

# INVOLVE

Involvement of third country nationals in volunteering as  
a means of better integration

## Seminar report

Wolverhampton, England  
14 October 2005



[www.volunteeringengland.org.uk](http://www.volunteeringengland.org.uk)  
[www.tandem-uk.com](http://www.tandem-uk.com)

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## 0. Seminar agenda

- 10.30      **Registration**
- 11.00      **Welcome by chair**  
Chair: Christopher Spence, Chief Executive, Volunteering England,  
Chair of CEV (European Centre for Volunteering)
- Presentations:**
- **The INVOLVE Project and CEV (European Volunteer Centre)**  
Markus Held, Co-ordinator, CEV
  - **Overview of volunteering by third country nationals in England** Ruth  
Wilson, INVOLVE Project co-ordinator for Volunteering England and author of  
'a-z of volunteering and asylum'
  - **Refugees and asylum seekers volunteering - experiences and outcomes at  
the Northern Refugee Centre**  
Juan Varela, Volunteer Co-ordinator, Northern Refugee Centre
  - **Personal testimonies: 2 volunteers**
- 12.00      **Workshops**  
'Volunteering by third country nationals: what is going on?'  
Is volunteering of third country nationals on the agenda?  
How are integration and immigration being discussed in our countries?
- 13.00      **Lunch**
- 14.00      **Presentation:**
- **Volunteering by third country nationals, experiences and lessons from the  
environment sector**  
Judy Ling Wong, Director, Black Environment Network
- 14.15      **Workshops**  
'Volunteering by third country nationals: overcoming barriers through good  
practice'
- 15.00      **Tea break**
- 15.15      **Workshops continued**
- 16.00      **Final plenary:**
- **Impressions of the day and key issues:**  
Speakers from CEV, a European INVOLVE partner and Volunteering England
- 16.30      **Ends**

# 1. Introduction

This is a summary of a seminar organised by Volunteering England as part of the INVOLVE Project. Two further seminars will be held in 2006 by partner organisations in Spain and the Netherlands.

The aims of the seminar were:

- to bring together a range of stakeholders, including third country nationals, to enable discussion and dialogue, and the development of networks
- to provide a starting point for research leading to the England report for the INVOLVE project

The event took place in Wolverhampton on 14 October 2005. In addition, the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) held its annual meeting on the evening of Thursday 13 October. CEV delegates then stayed for the seminar on 14 October.

This summary concentrates on notes made during the workshops. One of the plenary speeches and one of the workshop presentations can be downloaded from: [www.tandem-uk.com](http://www.tandem-uk.com)

The evaluation and other comments indicate that the day was a success, bringing together a diverse range of participants from many different countries, who explored the issues with enthusiasm and who shared their often extensive experience.

Our thanks go to everyone who helped make the event so worthwhile.

## 2. The INVOLVE Project

The focus of the INVOLVE Project is the involvement of 'third country nationals' in voluntary and civic activities as a means for better integration. 'Third country nationals' are people who are from outside the European Union, and who retain their original nationality.

The project is being led by Volunteering England, and co-ordinated by the European Volunteer Centre (CEV). The following countries are also involved: Austria; England; Holland; Spain; Germany; France and Hungary.

### **Aims:**

The project has two main aims:

- It will address the lack of knowledge about migrant volunteering, including third country nationals' concepts of, and attitude towards, volunteering and national policies and actions that facilitate these activities.
- It will nurture a trans-European network; allowing for increased dialogue between stakeholders; identification, exchange and dissemination of knowledge and best practice; and development of recommendations for policy changes.

#### Activities:

- **National advisory groups** have been set up in each country, to advise on the research, to take part in seminars, and to help disseminate the final report.
- **Information seminars** are being held in England (Wolverhampton, 2005); Spain and Holland.
- **Research** is being carried out in each participating country, to build on the earlier MEM-VOL research study (DG EMPL; [www.mem-volunteering.net](http://www.mem-volunteering.net)).

#### Final report:

A final report will compare and contrast the situations in the various Member States regarding volunteering by third country nationals and its impact on integration and aspects of social exclusion.

It will include transferable models of good policy and practice, and make recommendations for policy and operational changes for governments and organisations working in this field.

### 3. Outline of the day

#### Morning:

- **Welcome by chair**

Chair: Christopher Spence, Chief Executive, Volunteering England, Chair of CEV

- **The INVOLVE Project and CEV (European Volunteer Centre)**

Markus Held, Co-ordinator, CEV

- **Overview of volunteering by third country nationals in England**

Ruth Wilson, INVOLVE Project co-ordinator for Volunteering England and author of 'a-z of volunteering and asylum'

Download a summary of Ruth's presentation from [www.tandem-uk.com](http://www.tandem-uk.com) or [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)

- **Refugees and asylum seekers volunteering - experiences and outcomes at the Northern Refugee Centre**

Juan Varela, Volunteer Co-ordinator, Northern Refugee Centre

Download Juan's powerpoint presentation from [www.tandem-uk.com](http://www.tandem-uk.com) or [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)

- **Personal testimonies: two volunteers**

Guillermo Vansteenbergh, volunteer with CEIM (Valencian Foundation for Immigrants' Integration and Education)

Ben Chisanga, member the North East Refugee Forum, the National Refugee Integration Forum and ZICONE (Zimbabwe Community in the North East of England).

- **Workshops 'Volunteering by third country nationals: what is going on?'**

Is volunteering of third country nationals on the agenda?

How are integration and immigration being discussed in our countries?

