



AVE in a professional perspective: Assessing voluntary experiences

**Pilot project: Leonardo da Vinci programme of the European Commission:
General Directorate for Education and Training**

Report 1 for Hungary



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Budapest, April 2004

Introduction

The Leonardo project: assessing voluntary experiences (AVE) aims to identify, evaluate and validate skills and qualifications acquired through informal learning within volunteer activities for a professional purpose.

The basic idea of the AVE project is that identifying and evaluating the skills and qualifications acquired through voluntary work should be the way to recognise and validate this informal learning. As voluntary experience is an alternative way to experiment, develop or renew with specific skills and qualifications the recognition and validation of these skills and qualifications should be very useful for people who have no professional experience and for those who have been kept away from the labour market (parents who have raised their children, sick people when they have recovered, prisoners when they are free...).

The AVE-project - in cooperation with partners in several European countries and under the co-ordination of IRIV, France - aims to examine which projects and good practice on recognising and certifying voluntary experience exists in each countries and develop a tool and a method for Assessing Voluntary Experiences that can be used by organisations in different European countries to enable volunteers to make use of competencies and skills gained in volunteering.

The target groups of the project are specific groups of volunteers (youngsters with no professional background, mothers, willing to renew with a professional activity, any people kept away from the labour market), associations willing to benefit by this method, training organisations willing to integrate this new device, public authorities and professionals in human resources willing to integrate this form of informal learning.

This report is the result of the first step of the project which is to gain an overview of voluntary work in each of the countries and looking at how this issue is dealt with in each country. This first report is meant to present basic information relevant to the themes in the respective countries.

This report will give introspection into volunteering in Hungary and it presents the main results of the few surveys on the issue of volunteering. Furthermore it demonstrates the structure of associations, the meaning of volunteering. Finally, this report will show which projects have been carried out in respect of the assessment of skills and qualifications acquired through voluntary experiences in our country. Ultimately the report gives examples of non-profit organisations that have voiced their interest in the AVE project.

I. Brief history of volunteering in Hungary

Volunteering in Hungary has different meanings for different age groups. For the elderly the word is associated with the war, for middle-aged volunteering means community work. For the youth it gets the closest to the meaning understood in Western Europe - being an active member of the society. This is due to the rich tradition of volunteering Hungary has. Much of it is rooted in its agrarian past. For example, the rural tradition of Kalaka involved several families coming together to work on joint projects such as harvesting or weaving; while Komatal involved the preparation of food by friends for a mother who had recently given birth.

More formal expressions of volunteering can also be traced back several centuries: a voluntary association of medical workers, which provided a range of, care services to the local community. Throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, volunteers were active through the churches and the large, established voluntary agencies such as the Hungarian Red Cross.

This tradition of volunteering was interrupted after the Second World War. The decades of communism all but destroyed volunteering as an independent social force. The work of the churches was heavily constrained, and most social welfare provision was taken over by the State. Of course, volunteering did not disappear altogether. The Red Cross continued to operate and local, informal expressions of neighbourhood support remained largely unchanged.

One form of 'volunteering' which did flourish after 1950 were the so-called Communist Saturdays – in which citizens were 'encouraged' to volunteer in support of the Nation and Party. The quasi-compulsory nature of this activity has left behind a legacy of public suspicion of volunteering. Between 1950 and 1989 some independent voluntary action took place through such 'underground' social movements as the anti-poverty foundation SZETA.

Following the political changes in 1989 there has been a rapid flowering of civil society and voluntary action. Many new organisations have been established and government has begun to enter into a dialogue with civil society as part of its desire to stimulate a more pluralistic and decentralised welfare system. The scope for civil society has significantly increased in

Hungary since the beginning of the 1990s. The legal guarantee of the freedom of association, the relinquishment of state control over voluntary movements, and the favourable tax treatment of non-profit organizations have created excellent conditions for the advancement of citizen participation and the development of the third sector.

Though from the point of view of the public, the individual, civil organisations enterprise and the government the advantages of volunteerism are all too clear, government funding of the voluntary sector remains at a relatively low level and many organisations are chronically underfunded and understaffed.

All the actors must realise their responsibility in the development of volunteerism. Here we can think of local government, who can also create favourable local conditions; the government, which can bring (legal) changes to the whole country and guarantee the material security of organisations based on volunteer work; the media, who with showing of positive examples can give acknowledgement; companies, which through undertaking work and making donations can join the work, the public offices, the hospitals, the institutions of social provision, which organise their functioning in a volunteer-friendly way; cultural centres, which can ensure places; schools and universities, where volunteer work can become the norm; civil organisations which can ensure prepared leadership and well organised programmes. A common union and consciousness are only achievable as results with the improvement of the present situation.

In the last 10 years volunteerism has perceivable begun to occupy its proper place, although we must be honest and say that essential changes are not possible to reach from one day to the next. Patience and mutual trust are needed if we are to reach closer to an ideal state, which will naturally always change and then we can hope that things will happen according to different guidelines. One of the most beautiful properties of civil society is this permanent change, which is perhaps one of the safeguards of renewal. In civil society today this safeguard has been created which doesn't allow the theme to be forgotten.

