definition that can be used to develop basic data that is comparable across countries through a reasonably short survey module addressed to a very broad population of respondents. With the above criteria in mind, the new ILO *Manual* defines volunteering for measurement purposes as:

*Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside their own household.*

Several key features of volunteering as it is captured in this definition deserve special notice:

- 1) It involves work.** This means that it involves activities that produce goods and/or services, which bring something of potential value to its recipients.<sup>5</sup> As such, this feature represents a useful first step towards institutionalizing the valuation of the impacts of volunteering to societies.
- 2) It is unpaid.** Volunteer work by definition is work without pay or compensation, in cash or in kind. However, some forms of monetary or in-kind reimbursement may still be possible without violating this feature of the definition.
- 3) It is non-compulsory or non-obligatory.** Volunteer activity must involve a significant element of choice. Persons engage in these activities willingly, without being legally obligated or otherwise coerced to do so. Court-mandated unpaid work, work mandated as part of a prison sentence, and alternative service related to a military draft would therefore be excluded. Social obligation, such as peer pressure, parental pressure, or expectations of social groups, however, does not make the activity compulsory.
- 4) It embraces both “direct” volunteering, i.e., volunteer activities directly for other households; and “organization-based” volunteering, i.e., volunteering done for or through non-profit institutions or other types of organizations.**
- 5) It does not embrace work done without pay for members of the volunteer’s own household.** The use of the household as the defining border of family gets around the enormous difficulties in defining “family” by using the formulation common in labour force and other statistical surveys, which use the “household,” i.e., persons living together in the same housing unit, as the unit of observation.

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<sup>5</sup> The designation of volunteering as a form of unpaid work, distinct from leisure and paid work, has important implications for the statistical measurement community. The recognition of volunteering as a form of unpaid work was what opened the door for the ILO (which is responsible for the development of international labour measurement standards) to consider the development of a measurement standard for volunteering. Further, it also connected the measurement of volunteering with the System of National Accounts, the international guidance standard for national economic accounting (and the production of figures such as national Gross Domestic Product), providing the concrete link that had always existed in theory, but previously could never be practically employed, between the production of goods and services in the national economy and volunteering. This is to say that whatever the altruistic motives behind volunteer activities, the outcome is the production of goods and services to the national economy that are currently not being accurately attributed to volunteering. For a detailed technical explanation of the link between the ILO’s definition of work and the System of National Accounts, please see Annex IV of the ILO *Manual* (International Labour Organization (2011)).

#### **D. Other Key Features of the Recommended ILO Volunteering Module**

The final ILO volunteering module consists of only a page and a half of questions focusing on five key items<sup>6</sup>:

- 1) Who volunteers;
- 2) What activity they perform;
- 3) The amount of time they spend on each activity during a specific reference period;
- 4) Whether the activity is performed directly for a person or through an organization, and if the latter what type of organization it is (non-profit, for-profit, public, cooperative); and
- 5) What field or sector this volunteering supports (e.g., health, education, social services, environment, culture, sport, etc.).

The set of questions designed to elicit these data elements have been carefully designed, and so it is not recommended that the structure, wording, or order of the questions be modified.<sup>7</sup>

Armed with these variables plus the wealth of demographic data already captured in the labour force survey, we should be able to calculate the following:

- The volunteer rate;
- The demographic profile of volunteers (age, income level, education, urban or rural residence, paid occupation if any, sex);
- The economic value of their volunteer work, calculated at the “replacement cost”—i.e. what it would cost in that economy to replace the volunteer with a paid worker performing the same activity;
- The full-time equivalent labour force represented by volunteers
- The distribution of the volunteer labour force and the economic value of volunteer work among economic sectors (health, education, social services, etc.);
- The share that volunteers comprise of the full-time equivalent labour force in particular fields.

These are not, of course, the only facets of volunteer work that are of interest to volunteer leaders, scholars and policymakers. However, they will provide the foundation on which subsequent research can be built through other surveys targeting such matters as: the social and psychological impact of volunteering on the volunteers, on the beneficiaries of their actions, and on society at large; the relative effectiveness of various volunteer management approaches; and the factors that encourage or discourage volunteer activity.

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<sup>6</sup> Optional additional filter questions are offered on a voluntary basis to address the issues of compulsory service, family relationship, compensation, and the domestic vs. international volunteering, where these may be relevant in the local context. Similarly, a list of possible additional indicators of volunteer activity that may be of interest are provided, such as the motivations people have for participating or why they may cease to be a volunteer. However, as eager as researchers are to know the answers to these additional questions, they remain optional for statistical offices to implement to avoid overburdening the survey module.