## **Afternoon**

- **Volunteering by third country nationals: experiences and lessons from the environment sector**

Judy Ling Wong, Director, Black Environment Network

- **Workshops 'Volunteering by third country nationals: overcoming barriers through good practice'**

- **Impressions of the day and key issues:**

Willem-Jan de Gast, Project Manager, CIVIQ, Netherlands

Eva Hambach, Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk, Belgium and member of CEV Board

Ruth Wilson, Volunteering England

# The Workshops

## 4. Morning workshops

### 4.1 Introduction

The aims of the morning workshops were:

- to get an overview of trends and patterns in volunteering by third country nationals in different member countries
- to enable workshop participants to start networking

The facilitators set out to explore some or all of the following questions:

- **Do immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers volunteer in your country?**  
Where do they volunteer? (eg which sectors, types of volunteering)  
Are there any other characteristics? Eg:
  - Do men and women volunteer?
  - Young people?
  - The elderly?
  - People in work? Out of work? Unable to work?
  - How much time do they give?
  - Long term or short term?
- **Why do they volunteer?**  
Are immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers familiar with the concept of volunteering? What are their cultural attitudes/understanding, are these a factor?  
Why don't third country nationals volunteer?
- **What about trends in society and in the voluntary sector?**  
What helps or hinders the involvement of third country nationals in volunteering?  
Is this issue on the policy agenda in your country?  
Are there laws or policies which help or hinder volunteering by third country nationals? Who is key in implementing these?  
Is volunteering linked to integration policies in any way?  
What is the role of the media?
- **Has any research been carried out?**  
Are there reports/statistics we could have access to?

Workshops A - C brought together people from many different countries. Workshops D and E were made up of people living in England, so that participants could discuss the situation in England in depth, as a starting point for the INVOLVE Project research in England.

## 4.2 Workshop A

Facilitator: Markus Held, CEV

Note-taker: Myriam Chererti, Migrant and Refugees Community Forum, UK

### What is meant by volunteering?

For the purpose of the workshop it was agreed that volunteering was: working without money for personal contribution in an organised setting.

### Country reports:

**Spain:** volunteering has two forms: formal, which is recognised as volunteering by other mainstream organisations and institutions; and informal volunteering which takes the form of self-help support networks born from the inside. The challenge is that often the second form of volunteering is often not recognised. In Spain there is a large number of organisations where immigrants play a pivotal role in the integration process.

**Ireland:** a lot of 3<sup>rd</sup> country national volunteers come with a home definition of volunteering (often compulsory) and this creates a challenge in terms of translating into their new context.

**Luxembourg:** a lot of migrants do not volunteer because of the language barrier, although there is a will to be involved. This represents a challenge in facilitating the process of integration of these migrants.

There is a general tendency of migrants being accepted as volunteer amongst other migrant organisations and not mainstream ones.

**Belgium:** there are no proper figures on the volunteering rate of third country nationals, and migrants generally do not face problems volunteering with mainstream organisations. Three trends of volunteering were identified in Belgium: with self help groups, normal voluntary organisation, and mainstream organisations. It was also felt that migrants' organisations have to prove more than their counterparts.

**UK:** data on the rate of volunteering by third country nationals is in the process of being collected. It is difficult to have exact figures because of the way data is being collected.

**Netherlands:** a lot of research done, however, they still face the challenge of defining migrants. The rate of volunteering is of 35% amongst Dutch nationals and between 20-25% amongst immigrants.

**Germany:** no statistics are available to date regarding the volunteering of migrants, but there is new research that will make some of this data available.

### **Existing policies on volunteering in the different contexts:**

**Spain:** there is an observatory, which is one year old, which tries to monitor the rate of volunteering and how to encourage it. This forms part of a new policy targeted at promoting volunteering.

**France:** there are attempts to encourage children to volunteer as often they are more integrated than their parents. This approach is believed to encourage parents to volunteer too in their turn.

**Belgium:** there is a policy to promote volunteering especially amongst asylum seekers. However, it is restricting their time of volunteering by granting them a 'labour card.'

**Italy:** a lot of migrants volunteer however they are not integrated in mainstream organisations, as they are mainly perceived as labour workers. In terms of policy, there are improved attempts to change this attitude.

**Netherlands:** migrants organisations are seen as the best way towards integration however, there is no clear policy on how to increase volunteering amongst migrants.

## **4.3 Workshop B**

Facilitator: Angelika Munz, CPC, Netherlands

Note-taker: Noelle Gilbert, Volunteering England

First of all, participants outlined the situation for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in each of their countries:

### **Netherlands:**

- During the 1960s, many immigrants came for work from Yugoslavia, Turkey, Portugal, Italy, Romania etc. Usually the man would come first and later his family would join him.
- Initially, community groups ('migrant self-organisations') were set up to welcome new migrants and to organise social/cultural events.
- 10-15 years later more of these organisations were tackling 'emancipation' issues e.g. providing advice about migrants' rights, dealing with issues relating to education for migrants' children, etc.

- A further 10-15 years on, these organisations are now collaborating with others on specific issues.
- There is a changing pattern of involvement among the younger generation: some are involved in self-organisations; some are involved in mainly Dutch organisations; some are not involved at all.

#### Hungary:

- Volunteering by refugees and asylum seekers is not recognised at all.
- Refugees and asylum seekers are involved in projects in order to meet immediate needs.
- It is difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to get paid work.
- Hungary lost parts of its territory during 20<sup>th</sup> century, so many 'immigrants' are Hungarians from bordering countries i.e. Romania, former Yugoslavia, Austria etc.
- There is no research on volunteering by immigrants in Hungary and no volunteering infrastructure - but now beginning to be more aware.
- Many migrants do not want to stay in Hungary (the Dublin Convention has an impact which requires refugees and asylum seekers to claim asylum in the first European country they arrive in). They want to pass through, and therefore do not want to be identified. Many people move on to Austria.
- This is now changing, but the Government does not seem to have an integration policy.
- Volunteering is generally invisible, including by refugees and asylum seekers.
- There are no international volunteers - for example, VSO stopped placing volunteers in Hungary many years ago. Hungary is quite a 'closed' country.
- Volunteering is not developed in Hungary. Volunteers do get involved in work at refugee reception centre, but these are mainly students and often foreign students.

#### Austria:

- Refugees and asylum seekers can't volunteer.
- Most migrants came in the 1960s as economic migrants from former Yugoslavia and mainly settled in Vienna. Migrants from other areas such as Turkey came as well.
- Those from former Yugoslavia are not well organised, but there are approximately 500 Turkish organisations. Migrants do volunteer for these organisations, but this is not recognised or visible.
- Research on volunteering generally does not exist.
- Participation of migrants in volunteering is very important, as it can contribute to solving problems in the (Turkish) community. It also shows that the community is ready to deal with its own problems, it's not just a government issue.