II. National structures involved in volunteering

The important task of the state is to generate the necessary infrastructure for successful volunteer work, since the employment of volunteers costs money, and also requires proper organisation. Strategic state planning can undertake an active role in the awakening of public interest, in coordination and in the promotion of civil and market sector cooperation. In the interests of understanding volunteer activity it must finance research and must also place a large emphasis on the integration of volunteerism into the education system. In Hungary there is still a significant deficit in this sector.

Hungary also took part in the work of the International Year of Volunteers. In this work the government and the also the civil sector were represented.

At the 1997 meeting of the UN at the initiative of the Japanese government 2001 was declared the Year of Volunteers. The representatives of 123 Countries, including Hungary, signed the related agreement. Compared to other countries Hungary woke up a little late and the preparations could only begin in September 2000. Perhaps the most unavoidable explanation for this is that volunteerism still had not received the attention it deserved. In the lack of suitable social attention to this theme the government also too easily simply put it to one side. This was a serious impeding consideration, in the first months of preparation it was clear that without developed governmental desire it was almost impossible to get the representatives of the different ministries in the meeting room and to listen to a word the civil organisations had to say. On the other hand, apropos of the year this ignorance on the part of the government left the organisations far freer than in other countries to put forward their own agendas.

It is a positive fact, on the other hand, that regarding the year cooperation came about between the civil and governmental spheres, which was previously, unheard of in the history of Hungarian civil society and which was undeniably exemplary. Through introducing the events of the year I will also try to show this cooperation.

Initially the Volunteer Year in Hungary began to be organised in several small strands, due to the fact that based on the news arriving from abroad more civil organisations and ministerial

office holders felt the need for something to take place at home. Eventually on the 18th of September in the Health Ministry more than 70 people gathered at a meeting arranged by the NIOK foundation, where apropos of the realisation of the year the first discussion of the tasks was achieved. Religious organisations and ministerial representatives also received invitations. A meeting of this nature had never before been organised in Hungary.

In the end the meeting's most tangible result was the decision that 4 workgroups should be created, to which the arriving volunteers could report, and which would later on be the core bases of the work. The workgroups were organised according to the following themes: fact-finding, recognition, training and cooperation. An especially interesting question was how these themes would fall in line with the plans of the world conference.

The groups were organised around the main tasks to be solved and their compositions were truly mixed. Bearing in mind their superior ability to move the process forward, it was unfortunate that the representatives from the governmental side from the start took part in very small numbers in the group work, however the workgroup engaged with the governmental – civil cooperation nonetheless had representatives of both sides in suitable numbers.

The Workgroups hoped to achieve results in the following:

Fact-finding: As its task this workgroup hoped to organise the carrying out of a comprehensive national survey, related to which exact conclusions could be deduced regarding the level on which volunteerism stood and what kind of role it could fill within certain areas of society.

Recognition: This group wished to concentrate on legal acceptance and promotion, understanding the fact that getting volunteerism moving without suitable social involvement and with an absence of suitable legal regulation would mean the process of integrating the volunteer programs would be very difficult.

Training: The group set out as a task the brining together of all the volunteer training organisations, information exchange of their products among the different training

organisations and as a long-term plan the introduction of volunteer education into the different levels of the Hungarian education system.

Cooperation: In connection with this theme the main task laid before this group was the inception of previously non-existent (local)government – civil cooperation and thinking together. In achieving something entirely new and desperately needed the representatives of the civil organisations could actively contributed to the working out and formalising of programmes for connecting with volunteerism.

The workgroups remained open for almost an entire year, anyone could join with them at any time. From the point of view of this structure this was a fundamentally important point. The work was open to anyone and nobody could say that they had been left out of the planning process, from the first minute the organisers endeavoured to ensure the maximum possible openness, and to every end emphasised how much they valued the work of those who had recently arrived. The workgroup leaders, elected by the members, prepared the work strategy until the end of November, based on which the national panel were able to work out a unitary plan of action.

On the 5th of December 2000, the World Day of Volunteers and the occasion of the official launch of the International Year of Volunteers numerous press releases, organised by the workgroup charged with securing recognition, appeared in the written and electronic media:- reports were delivered on public service TV and Radio, a series of articles introducing volunteer projects began in the monthly *Sansz* specialist non-profit and application journal.

The work strategy would have remained nothing more than a plan without the necessary material support. The Office of the Prime Minister promised 4.5 million forints for carrying out the tasks contained in the action plan of the committee. The Non-profit Information and Education Centre (NIOK) undertook the financial administration of the year and the maintaining of the connection with the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Action Committee and representatives of the ministries took part in a conference, organised by the Dutch National Volunteer Centre and UN Volunteers in Amsterdam between the 14th and 18th of January 2001, to mark the beginning of the International Year of Volunteers. While taking part they reported on the work strategy assembled by the Action

Committee, the programmes to be independently completed by the ministries and they built up connections towards the goal of making known internationally the Hungarian events.