<sup>7</sup> ILO *Manual* does provide important guidance for translating the survey to ensure the questions are relevant to the local context, and for avoiding pitfalls in the measurement, such as running surveys during periods when volunteer activity might be particularly high or low (like during holidays or after a natural disaster).

Several other key elements of the recommended survey module are important to emphasize:

- **No use of the terms “volunteering” or “volunteer work” anywhere in the recommended module**, because experience has shown that they are understood differently in different contexts and are not helpful in eliciting accurate responses.
- **The questions are activity-focused, not target-focused**, because the International Technical Experts Group determined that respondents were more likely to remember what type of activity they carried out rather than who the activity was carried out for. The activity focus also allows an easy translation of volunteer work into its corresponding occupation, which can then be assigned a replacement wage.
- **Uses a 4-week reference period**. Volunteer work is often carried out less frequently and less regularly than other activities, which means that a significant dimension of the phenomenon may be missed if the reference period used is too short. On the other hand, if the reference period is too long, the accuracy of recall declines. The survey module recommended in the *ILO Manual* thus proposes a four-week reference period, which testing showed sufficiently captured the phenomenon at the national level. The module also offers an additional prompt to capture activities engaged in only once or twice a year (for instance, around a religious holiday, national disaster, or national sporting event).
- **Moderate use of prompting**. To reduce the difficulty respondents sometimes show in recalling volunteer activities, surveys of volunteering often employ prompting<sup>8</sup> to fix the definition of volunteering more securely in the respondent’s mind and assist the respondent in recalling. Employing too many prompts can increase the cost of the survey significantly, may distract or confuse some respondents, and often overstates the actual amount of volunteering because it causes respondents to admit to some activity just to stop the barrage of prompts. On the other hand, using few or no prompts can seriously understate the amount of volunteer work by failing to fix sufficiently clearly in respondents’ minds the full range of activities that are within the scope of the survey.

The recommended survey module proposes a compromise between these two approaches. Respondents who respond positively to the question about whether they had done any unpaid, voluntary work in the previous four weeks move directly to questions about the type, hours and institutional context of this work. Respondents who initially say that they do not do any of such work, are offered five examples of types of activities that fit the definition, but that they may not have considered.

### III. Implementing the *ILO Manual*: The European Volunteer Measurement Project (EVMP)

While the *ILO Manual* addresses the methodological and definitional challenges to measurement outlined in Section I, additional efforts were needed to inform national statistical offices, raise the awareness of the Member States, further common EU policy, and engage with the concerns of the volunteering community about measurement. To disseminate the *ILO Manual* and promote its implementation in Europe, the European Volunteer Centre,<sup>9</sup> the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies,<sup>10</sup> and SPES - Associazione Promozione e Solidarietà,<sup>11</sup> thus joined forces to form the European Volunteer Measurement Project (EVMP).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Prompting is a procedure consisting of providing respondents with follow up questions about, or examples of, the type of activities in question with the aim to increase the probability the respondent will accurately recall the activity and respond accordingly.

<sup>9</sup> [www.cev.be](http://www.cev.be)

<sup>10</sup> [www.jhu.ccsc.edu](http://www.jhu.ccsc.edu)

Together, the EVMP partners developed an approach to promoting the adoption of the ILO *Manual* in Europe that employs a collaborative framework involving statistical institutions, policy makers, academics and voluntary organisations, networks and support centres, to provide the necessary orientation, training, implementation assistance and dissemination of the resulting information. Initial funding was provided by the special Italian volunteering networks fund.<sup>13</sup> This section describes the EVMP approach and provides an analysis of outcomes achieved to date.

#### **A. EVMP Project Approach: Interconnectedness**

The European Volunteer Measurement Project (EVMP) is best characterised as a network, uniting towards common objectives stakeholders different in nature and status, but open to discussing, planning and acting together, in recognition of specific expertise and role that volunteering and civil society, statisticians, academics and policy makers bring to the pursuit of the cause. All the initiatives, starting from the operational governance of the project, share these characteristics, which contributes a specific and additional value to the results of the preparatory phase. More specifically, the structure and the conceptual approach for the development of the EVMP is as follows:

- 1) Core Partners: Putting Vision Into Action.** Tasked by the ILO to encourage and support the implementation of the ILO *Manual*, the JHU/CCSS sought a strong partnership with the voluntary sector in Europe in order to further a comparable sustainable system of volunteer measurement. CEV had brought the topic to the attention of its members by making the measurement of volunteering a core theme of its 2008 conference (European Volunteer Centre (2008)); JHU, CEV and SPES developed an approach to engage national and regional groups that emphasized the relevance of the information for the voluntary sector itself; focused the campaign on statistical offices and policy makers; and leveraged the visibility provided by the 2011 European Year of Volunteering, which provided multiple occasions for transnational networking and for mainstreaming the comparative measurement approach into the general volunteering support agenda.
- 2) Layers Of Engagement: Think Local, Act Global.** A distinctive trait of EVMP model is that it provides a common framework that allows stakeholders to act on different levels, and connects these efforts by supporting the use of the ILO *Manual* methodology to further the use of volunteer measurement as basis and argument for the valorisation, understanding and support of voluntary action.

On global level, EVMP is an advanced experimentation of the JHU effort to promote the production of comparable data on non-profit organisations across countries and cultural backgrounds. At the European-regional level, it is a notable example of trans-national civil society initiative to mainstream institutional policy measures. The core layer of engagement is at the national state level, because the power for implementation of the volunteering module lies with the national statistical offices.

On local and thematic level, small-scale implementation efforts applying the *Manual* at the organisational and local level represent a still underestimated opportunity to construct a bulk

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<sup>11</sup> Volunteer Support Centre of the Lazio region, coordinator of the research “Volunteering across Europe. Organisations, promotion, participation” <http://www.spes.lazio.it/volontariatoeuropa/default.asp#testo>

<sup>12</sup> All resources are available on [www.evmp.eu](http://www.evmp.eu).

<sup>13</sup> The planning and preparation phase of EVMP (January 2011 – April 2012) was supported by ACRI, Forum del Terzo Settore, Convol, Consulta dei Comitati di Gestione and CSVnet.

of data that can, in time, provide a useful field for comparative analyses and policy and practice development.<sup>14</sup>

In this respect, the inversion of the modern paradigm aims to find solutions to local needs through a referral to a global standard of volunteer measurement.

- 3) **Joining Forces: Connecting Volunteer Community with National Statistics Offices.** A key element of the EVMP model is the creation of a platform for collaboration between the voluntary sector and the statistical institutions. The EVMP partners understood from the very beginning that efforts to convince national statistics offices in Europe to implement the ILO *Manual* would require that the national volunteer groups take the leading role in making the case to statistics agencies in their countries. But to do so, it was first required that these organisations be engaged, made aware of the ILO *Manual* and its potential benefits, and provided with training to launch a national implementation campaign. Voluntary organisations and their networks thus represented a primary target of EVMP action.
- 4) **Policy: Foundation First.** European policy documents recommending data collection and the use of the methodology proposed by the ILO *Manual* were important *stimuli* for successful national implementation campaigns, therefore advocacy efforts towards EU institutions represent an important strand of EVMP work. Positive EU policy input testifies the urgency for a common instrument that permits comparability, justifies the operational definition and provides frameworks for recognising converging interests between different stakeholders and in all countries. (See also below, Box 3: EU Policy Recognition for the ILO *Manual*)

## B. EVMP Project Progress and Outcomes: The Three Dimensions Of An Initial Assessment

- 1) **Information Dissemination.** The dissemination of information – about the *Manual*, its potential and implementations, and about the EVMP objectives, results and outcomes – is the core mission of EVMP to both promote the adoption of the ILO *Manual* and help volunteers and their organisations gain adequate and objective assessment and visibility.

As a starting point, the project organised the circulation of information, awareness-raising initiatives and capacity building seminars<sup>15</sup> in order to gauge the support of volunteering and community leaders at national level. An initial call for supporters was launched<sup>16</sup>, and based on the interest generated, a volunteering centre was identified by the EVMP to serve as the **National Focal Point (NFP)** for every target country. These NFPs provided expert referral for policy making, advocacy efforts and served as the contact channel for the national statistical institution. NFPs were encouraged to organise public events at the local and national level to make their members aware of the initiative, and network with other national groups in order to gain visibility for the need for comparable data on volunteering. This arrangement allowed the EVMP partners to magnify the campaign and sustain a large advocacy action for the implementation of the ILO *Manual* volunteering module in national statistical systems in

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<sup>14</sup> First experiments on this level are now under way, and include research and social accountability reports by associative federations such as International Red Cross, Portuguese Catholic Scouts, and reporting volunteer hours as co-financing contribution for public-funded projects of local voluntary organisations in the yearly grant of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

<sup>15</sup> For a detail of initiatives and results see the EVMP Preparatory Phase Final Report

[http://evmp.eu/wp-content/uploads/Progress\\_ENGLISH\\_4.2012.pdf%20TARGET=](http://evmp.eu/wp-content/uploads/Progress_ENGLISH_4.2012.pdf%20TARGET=).