- In Austria, volunteering is “sick”. The Government has made big mistakes, such as only trying to solve (social?) problems through politics, not by involving community organisations. For instance, it makes laws, involves social welfare institutions in implementing them, but doesn’t involve voluntary organisations/volunteers.
- For example, [the speaker’s] own organisation for young immigrants has now lost its funding from the government. He thinks this is because they became too vocal - if voluntary organisations get too powerful, the government feels threatened.

#### Scotland:

- The Scottish government has a positive approach to migrants, but the public is hostile (for example the First Minister gets more negative post about the immigration issue than anything else). There is a growing awareness of racism and discrimination in Scotland.
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups and refugees and asylum seekers are concentrated in certain, mainly urban, areas.
- Glasgow Volunteer Centre has a project to encourage volunteering by refugees and asylum seekers and mentoring by Scottish people for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Generally the media coverage of refugee and asylum issues is negative - perhaps Scotland is learning intolerance from the English media.
- Scotland has a history of *emigration*. Also, they are now discovering that the Scottish are not as ‘friendly and welcoming’ as the image implies.
- There are South Asian, African, Chinese, Jewish, Italian, Irish, Lithuanian immigrants who mainly came during the 1960s (but some before this time?)
- With regard to volunteering and immigration issues, there is a tension between the political context/UK immigration policy balanced against Scotland’s need for more migrants due to skills shortage.
- Scotland has a volunteering strategy which specifically aims to remove barriers to volunteering and develop skills (to be implemented by the network of volunteer centres in Scotland)
- There is a strong tradition of volunteering in Scotland but BME groups are underrepresented (no research as to why this is).
- There is a general debate re: Scottish identity. An important benefit of volunteering is the encouragement of integration and a sense of belonging.

It was noted that Holland is facing similar issues as it is also discovering that it is not so ‘tolerant’ as its self-image implies.

How can we overcome barriers?

- In Holland, an organisation funded by the Government involves former asylum seekers as volunteers as a step towards paid employment. Its main aim is to encourage integration and paid employment. Volunteers are mentored for 2-3 months.

Many refugees and asylum seekers only mix within their own communities - don't volunteer in Dutch (mainstream) organisations. Partly this is because they don't know these organisations exist, but 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations who are integrated, still don't feel accepted so organise themselves in reaction to this.

- In Austria, the organisation working with young immigrants (mentioned above) works with 15-20 nationalities. Usually people stay within their own communities, but they feel it is important to encourage working together, to be international not nationalist, by getting involved in arts, music etc.

#### Summing up:

Visibility of volunteering generally and volunteering by refugees and asylum seekers needs to increase. All countries in Europe face xenophobia which is a very big barrier. If 2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> generations stay apart, there will be problems for society generally - we need to ensure this does not happen.

## 4.4 Workshop C

Facilitator: Dr Bénédicte Halba, IRIV, France

Note-taker: Michael Pickett, Immigration Advisory Service, UK

#### Round-table introduction of participants:

- For Austria: Christoph from Austria, Ramis from city council in Vienna
- For France: a representative from the National Center for Volunteering and from the Fasild, a special Fund dedicated to social action and migrants
- For the Netherlands: Marieke from the National Centre for Volunteering
- For Spain : Cristina and Maria from FSVCV
- For Hungary: a representative from OKA, the National Center for Volunteering
- For Belgium: a representative of the National Centre for Volunteering ;
- For Luxembourg: a representative from the National Centre for Volunteering
- For Germany : Susanne from Inbas and a representative of a steering group on migrant issues in Essen

Susanne underlined that in the national statistics in Germany there is no official data concerning migrants volunteering at least for the 1998 version as

in the 2005 one migration background is taken into account. There has also been a survey on Turkish volunteering on the basis of a data bank of 10,000 Turkish family names. One third of the German population volunteers; one in ten of Turkish - German population volunteers.

For Netherlands, Marieke says that there is also a problem of defining voluntary work. Migrants volunteering is quite developed in their own community and they would call it volunteering. It is considered as a social duty. Volunteering is a western notion for Marieke.

In Austria Christoph and Ramos agree that there are two kinds of volunteering: a formal one (institutional in the mainstream associations) and an informal one (which covers lots of activities). A questionnaire dispatched in Austria in the framework of a research project initiated by the Institute of Sociology of the University of Vienna proposes 10 to 15 activities. In Vienna, 500 associations for foreigners/migrants are listed. There is no official data on migrant volunteering.

In Luxembourg, 6% of migrants volunteer. In a population of 300,000 inhabitants, there are 400 associations for foreigners which is quite a lot. Migrants associations used to be controlled as in the composition of the board of associations, some quotas were imposed for nationals. It doesn't exist any more.

In Spain, the definition is clear for volunteering : an altruistic motivation , no money received, mostly in the framework of an association. There is a big difficulty to get statistics in the field of migrants volunteering. There is also a big difference between migrants associations and refugees associations.

In Hungary, there is no official, regular data on volunteering. A new law, adopted in 2003, gives the general framework for voluntary work. Volunteering is not on the agenda so far and so migrants volunteering is not studied.

In Belgium, there have been studies both in the Wallon and Flemish communities. However there is a lack of national data. In 2001, the Foundation Roi Baudouin, devoted to volunteering, gave some recommendations for volunteering but not developed data. Migrants volunteering is not either on the agenda.

In France, 13 million people volunteer. This represents 25% of the population over 15 years. Migrants associations exist but are not listed in a specific rubric. As far as volunteering is concerned, there is a Republican taboo that avoids asking the origins of interviewees. It would be considered discrimination. Data concerning migrants volunteering are missing. There have been studies supported by the Fasild on migrants integration, especially through associations. They are local or regional. There is no national overview.

The following main points were raised:

- Definition of volunteering: common criteria are needed so we can be confident of talking about the same thing; our Austrian partners propose a glossary presenting the different definitions for volunteering ;
- Public concerned: clarifying the difference between immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the national contexts; refugees and asylum seekers may be marginal population but main political issues.
- Immigration background: the political issue is quite important as some countries focus on assimilation (Austria, Spain, Luxembourg), others are more focussed on integration (France); some countries which used to be emigration countries have become immigration ones (Spain, Hungary).
- Statistical data: big differences in measuring volunteering and migrants volunteering (sometimes no data at all); it shouldn't be considered as a main obstacle as the qualitative approach may be sometimes more relevant.

## 4.5 Workshop D

Facilitator: Ruth Johnson, Volunteering England

Note-taker: Hannah Lewis, tandem

This workshop focussed on the situation in England.

### Overall summary:

There are some highly motivated people who look for volunteering experiences. Identifying (and overcoming) the barriers they experience is necessary if volunteering is to be promoted.

Others may not be aware of volunteering and so for them the main issue is to raise awareness in the third country national (3CN) population of volunteering and its benefits, and of volunteering opportunities (e.g. via community organisations)

Little is known about 3CN volunteering beyond refugees and asylum seekers, with the possible exception of students. There is also confusion in the voluntary sector and among 3CN of the rights of those in different immigration categories to volunteer.

### What is going on?

3CN may come from countries/ backgrounds where a communal lifestyle is familiar, especially if rural/ agricultural. But this philosophy may not translate to the concept of (formal) volunteering here.

In other countries (e.g. ex-Eastern block) volunteering was compulsory so notion of choice/ freedom/ rights etc. of/in volunteering may be unfamiliar

There is a large amount of informal support given within national/ ethnic/ faith 'communities'.

It can be difficult to integrate and it takes time! Living in a multicultural, mixed society is a culture shock for many. There are barriers/ racism among 3CN in terms of their attitudes to other nationalities/ people.

Only the most confident/ courageous people leave 'informal volunteering' among friends/ acquaintances to enter more formal volunteering

RCOs and community organisations are trusted and thus hold a key role in informing people of opportunities. Personal contact/ trust can be crucial in engaging people. Word of mouth is the number one, and sometimes the only way of engaging people.

People may have no notion of a 'volunteer centre' or other organisations that can assist with placing people. They may not know where they are situated. Outreach/ partnership working and personal contact is important: just giving a map to people may not be adequate.

Paying expenses is essential for enabling volunteering, especially for those on very low incomes

The policy arena is changing. The government's Department of Work and Pensions is aware that people are still being told (erroneously) that they cannot volunteer: it takes time for views to change at the ground-level. SUNRISE is about to start and will hopefully improve access to information/ knowledge of volunteering for new refugees. IS96 wording will remain the same ('no work paid or unpaid') but the HO is about to publish guidance on volunteering on their website.

Very little is known about 3CN volunteering beyond refugees and asylum seekers. Students may be an exception - data on the volunteering of 3CN students can be sourced through university volunteer placement projects. Information on people in other types of immigration category is difficult to find. Those on work permits must work according to the stipulations of their work permit

### **Barriers**

*Religious and cultural differences* may be a barrier to volunteering, particularly among women

There is a high *lack of awareness* about volunteering opportunities and of the concept of volunteering

*Economic*: People who have long shifts, night shifts or who work many hours may not be inclined/ able to volunteer/ cannot afford to

*CRB* is a barrier to volunteering - especially, for example, among women interested in childcare opportunities and working with vulnerable people. People retreat to 'their community' (informal volunteering) and wider society misses out from engaging these motivated, talented people.

Asking for long-term *references* (2+ years) is a barrier

*Fear of official procedures* (CRB, references, etc)/ lack of understanding of procedures is an additional barrier

*Front-facing staff* (such as receptionists) are sometimes less sensitive to additional support needs (and may not have multiple languages) and may be off-putting.

A high volume of complex forms and *overly official recruitment* procedures is off-putting

*Language* difficulties and lack of confidence in speaking is a barrier

Some people are still being told by the *Job Centre* that they cannot volunteer if they are receiving benefits

There is confusion in policy, and among workers/ practitioners about immigration categories and rights to volunteer. This may lead to erring on the side of caution and informing people they cannot volunteer

Once people have received a negative message about volunteering (or have had a negative volunteering experience) it can be even harder to engage people.

Small voluntary organisations are themselves struggling with funding to keep going and may not have resources to properly support volunteers.

*Negative media coverage* of migrants and refugees/ asylum seekers is a big barrier

## 4.6 Workshop E

Facilitator: Ruth Wilson, Volunteering England

Note-taker: Ivelina Metchkarova-Taylor

This workshop focussed on the situation in England.

Issues regarding volunteering by third country nationals, as identified and discussed in the workshop:

- There isn't enough research into this topic, partly due to the fact that it's hard to monitor and collect data for this group of volunteers; yet this information is very useful to ensure that their support needs are met.
- There needs to be more publicity and clarity as to who is allowed to volunteer, because there is too much misunderstanding and misinformation.
- The processes involved in recruiting volunteers can create a barrier, e.g. CRB checks on migrants are very difficult to obtain.
- There is no co-ordinated and targeted approach from mainstream organisations, e.g. no uniform application process for migrant volunteers.
- Funding is a big issue for organisations, if they don't have the money, they can't engage these groups. Funding is patchy and unreliable.
- Due to the complicated process of becoming a volunteer and because of capacity issues for volunteer co-ordinators, it may take a long time before a volunteer is placed in an organisation. It's important to explain this to potential volunteers so they don't have wrong expectations. This is particularly hard when involving asylum seekers, who want to get a placement fast.
- The capacity of people to feel settled is undermined by new government policy, especially the proposed new 5-year rule. Government policy on integration is not co-ordinated and there are some contradictions.
- Resources need to be targeted both at grass-root informal volunteering, as well as at formal structured volunteering.
- Volunteering for asylum seekers and refugees is more structured than for new migrants and their communities.

## 5. Afternoon workshops

### 5.1 Introduction

The aims of the afternoon workshops were:

- to explore good practice in volunteering by third country nationals
- to identify barriers to good practice

- to enable participants to exchange ideas and experience

Each workshop began with a presentation by a speaker on their work, or on good practice in their country. The facilitators then set out to explore some or all of the following questions:

- **Good practice and barriers at practical level**  
 How do we define good practice? (in the involvement of third country nationals as volunteers)  
 What examples are there of good practice?  
     Among immigrant-led organisations?  
     Among organisations working with refugees and immigrants?  
     In mainstream organisations?  
 What worked?  
 What problems did they encounter and how did they overcome them?  
 Did the organisations/project change in the process? In what way?  
 Are there examples of innovative partnerships that have helped increase volunteering by third country nationals?
- **Good practice and barriers at policy level**  
 What policy initiatives have helped?  
 (at EU / national / regional / local level)  
 What have been the problems and barriers?  
 How have these been solved?  
 Has anyone evaluated the policy? What has been the outcome?