<sup>16</sup> EVMP web-site/Meet the supporters <http://evmp.eu/about/partners-supporters/meet-the-supporters/>

Europe. It is worthy of mention that no funding was available to cover this advocacy work at the national level.

With the help of the NFPs, 10 awareness-building and technical training events<sup>17</sup> were organised across Europe during the preparatory phase, and core partners made presentations in more than 10 additional, national and European level events. At least 500 individuals from civil society organisations and networks were ultimately involved in these events. A dedicated web site<sup>18</sup> was set up, with sections also specifically dedicated to technical users (statistics offices)<sup>19</sup> and non-technical, civil society, users.

Further, NFPs carried out translations of the ILO *Manual* and EVMP documents into several European languages, which had the positive side effect of engaging the volunteering community further in the discussions, in order to assess and agree that a global standard can capture and contain the country's specificities. Many of the worries and barriers to acceptance among the volunteering community described in the first part of this paper were facilitated and dealt with in this process: issues of definition, cultural specificity, organisational environment and social value have remained prominent in the debate.

The **national statistical institutions**, having no obligation to implement the ILO *Manual*, represented the second target group of EVMP action. To build awareness of the ILO *Manual*, EVMP partners invited all European statistical offices to the first of several subsequent Technical Training Workshops (in Warsaw<sup>20</sup> in September 2011). Overall, a dialogue was opened with statistical officials of 22 European countries. Information, opportunities for networking and debate, training and technical expertise for the preparation of implementation were provided.

- 2) **Building the Culture of Volunteering Measurement.** EVMP's basic dissemination activity is not a simple transfer of pieces of information previously unknown to the target groups. It is an action of social communication in that it aims to produce societal change, advance a positive outlook on volunteer measurement and evidence based policy making, create platforms for exchange of information and expertise between sectors, and stimulate the production of ideas and standards for the measurement and valorisation of social and economic impacts of volunteering.

This educational mission has planted important seeds in numerous volunteer leaders, public policy makers and statisticians that were sometimes sceptical of measurement efforts in the past. This kind of attention and understanding provides for an advancement of culture in the field of volunteering research.

- 3) **Facilitating Civil Society - Statistical Agency Collaborations.** The distinctive EVMP trait is the investment in a platform of collaboration between civil society networks and statistical institutions. All EVMP initiatives provided occasions for the two protagonists to meet and understand each other, to fully grasp their complementary potentials and to plan common actions for the implementation of the *Manual*, and the steps that lead to it. The collaboration

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<sup>17</sup> For a complete list of events, see <http://evmp.eu/about/progress/>

<sup>18</sup> [www.evmp.eu](http://www.evmp.eu)

<sup>19</sup> <http://evmp.eu/for-statisticians/overview/>

<sup>20</sup> For more information about EVMP's technical training in Warsaw, please see: <http://evmp.eu/2011/10/05/a-community-of-statistical-officials-is-formed-warsaw-training-event-28-29-september-2011/>

between EVMP partners and the NFPs proved invaluable in engaging the statistical agencies and navigating these complicated institutions with their unique decision-making processes to obtaining the initial willingness to collaborate.<sup>21</sup>

In most cases, these collaborations represented a completely new arrangement between the two groups. In general, much to the surprise and appreciation of their volunteering colleagues, statistical officials proved extraordinarily eager to work with the volunteer groups once the doors of the national statistical institutions were opened. More specifically, the contribution of volunteering groups to the process was in particular welcome with regards to: the translation of the *Manual*, comparison of the definition in the ILO *Manual* to local conceptions and clarification of the necessity for comparativeness, organisation of events and discussion in preparation of the implementation, provision of examples of typical volunteering activities, advocacy, fundraising, training of interviewers, and dissemination and use of the resulting data.

- 4) Policy Work.** Recognising the importance of policy to support stable, obligatory and institutionally recognised standards that both the voluntary sector and the research community can refer to, the EVMP invested highly in policy work and stakeholder engagement. The efforts were greatly facilitated by the fortunate coincidence of the publication of the ILO *Manual* with the 2011 European Year of Volunteering. This followed efforts by the European Parliament, and notably the Intergroup on Volunteering led by the MEP Marian Harkin, who in its precursor 2008 Report<sup>22</sup> and Resolution (European Parliament (2008)) already pushed for improved data and measurement on volunteering.

Thanks to timely and convinced support of the EYV2011 Task Force, the *Manual* and the theme of measurement was featured in major EU conferences. It was also a highly present concern in the proceedings of the EYV2011 Alliance Working Group “Value of Volunteering” and now continues as an element of civil society claims for the future development of support to volunteering<sup>23</sup>. But the biggest success of EVMP preparatory phase are the European level institutional documents claiming explicitly that volunteering be measured, by a comparable and standard methodology, of which the *Manual* provides the only existing experimented example. All major EU level bodies that expressed themselves on volunteering and its future include this concern and proposal (see Box 3).<sup>24</sup> Other noteworthy support initiatives from

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<sup>21</sup> The task proved especially challenging as EVMP got out in the field in the very months that the economic crisis hit all European Government budgets hard. Statistical institutions, which are usually understaffed and over-burdened, found themselves in the position of cutting their activities to only the surveys obligatory by law. Nevertheless, creative solutions were achieved in several countries. The descriptions of progress in different countries show how EVMP addressed these and other major challenges, and what strategies proved successful.

<sup>22</sup> European Parliament (2008). *Report on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion* <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2008-0070+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

<sup>23</sup> P.A.V.E. – Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe by EYV2011 Alliance [http://www.eyv2011.eu/images/stories/pdf/EYV2011Alliance\\_PAVE\\_copyfriendly.pdf](http://www.eyv2011.eu/images/stories/pdf/EYV2011Alliance_PAVE_copyfriendly.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> In addition to the examples included in Box 3, it is noteworthy to highlight that, although at the date of the writing of this paper, the Committee of the Regions has not formulated a response to the European Commission Communication, this EU institution has included volunteer measurement in its policy statements, e.g. “In partnership with the European institutions, the Committee of the Regions wants to stress that the European Year must further the achievement of the following political undertakings: [...] more systematic collection of data on volunteers and the services they provide in order to accurately assess the economic value of the sector” (Committee of the Regions, Regional and local authorities in action during the European Year of

prominent European level political leaders<sup>25</sup> testify that the *Manual* implementation is actively sought out as a tool for policy makers not only to base their work on evidence, but also to grasp through data on voluntary action a genuinely European – shared, and not a sum of national contributions – dimension of citizenship and social cohesion.

### Box 3: EU Policy Recognition for the ILO *Manual*

The Communication of the European Commission encourages “Research and data collection on volunteering ... at the national level” and specifically recommends “the use of the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* and the United Nations *Handbook on Non-Profit Organizations*” in this context (European Commission Communication, 2011).

In its answer, the European Economic and Social Committee states that “it is necessary to get agreement on and implement the use of the ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* as a way to harmonise the methodology for collecting data on volunteering in Member States” (European Economic and Social Committee, 2012).

The European Union Council Conclusions invite Member States to “Consider encouraging production, publishing, and sharing of research tools/methodologies and results concerning voluntary activities and active citizenship, along with statistical data...” and call attention again to the “the ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*” as a prime example of where to “look for statistical tools... to ensure comparable data” (Council of the European Union, 2011).

The 2012 European Parliament *Report on recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU* initiated by MEP Marco Scurria “Encourages the Member States to adopt the use of the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* and the United Nations *Handbook on Non-Profit Organizations* with a view to making available comparable statistics and data providing a clear picture of the significant contribution made by volunteering and of the needs of volunteers and providers throughout the European Union” (European Parliament, 2012).

## C. ILO *Manual* Implementation: Country Level Progress

- 1) First Implementers: Poland and Hungary.** The first EU countries to fully implement the *Manual* were Poland and Hungary, both of which inserted the volunteering module in the Labour Force Survey, Poland in 2010 and Hungary in 2011. The decision to implement was helped, in large part, by the familiarity with working with JHU/CCSS on past efforts to measure the non-profit sector. The fact that these two countries held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2011 provided a good occasion to lead by example in creating a lasting legacy for the European Year of Volunteering and sound grounds to lead in European policy-making (Council of the European Union, 2011) and feature EVMP in prominent public occasions.<sup>26</sup>

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Volunteering 2011, Speech by Mercedes Bresso, President of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 26 January 2011)

<sup>25</sup> See Luca Jahier (2011) and Gianni Pittella (2012), etc.