All participants were in mixed nationality workshops in the afternoon.

## 5.2 Workshop F

Speaker: Gabor Miklosi, ELTE, Hungary  
 Facilitator: Susanne Huth, INBAS Social Research, Germany  
 Note-taker: Eleanor Harrison, Refugee Council, UK

- It was established that the concept and practice of volunteering varies considerably in different European countries, with the British model more formalised and widespread than in some of the other countries represented, such as Hungary.
- Concern was expressed that whilst volunteering was encouraged and practised by native communities in the UK, where this was not the case, it would be wrong to encourage/coerce third country nationals to volunteer, in exchange for employment training/benefits/integration activities.
- The acquisition of volunteering by the state was a key theme, with many participants expressing concern that the original concept and purpose of

volunteering was being undermined by different states' use of volunteering to encourage economic activity or integration amongst vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in society, such as refugees and asylum seekers. Examples were given by UK representatives of the "New Deal" scheme in which participants must take "voluntary" placements with organisations in order to continue to access their benefit; or the proposed Section 10 of the 2004 Immigration and Nationality Act, where refused asylum seekers must engage in community work in order to receive Board and Accommodation. It was recognised that the voluntary sector itself has a duty to defend itself from the encroachment of the state. Hungarian participants also discussed an employment scheme in which third country nationals are forced to volunteer in exchange for employment training and financial support.

- It was established that many more asylum seekers settle in Western Europe with Eastern European states usually used as transit countries. With the expansion of the European Union third country nationals are seeing Eastern European states such as Hungary as attractive states to settle as economic migrants though, but these numbers are still limited compared to Western Europe. The demand for integration is therefore greater in Western Europe, but Western Europe also has a better infrastructure with which to cope with the influx.
- It was recognised that faith communities have a significant role to play in understanding and expanding the volunteering activities undertaken by third country nationals. Many asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants are reported to regularly attend places of worship, often more frequently than host populations. Through these faith centres, many formal and informal volunteering activities and initiatives currently take place, although little is recorded for researchers to analyse. Faith leaders are often some of the first people in local communities to make contact and welcome newcomers and their roles could be pivotal in understanding the involvement of third nationals in volunteering in Europe.
- Whether the voluntary sector should be encouraging new communities to volunteer in the host community, or whether energies should be focused on encouraging new communities to volunteer within their own communities was also discussed. It was recognised that more effort needed to be directed at getting host community members to volunteer in new community organisations, as this will also facilitate integration, a theme which all participants recognised as extremely important.
- Many participants suggested that "mainstream" charities were not doing enough to increase the representation of people from new communities amongst their volunteers. It was noted, however, that each voluntary sector organisation has its own purpose, contained within its mission statement, and with limited resources many organisations struggle to fully meet their

own main goals. The following issue was raised: is it not the duty of refugee sector organisations and other voluntary organisations, who are directly working with and for new communities, to take responsibility for promoting the eligibility of these groups to volunteer, the skills and talents they bring with them and the overall benefit to the community and individual projects. An example of good practice was given of the project in Sheffield, UK where a dedicated worker has been funded for three years to promote and find volunteer opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees.

- Another issue that was raised was the assumption that immigrants are aware of voluntary sector organisations and their activities. In reality, most immigrants come into contact with voluntary sector agencies initially as beneficiaries of their services. It was stated that where clients become volunteers it can be incredible beneficial to that organisation. This has been demonstrated by the involvement of service users in homeless charities and drug and alcohol charities. Clients can benefit the organisations, in terms of genuinely understanding many of the issues the clients' face and relating to the clients in terms of culture, shared background and experience and understanding of the choices that people sometimes make. They can provide familiarity in an often alien world when working with people from new communities.

### 5.3 Workshop G

Speaker: Dr Bénédicte Halba, IRIV, France

Facilitator: Willem-Jan de Gast, CIVIQ, the Netherlands

Note-taker: Willem-Jan de Gast, CIVIQ, and Eli Mujo, tandem, UK

#### Barriers

- 1) Formalization and bureaucratization of both mainstream voluntary organisations and governmental bodies
- 2) Funder priorities do not match the actual needs of migrant organisations
- 3) In some countries, refugees and asylum seekers are not allowed to do volunteering, or they are not allowed to both work and do volunteering
- 4) Definitions of volunteering may lead to exclusion of third-country nationals
- 5) Perceptions of and attitudes towards third-country nationals may lead to exclusion
- 6) Perceptions of and attitudes towards volunteering by third-country nationals may hinder their participation, especially in mainstream organisations

- 7) Lack of knowledge and data on migrant volunteering
- 8) Lack of visibility of third-country nationals and of migrant volunteering
- 9) Language
- 10) Lack of self-confidence among third-country nationals
- 11) Lack of suitable placements (especially in mainstream organisations)
- 12) Lack of support at the individual level

Comment: Many of these barriers exist in most of the partner countries. The intensity and scope of the barriers may vary, but most do exist across Europe.

### **Examples of good practice**

The examples below were written down on the basis of the following questions:

- a) What was the nature of the project/practice (objectives, form)?
- b) What actually happened (which activities took place)?
- c) What was achieved (results)?
- d) What are the lessons learned?
- e) What are the success factors?