<sup>26</sup> Conference “Europe of active citizens: Volunteering” organised by EESC, Polish Presidency and EC, Warsaw, Lester M. Salamon (September 2011). <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/programme--poster->

The initial Polish results were presented at the end of 2011<sup>27</sup>; and the final elaboration is expected in 2012. The early implementation gave the EVMP the possibility to draw on the first hand European expertise and share the Polish lessons learned<sup>28</sup> early in the process.

The Hungarian results, as anticipated to EVMP colleagues during the Technical Workshop in Rome,<sup>29</sup> will be published in autumn 2012. This will open some new, although limited comparative potentials, that EVMP is keen to explore, including the volunteer rates, and the nature of the typical activities of informal voluntary action, as opposed to organisational volunteering in the two countries. It will also be interesting to put in correlation the Polish and Hungarian volunteering module data with traditional, albeit different Western Europe volunteering surveys of the past years, and make a first assessment whether the data confirm the traditionally accepted differences between “Eastern” and “Western” cultural traditions of volunteering in Europe.

- 2) Italy’s Implementation: EVMP’s Model of Cooperation.** The Italian road towards the implementation of the ILO *Manual* offers a rich and positive example of the volunteer community – statistical institute partnership. Italy’s decision to implement the ILO *Manual* in 2013 springs from Istat’s (Italian National Institute of Statistics) strong tradition in social measurements, while EVMP efforts provided the necessary trigger for Istat to take up the challenge.<sup>30</sup> The implementation is planned for spring 2013, with first results expected by the end of the year.

This timeline is a challenge indeed, as Istat’s commitment came in the midst of a dramatic economic crisis that produced severe cuts in public investment. But the EVMP cooperative model, which engaged the network of Italian volunteer support centres and Istat in close collaboration, offered practical solutions. According to the plan developed, Istat inserted the volunteering module in the national statistical plan, allocated an expert within Istat, and contributed to EVMP initiatives and peer trainings.<sup>31</sup> It engages in dialogue with the volunteering community to ensure that the survey module translation reflects Italian usage while preserving the *Manual’s* emphasis on achieving comparability among different countries. The Italian example of cooperation between civil society and statistical authorities has also been taken up by Portugal, Spain, Montenegro, and Ireland.

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[en.pdf –http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/salamon---eesc\\_volunteering\\_-9-30-2011.pdf](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/salamon---eesc_volunteering_-9-30-2011.pdf); EYV2011 Closing Conference <http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/conference/warsaw-final-conference> – Speech by CEV President Eva Hambach [http://europa.eu/volunteering/sites/default/files/speech\\_-\\_eva\\_hambach.pdf](http://europa.eu/volunteering/sites/default/files/speech_-_eva_hambach.pdf) and “Recognising the contribution to economy, society and the individual – Where are we now, and where do we want to go?” 8 January 2011, Budapest (Hungary)

[http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/sites/default/files/eyv2011\\_budapest\\_conference\\_final\\_programme.pdf](http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/sites/default/files/eyv2011_budapest_conference_final_programme.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> EYV2011 Final EC institutional conference – Presentation by Slawomir Nalecz

[http://europa.eu/volunteering/sites/default/files/economic\\_weight\\_of\\_unpaid\\_voluntary\\_work\\_outside\\_own\\_household\\_in\\_poland\\_3\\_-\\_nalecz.pdf](http://europa.eu/volunteering/sites/default/files/economic_weight_of_unpaid_voluntary_work_outside_own_household_in_poland_3_-_nalecz.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <http://evmp.eu/wp-content/uploads/Lessons-Podgorica-GUSISP.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> EVMP Technical Workshop, Rome (Italy) 19 April 2012, Rita Vàradi and Elizabeth Lindner “First results of volunteer ad hoc module on HU-LFS [http://evmp.eu/wp-content/uploads/Hungary\\_EVMP-Conference\\_Rome\\_4.19.2012.pdf](http://evmp.eu/wp-content/uploads/Hungary_EVMP-Conference_Rome_4.19.2012.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Linda Laura Sabbadini address at the Technical Workshop, Rome (Italy), 19 April 2012, <http://evmp.eu/blog>

<sup>31</sup> Tania Cappadozzi, Istat “Sharing the Italian experience on the project of measurement of unpaid volunteer work” [http://evmp.eu/wp-content/uploads/Cappadozzi\\_Presentation\\_EVMP-Conference\\_Madrid\\_3.28.2012.pdf](http://evmp.eu/wp-content/uploads/Cappadozzi_Presentation_EVMP-Conference_Madrid_3.28.2012.pdf)

On the civil society side, SPES first produced an official ILO-approved translation of the *Manual*<sup>32</sup> into Italian and also translated and disseminated all of the EVMP basic fact-sheets and information<sup>33</sup>. The network of volunteer support centres<sup>34</sup> subsequently agreed to take on the task to train the interviewers and organise guidance and support, in particular with regard to the classification of activities typical for the context. A third sector research foundation<sup>35</sup> has organised a small-scale test<sup>36</sup> of the questionnaire and has committed resources to support the implementation.

Italy presents an innovation also on the technical side. Because of timing considerations, the option of inserting the standard ILO *Manual* volunteering module into the labour force survey is not available in time to be useful in the development of an Italian non-profit institution satellite account. Instead, this module is to be inserted into a standard “Aspects of everyday life” household survey. In identifying another standard social survey platform, Istat offers a possible fall-back option for other countries to consider, as LFS is heavily congested by obligatory *ad hoc* modules and under enormous pressure for employment statistics. While this raises the possibility to explore other topics that would not fit into a labour force survey, care has to be taken to retain the core ILO *Manual* module if the central principle of creating cross-nationally comparative data is to be preserved.

- 3) Quest for Comparability.** EVMP also engaged with countries that have an established national tradition on volunteer measurement to identify opportunities to modify existing approaches to ensure compliance with the ILO *Manual* approach. In some of these countries, including France and Germany, EVMP made some advancement.

More specifically, in France, the Report<sup>37</sup> of the working group of the National Council for Statistics, formally recommended the adoption of the *Manual*. The advocacy efforts there are headed by the French member of the ILO *Manual* Technical Experts Group<sup>38</sup> and the French CEV member organisation France Bénévolat<sup>39</sup>.

The German traditional volunteering survey is due in 2013. The institute in charge<sup>40</sup> took notice of the *Manual* and of the potential for comparability at European level, and participated to the EVMP Technical Workshop in Rome<sup>41</sup>. Both parties are eager to seek solutions for rendering the German survey compatible with the *Manual* standard, while safeguarding the historical series of data.

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<sup>32</sup> “Manuale OIL per la misurazione del lavoro volontario” for download on <http://evmp.eu/about/manual/>

<sup>33</sup> Download Info Packets in Italiano on [www.evmp.eu](http://www.evmp.eu)

<sup>34</sup> CSVnet – National Coordination of Volunteering Support Centres [www.csvnet.it](http://www.csvnet.it)

<sup>35</sup> Fondazione Volontariato e Partecipazione [www.volontariatoepartecipazione.it](http://www.volontariatoepartecipazione.it)

<sup>36</sup> CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) and CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) test of the standard ILO *Manual* volunteering module inserted in the research “Caratteri e tendenze del organizzazioni di volontariato in Italia”, Fondazione Volontariato e Partecipazione, 2011-2012.

<sup>37</sup> CNIS – Conseil national de l’information statistique: E. Archambault, J. Accardo, B. Laouisset, Rapport N°122 “Connaissance des associations”, December 2010

[http://www.cnis.fr/files/content/sites/Cnis/files/Fichiers/publications/rapports/2010/RAP\\_2010\\_122\\_connaissance\\_associations.PDF](http://www.cnis.fr/files/content/sites/Cnis/files/Fichiers/publications/rapports/2010/RAP_2010_122_connaissance_associations.PDF)

<sup>38</sup> Edith Archambault, Professor Emeritus of economics of La Sorbonne University, Paris and member of the Technical Experts Group for the preparation of the ILO *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work*.

<sup>39</sup> France Bénévolat, French national volunteer centre [www.francebenevolat.org](http://www.francebenevolat.org)

<sup>40</sup> Deutsches Zentrum fuer Altersfragen (German Centre of Gerontology) [www.dza.de](http://www.dza.de)

<sup>41</sup> “Value and role of volunteering” Technical Workshop, Rome (Italy), 19 April 2012 <http://evmp.eu/2012/06/26/phase-1-wrap-up-conference-2/>

#### **IV. Next Steps**

This section briefly outlines the next steps that are needed to achieve a more complete solution to the challenge of institutionalising the measurement of volunteer activity in Europe as the basis for greater recognition of volunteering and greater support for the contributions it can make. More specifically, we outline five crucial steps that are needed to build on the foundation that EVMP has established.