#### **CNV Lucca - Italy**

- a) Create a link between high schools and voluntary associations, among which some refugee organisations
- b) Teaching volunteering for 2 hours per week
- c) Increases number of volunteers; increased understanding of what volunteering entails and of the many forms it can take
- d) You have to find the right words to describe 'volunteering'
- e) That volunteers themselves are speaking: from practice to cultural transmission

#### **CIVIQ - Netherlands**

- a) Stap Twee (step two): five-year government sponsored programme dealing with the enhancement of diversity in mainstream voluntary organisations
- b) National, regional and local components directed at policy level, organisations and partnerships
- c) Workshops, diversity instruments, conferences, meetings, pilot projects, website, handbook. Also achieved: awareness of the need to increase diversity, higher visibility of migrants and volunteering, lasting partnerships and re-usable materials and instruments

- d) Creating more diversity is a long-term process, a lot of flexibility is needed, there are lots of prejudices and often it was still necessary to take step one instead of step two.
- e) Involve all stakeholders (including migrant organisations), take small steps but plan well ahead

#### **Caritas - Germany**

- a) Information for people who travel to developing countries
- b) Providing information and training about culture and language; individual and group consulting with third-country nationals
- c) Good preparation for the ones going abroad
- d) It helps to give the destination country a live face
- e) The project provides third-country nationals an opportunity to show their knowledge and to improve their skills

#### **Espace Ardenne - France**

- a) School mentoring
- b) Try to bring the French culture closer to migrants through their children
- c) Children (and their families) increase their self-esteem
- d) Try to solve problems in a positive way, instead of dramatizing them
- e) Use of group work, install and foster sense of community

#### **Volunteering England - England**

- a) Manchester refugee week festival
- For detailed information see page 50 of the A-Z of volunteering and asylum

#### **Volunteering Ireland - Ireland**

See summary paper on tandem website: [www.tandem-uk.com](http://www.tandem-uk.com) or or [www.volunteering.org](http://www.volunteering.org)

#### **Criteria for good practice:**

- easy access to organisations: make things clear to the volunteer
- sustainability; a long-term perspective
- emphasize the fact that third-country nationals are first and foremost volunteers and not immigrants; their voluntary work may then be valued more
- take care that third-country nationals feel free to do volunteering (you're worth doing it)
- move from an exclusion process to a inclusion process
- provide practical support for volunteers (e.g. travel expenses, insurance)

## 5.4 Workshop H

Speaker: Christoph Reinprecht, University of Vienna, Austria

Facilitator: Markus Held, CEV

Note-taker: Hannah Lewis, tandem, UK

### Accessibility

Paying travel expenses.

Speaking third country national (3CN) languages and/ or being patient, flexible and welcoming.

Good location.

Promote the benefits of volunteering to potential volunteers and organisations (NB social responsibility and image/ community participation is increasingly important for companies and organisations).

Be creative in locations and forms of recruitment. Make the effort to physically visit locations where 3CN go. Use tangible/ visual tools in promotion and recruitment/ training.

### Sustainability

Of the organisation/ placement opportunities and of individual volunteers.

### Quantity

3CN volunteers should be included!

### Quality

outcomes should be based on quality of volunteering experience (in length of placement, type of roles, interaction with 'other communities', etc.) not just on quantity of placements.

### Welcoming

Employ 3CN to work with volunteers/ for outreach - they bring empathy and knowledge of 3CN life reality.

Language/ translation - e.g. of at least basic information leaflets.

Open, flexible and enabling attitude among personnel (NB this is as/ more important than employing 3CN as staff - it may not be enough to 'just' employ a 3CN and expect outreach will therefore be achieved - they must have the right attitude and approach).

### Development

Of skills and potential of volunteer.

Placement organisations can support voluntary organisations to develop.

### Valuing

The volunteer - acknowledge the role of the volunteer; provide feedback and encourage; publicly value through naming / thanking ceremonies (e.g. at AGM); provide accreditation/ certificates.

Informal volunteering.

Small voluntary organisations and community groups (including those who may not be fully constituted).  
Give individual attention and guidance.

### **Clarity**

Goals and objectives of volunteering should be clear for volunteer and for the organisation.

Of volunteer roles / tasks.

### **Community / empowerment**

Individual volunteer and organisation could/ should link to 'the community' (i.e. not be isolated from 'integration').

Skills and knowledge gained by volunteers can have a 'cascade' (empowering) influence on integration (as people talk to their friends).

Mainstream organisations need to *actively* reach out to 3CN and their organisations/ groups (and 'volunteering for integration' must ensure links to the mainstream).

### **Matching the needs and expectations of the volunteer and the organisation**

Good matching is achieved through good networking, good preparation for the volunteer and the organisation and individual support.

Managing expectations is important - 3CN may have high expectations of employment.

More challenging roles/ positions should be given to the most able/ reliable volunteers (and efforts should be made by volunteer placement organisations to provide suitable positions for the most able/ only send the most able to demanding roles).

Successful matching of volunteer capacities with volunteer roles is crucial to building good relationships/ networking.

### **Networking**

Build contacts of similar organisations, other volunteering opportunities, support agencies, and other 'stakeholders' (could be anything from an FE college offering language courses to an advice agency, the local authority, businesses and organisations, etc.).

Develop and invest in personal contacts with stakeholder groups. Physically visiting people/ organisations is important.

Networking should be 'interdisciplinary' / cross-sector - make an effort to 'move out' (e.g. language courses)

New migrant organisations and groups should work with established volunteering organisations to expand/ alter/ develop their work rather than setting up parallel projects. Parallel projects may not enable integration in the longer-term.

Physically going with someone for their first interview/ meeting with a voluntary organisation can make all the difference.

Be well known!

## **Barriers**

### **Media/ politics - context**

The negative media and political context towards migrants and refugees/ asylum seekers is a serious barrier across European countries. This extends to workers and can be threatening to organisations as well as their clients.

A general lack of acceptance of migrants in the community and among funders exacerbates this negative image.

### **Trust**

There are significant issues of suspicion and mistrust towards and within 3CN and their community organisations.

Personal face-to-face contact is crucial for volunteers, between organisations, and for small to medium voluntary organisations communicating with larger voluntary orgs and the statutory sector.

There is a lack of trust and recognition of migrant organisations, especially those non-constituted. For an organisation to become constituted those running it must already be far down the line of integration in order to negotiate the necessary paperwork and processes. To exclude those that have not quite 'made it' may restrict rather than enable integration.

### **Language**

It can be hard to identify volunteering opportunities for those with lower language skills.

### **Matching**

If volunteers are badly matched with organisations they will be put off volunteering, and the organisation will be unlikely to take on more 3CN volunteers.