##### **A. Implement**

A huge snowball has now been built through EVMP's efforts; in order to produce durable effects, it needs to be kept rolling and gathering weight in numerous countries. The volunteer community needs to keep pressing on statistical offices through both advocacy and offers of technical support to secure the implementation of the *ILO Manual* and create a sufficient critical mass for comparative analyses and EU level institutionalisation. At the moment, the lack of funding for promotion efforts puts at risk the continuity of EU-wide planning and organizing, but country-level efforts need to continue and accelerate. The opportunity created by the issuance of the *ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* must not be squandered.

##### **B. Institutionalize**

Eurostat remains the key to the full implementation of the *ILO Manual* in Europe. Eurostat's directives are law in European statistical circles. It is therefore imperative that Eurostat be persuaded to endorse both the *ILO Manual* and the companion United Nations *Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts*. Fortuitously, Eurostat has joined the worldwide chorus calling for a broader "well-being" focus that goes beyond the narrow GDP focus. The implementation of the *ILO Manual* and the UN *Handbook* is the logic next step, since volunteering and the civil society sector broadly are crucial contributors to societal well-being, in addition to being major economic forces. At the moment, two turning points are imminent, for which broad support is needed in order to progress our message to decision makers.

The first is the preparatory work of Eurostat's Labour Market Statistics Working Group, which we urge to consider inserting the ILO standard volunteering module as an obligatory labour force survey *ad hoc* module every three-to-five years starting from 2016.

The second is the proposal for the revision of the European System of Accounts (ESA 2010), which is currently before the European Parliament, but which seems to ignore important advances in the recommended treatment of non-profit institutions (NPIs) that were included in the recent revision of the global System of National Accounts (2008 SNA). Among other things, the draft ESA 2010 neglects to include the proposed "satellite account" on NPIs in the list of satellite accounts it explicitly discusses and thereby especially sanctions for countries to implement. Efforts are needed to secure agreement from Eurostat to add this and related advances in the treatment of non-profit institutions included in the 2008 SNA into the corresponding ESA 2010 in line with recent recommendations made by the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament, as discussed above.

##### **C. Develop**

The *ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* was always conceived as the first step toward establishing a cross-national system for measuring volunteering. It will establish who the volunteers are, what they do, how much of it they do, for whom they do it, and what its basic

economic value is. But volunteering's impact is broader than this and socio-demographic and economic measures capture only part of its impact. The broader social impacts of voluntary action – notably on social capital, on beneficiaries, on organisations involving volunteers, and on volunteers themselves, including their motivations and the barriers they face – need to be studied and valorised.

The EVMP approach is to seek also for these dimensions new statistical tools built through multi-stakeholder consensus mechanisms along the lines of the successful process that produced the *ILO Manual*. This we believe represents one of the priorities of the EU research agenda, starting from the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and feeding significantly into the new Horizon 2020 research program for social sciences and humanities. The ILO has already indicated a willingness to post consensus methodologies for capturing these dimensions of volunteering on its web site for countries around the world to adopt, opening the possibility of a rich body of comparative data on these other dimensions of volunteering as well.

#### **D. Capture and Compare**

The data resulting from implementation of the *ILO Manual* will have their biggest impact if used comparatively. For this to be possible, however, two things are necessary: first, countries will have to exercise discipline in adhering to the officially agreed structure and content of the *Manual's* core volunteering module; and second, special efforts will need to be made to capture the results of the implementation. The EVMP goal is to produce regular *State of European Volunteering Reports* that could benchmark progress in the development of volunteering in Europe and progressively grow into standard benchmark references on the state of civil society in the region.

#### **E. Use**

Data are of no value if they are not actively used. More than that, given the pressures that statistical agencies are under, they are not likely to continue to generate data that are not actively relied on by the entities that the data cover. Continued efforts will therefore be needed at both the European and national levels to promote the culture of volunteer measurement by demonstrating the uses that can be made of solid data on volunteering in advocacy, assessment of techniques for volunteer promotion and retention, and policy design. This can include small-scale implementations, which use the *Manual* standard for the economic valuation of volunteering within an organization, project, or community and use the resulting data as evidence for expanded support of volunteer promotion and for policies that provide a quantitative basis for treating volunteer contributions of time as valid match funding for both EU and national funding schemes.

Thanks to the *ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*, we may thus be at the dawn of a new era in the recognition of the value of volunteer work. But important tasks still remain to bring this new era fully to life.

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<http://cor.europa.eu/en/about/president/speeches/Documents/Speech-by-Mercedes-Bresso-European-Year-of-Volunteering-Voluntary-Work-2011/EN.pdf>

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