It can be difficult to find opportunities for the highly skilled.

### **Legal Status**

Immigration status and changes in status can be a barrier. For those in the asylum system both positive and negative decisions often mean people leave. With a negative decision people go underground, with a positive people may find other things to do.

Engaging those without documentation (sin papeles/ sans papiers or refused) is a particular challenge. Their right to volunteer varies across Europe.

### **'Cross-sector blindness'**

There is often a lack of contact/ co-ordination between welfare state/ unemployed/ employment agencies and volunteering/ voluntary sector/ volunteer centres.

Bespoke events, projects, promotion to 3CNs may raise awareness of volunteering and can be a starting point, but can also be isolating/ operate in parallel to the mainstream and sometimes can ultimately defeat the goal of integration.

There are not enough partnerships with mainstream organisations.

### **Resources and capacity**

It can make a big difference when local government employ BME workers/ create relevant posts. Where there are none, smaller voluntary organisations and migrant groups shouldn't use this as an excuse to not act.

Employing 3CN nationals can be a barrier as well as being welcoming. There is a danger that 3CN will be partisan to their own tribe/ ethnic group/ nationality/ gender.

## **5.5 Workshop I**

Speaker: Johannes Hagos, Volunteer Centre, Westminster, UK  
Facilitator: Carolina Rodriguez, FSV, Spain  
Note-taker: Anne Hubbard, Welsh Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

### **VCW Refugee Project:**

This project sets out to ensure that refugees in the city of Westminster experiencing isolation, depression and suffering the impact of negative media representation can use their skills positively to volunteer within their local community and receive effective support and training during their volunteering. Volunteering can improve their English language skills, and employability prospects, counter depression and isolation by social contact and provide a sense of doing a worthwhile activity, promoting a positive picture of refugees in the wider community.

### **Background**

April 2003, the Volunteer Centre Westminster received funding from the Department of Health as part of the Opportunities for Volunteering to start a project to introduce and encourage volunteering amongst refugees and asylum seekers in the city of Westminster. I was appointed as a development officer and the project started in June 2003.

The aim of the project is:

To involve refugees and asylum seekers in volunteering their skills both for their own benefit and also for the benefit of the local community.

The projects key **objectives** are:

1. To recruit and support refugees in finding appropriate voluntary work and in making the most of their involvement in the community for their long term integration and employability.
2. To campaign or initiate new approaches to counteract any barriers to volunteering by refugees
3. To set up an Advisory Group to ensure the project is user-led
4. To advise and support voluntary organisations in good practice in the involvement of refugees as volunteers
5. To effectively monitor and evaluate the project to ensure the scheme provides a high quality of service

**Progress to date:**

The project has an overall target of 86 volunteers to be recruited over the three years of the scheme. In fact the project has recruited over 400 volunteers, with 75% successfully placed with voluntary and statutory organisations.

In addition 7 training lessons have been organised on interview techniques and CV writing, and communications with very favourable evaluation by the participants. Links have been made with the local Communities.

Adult Education Service and we have provided a weekly outreach point at a centre providing ESOL classes, links with the Job Centres, Paddington First and a link with an IT training provider and BRC through Chris Badman.

Articles have been printed in local papers about refugees' volunteering experiences.

### **Advisory Group**

A group has been set up and has met regularly. This group is monitoring and helping develop the project through their experience of the needs of refugees in Westminster and their knowledge of local provision.

### **Questions and answers:**

**Question 1:** In the Netherlands, volunteering projects are not so open to migrants; does your (Johannes's) project just deal with refugees and asylum seekers?

**Answer:** In the main, yes: potential volunteers are asked about their area of interest and then referred to appropriate volunteer placements. Most volunteers want to volunteer not in their own community but most wish to be involved in different communities: it is vital for refugees and asylum seekers to integrate in host community through volunteering.

**Question 2:** Are more 'traditional' voluntary organisations open to working with refugees and asylum seekers?

**Answer:** Some, but others need advice and information about, for example, refugees' background, cultural knowledge, level of English. Some refugees have good qualifications but their English isn't good. Those with a low level may go to charity shops where they may improve their English by meeting a variety of customers.

**General discussion: What are the barriers for immigrants with regard to volunteering (in each country)?**

**UK:** Language, lack of information. Some volunteers want to be paid. Immigrants don't know or understand the concept of volunteering? Also volunteers may be exploited? They need to understand what volunteering is and volunteers should not be sent to profit makers, only charities.

Language / communication. There's no information: Asylum seekers want to do something, so as they don't suffer depression or isolation. They must be encouraged to go into other communities. Also, GP's do not treat them very well or don't understand them. Childcare is a problem, plus transport.

**Netherlands:** No one tells people they can volunteer. One should use word of mouth, posters etc.


**UK:** In Huddersfield, for example, there are around 2000 asylum seekers and refugees. Few know anything about volunteering

**Spain:** Spain is at the beginning of road. The Spanish are not used to volunteering, or even the concept of volunteering. It is deemed a way to use someone as "Cheap Labour", the person may be accepted as a volunteer worker - ie he/she will do the job for free which others are paid to do as a way into the workforce. Perhaps one could try to resolve childcare issues by using other women as volunteers - this as a first step. Once must demonstrate to Spanish society self reliance, self help.

National government policy should be developed to distinguish between a worker and a volunteer. Social intervention in Spain is one of lowest in Europe - There are no laws and asylum seekers are not allowed to work for one year.

Why can't they volunteer? Because they can't work! Asylum seekers don't exist until the government grant them refugee status. This will encourage a culture of non-intervention and "passive" recipients of state aid. In Spain now, we are in primary stage. Need political will to change. Regions can't make decisions (Federalism).

Lack of strategy / co-ordination between regions and governments / states. Migrants do some things but not much. Focus is on work.

France: Same thing happens in France. People with  status. Another problem. Also, there are cultural issues - some cultures won't allow women to volunteer.

Spain: Volunteers can do it if they have money. The market isn't good. Need to work. Spanish people need to work, but first they need to do unpaid work to gain the skills to get a job. Also, what about the people without papers - the black market? The market is very narrow. Spain is new to social intervention in state (because it requires wealth).

Hungary: Volunteering is very low. Immigrants are mainly from former Hungarian territories. 80% don't have "classical" integration problems. Need money from EU - our project has 30 asylum seekers who are not allowed to work - and who do not speak Hungarian. Project to find employers who would allow these people to volunteer. Doesn't work: Hungarians are very prejudiced. Lack of trust. Hungary is very new to these kind of problems. (immigration). We would like help and advice from other countries with more experience.

There has been research into the relationship between government and NGO's which is historically very difficult; there were even very negative reaction to questions! In Hungary it is very difficult to be an alien. Migrant project - stated its intention to place volunteers in the profit sector - only 10 out of 30 were successful.

### Positive solutions/good practice

- talk about refugee culture / background and the support needed etc to organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers as volunteers.
- one UK Barrier is CRB checks. Need to come up with good practice to work around this - be creative (i.e. supervision, shadowing, etc)
- work on practical ideas so voluntary organisations can work with diverse volunteer base.
- perhaps advertise on internet?
- organisations should do a check on their diversity scale.
- There's a need for a strategic overview and a structural relationship between central government and the regions to support migration - such as the one in the UK?. Need to gain political support in the regions to

- support migration. Structures are implemented which coordinate, multi-agency work around asylum and integration work.
- the benefits of volunteering are very important - vital to gain experience for work. Infrastructure and government funding is very important.

## Some conclusions

### Barriers to volunteering

- Information
- Languages
- Childcare and transport
- Illegal immigrants not reflected - no access to integration initiatives
- Need for overall policy / overview of immigration and integration
- Serious prejudice in some countries
- Perception that volunteering may be “risky” as it may affect one’s asylum claim

### Solutions

- Networking
- Sell benefits of volunteering (the selling should be done if possible by refugees)
- Share good practice
- Voluntary organisations need to work with other similar organisations to build capacity and knowledge

## 5.6 Workshop J

Speaker: Ali Müjde, CIVIQ, Netherlands  
Facilitator: Ruth Wilson, Volunteering England  
Note-taker: Christine Ugborogho, Home Office, UK

### Speaker from The Netherlands, CIVIQ - Institute for Volunteering Support, Project Step 2: Ali Mujde

- Ali said his project was a 2 step process on migrants and refugees and the general issues to support volunteering work. Biggest project they had undertaken in the last 5 years.
- They had received funding from the government and profit sector to stimulate voluntary work amongst employees.
- Using tables to illustrate step 1, Ali illustrated how the host community, and to a much smaller extent, migrants provided their services to voluntary organisations for volunteering. The voluntary organisations are regarded as the equivalent of a local authority providing services. They have been trying to get the supply of volunteers to match the diversity in the community.

- Their migrant community organisations work separately from the established voluntary organisations and though they provide similar services, they have to be very careful in trying to establish/develop co-existence of services as the MCO's do not want to be seen as recipients of charity.
- They have worked to resolve some of these issues by pairing people from the same backgrounds and areas of diversity sensitively. Therefore an elderly person from the vol sector would work alongside another elderly person in the MCO as it was reasoned they would be facing the same issues. As long as the vol sector person was sensitive to all needs the relationship would work.
- The questions they asked themselves were: are the current services that are provided relevant to the migrants, how do they reach the migrants within these groups. 2 years ago they came to the realisation that MCO's could help.
- Using a further table to illustrate step 2 - how MCO's could assist with this process, he once more reflected the community made up of hosts and a small number of migrants. These people develop their own support networks with settled community on one side and migrants on the other, both working exclusive to each other. They then establish contact and decide on areas for collaboration. Through that collaboration interculturalisation/integration then occurs within the wider community made up of hosts and migrants.
- Ali said they wanted to encourage volunteering to reflect multiethnicity in the society, for political correctness, marketing the positives of their country and to encourage diversity.

#### **The stages they had to go through were:**

1. Awareness of ethnic diversity in the environment.
2. To ensure the wishes of the voluntary support organisations are translated.
3. To show internal change for organisations and volunteers.

#### **Objectives of project:**

1. They would have a databank of good practice.
2. Interculturalisation of services.
3. A main objective was to reach organisations rather than people, who would then spread the message through their organisations. As such 150 organisations reached. The message was also spread through their route planner website.

#### **Dilemmas**

1. Interculturalisation threatens migrant organisations.
2. Could loose talented people to big formal organisations.

3. This system of working: partnership or competition? Most organisations aren't ready for stage 2. When people move on, can be difficult to restart.
4. Organisations and staff can be in different stages of multiculturalization.
5. Sense of urgency at the top not the same at the bottom of the process.
6. MCO's are not necessarily as engaged as they deal with single issues. Can be more difficult to find areas of synergy.
7. People do not want to be identified as successful migrants. They want to be identified as fully integrated, so can stall the process of finding suitable mentors and the initiatives planned. More discussions planned with the settled migrants to highlight the positives of the scheme and to get them to help the new comers.

**To date:**

4 regional pilots. 1 pilot had to end after a year. The other 3 were carried out in 3 different locations resulting in 9 projects.

**Comments from other countries:**

**Spain:** whole process of working with migrants alien in Spain because migrants are not granted legal status. If they were it would be much easier to access services. They are therefore working hard to ensure that the migrants can obtain some form of legal status that would enable them to access the benefits of volunteering. Will be taking on board the lessons from today.

**Austria:** Situation more difficult here and interaction between migrant community and the host community much more limited. The host community was described as racist and their experience of interaction with migrants was much more limited compared to other European countries, resulting in the host community not being particularly empathetic to the plight of migrants.

Young, second generation migrants have lots of links with each other through school, religion etc so can afford not to have more formal links with the main community. The same applies to the host community that have their established link systems and do not interact with each other. They are trying to create bridges for interaction.

At present overtures from the main community to the migrant community are rejected as the help is seen as evangelical in fervour and disempowering. The migrants do not want to feel like victims so they are trying to create an atmosphere of emancipation.

Positive feedback of success stories in the media help. The current political environment does not create an effective environment for full integration. The state system bars seeking funding from the private sector. There is a lot of frustration with the slow pace of change.

For more information on the **INVOLVE Project**, contact:

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