By February 2001 the fact-finding workgroup prepared and began to distribute the „Civil Organisations on Volunteerism” questionnaire. With the help of this questionnaire they tried, for the first time in years to collect accurate information about the situation of volunteerism in Hungary. This study clearly also provided an important basis for this work. From the beginning of the organisation of the Year of Volunteers it was conceived, so that afterwards it should be possible to begin building in the possession of correct information, that it was necessary to collect material that would lay clear foundations for the future. However it is an unfortunate fact that later they used the questionnaire as a basis for their other work without consulting the specialists responsible for the original research about it, thus instead of a large, truly all-encompassing research more smaller results were created, which did not definitely allow for the best possible understanding of the situation.

The cooperation workgroup worked out the conception of the www.onkentes.hu homepage. With the help of this page, for the first time the possibility was created for all information and connections about the theme of volunteering should be available in one place. Thus it was especially easy to follow the events of the year and be connected to the programmes to be organised anywhere in the country. The homepage contained amongst other things the international and Hungarian precedents to the year, the work plans of the National Committee and the workgroups, a calendar of the events taking place in Hungary during the year, applications attached to volunteerism, numerous domestic and international documents related to the theme of volunteering, results of research and study, and a bibliography of books engaged with the subject of volunteering.

In March the workgroup charged with clearing up the legal situation of volunteers began to function. They defined the following topics as areas to be legally cleared up:

The (legal) definition of volunteers’ status;

Questions of employment law and taxation connected with the undertaking of volunteer work,

Third-party insurance for volunteers;

Reimbursement of volunteers’ expenses;

Connection of volunteerism and unemployment;

Undertaking by young people of volunteer work abroad;

Foreign citizens undertaking work in Hungary.

The training workgroup began to compile a list of specialists, institutions, books and publications concerned with volunteer training. There was a real necessity for this, the results of the workgroup's exploration soon showed that there was no kind of adequate information in this theme relating to who provided training for civil organisations, in other words what organisation and what kind of preparation was offered to applicants.

From the beginning of last year the cooperation workgroup finally began to work continuously with the representatives of the ministries. An interesting aspect of their work was finding out in what way it was actually possible to work alongside them. Based on these experiences it would be possible to write an entire separate paper, thus here I will only deal with the most relevant impressions.

In general in the offices, up to the level of assistant under-secretary civil organisations could meet in connection with the work of the volunteer year with enthusiastic and specialist people. On the other hand from there on up, the political level, the official life was truly difficult to understand and unfortunately many times it worked very unpredictably. Developing the political will is a difficult job, which is better to be working with real people or stuck in offices with officials. The solution is clear: both are necessary, for only by bringing together the local initiatives from below and the nationwide changes from above is it possible to produce an environment suitable for those taking part in volunteering.

On March the 21st, two representatives of the National Committee were able to give an account to the Civil Society Organisation's Committee both of the years' events up to that point and those to come. This meeting convinced us that with enough of investment of time and energy the politicians, independent of their party status, could be persuaded of the importance of the cause. It is unfortunately very difficult to hold something in the parliamentary focus without repeated follow-up.

At the meeting of the Committee held on the 2nd of May it was decided a decision was made to hold a Volunteer Week and the related Volunteers' festival was organised. These promised to be the biggest events among the International Year of Volunteers programmes in Hungary.

The goal of the Action Committee was to show of the human, social and economic sources of power inherent in the volunteer organisations and volunteer work.

On the 8th of May, at the Hungarian Foundation of Culture, the last of this form of meeting was organised, at which the National Committee gave an account of the events of the previous months, and invited new organisations to join the initiative. A little while later, on the 7th of June, the training workgroup staged a seminar entitled „Training Experiences in the Employment of Volunteers” at the National Culture Institute. The seminar was divided into two main parts. In the first, entitled „Good Practices,” examples of working with volunteers were seen, while in the second they a programme of group work was followed, where every attending organisation had a chance to present and highlight successful practices or problems they had experienced.

The workgroups followed the following three themes:

Preparation of volunteers for Volunteer Work;

Reaching volunteers directly, organisations to help them, preparation of specialists and coordinators to work with volunteers;

Preparation of the key decision makers at the institutions for accepting volunteers.

The National Council held a forum in „Civil Street” of the Student Island festival for the attending organisations. At this forum they were able to become acquainted with the events of the year that had taken place so far, the concepts of the Volunteers Week and Celebration, the current condition of the organisations and the means of joining them. The National Committee commissioned 3000 stickers and 500 badges to be prepared with the logo of the International Year of Volunteers.

The National Committee began to implement the press campaign for the Week and the Celebration. In the campaign 16 newspapers, 14 radio stations, 15 TV channels and the MTI gave news, 9 TV and Radio stations broadcast public benefit adverts and Boomerang Freecards released a free postcard about the events of the Week, respectively the Celebration.

The National Committee and the regional coordinators organised the week between the 8th and the 13th of October. In 6 days 183 Organisations organised nearly 250 programmes and events in more than 100 settlements. Anyone could join in the events for a few hours, a day

or the whole period of the week. Approximately 4000 people participated in volunteer work during the course of the week, and they all participated, mostly for the first time, action in wider or narrower aspects of the population's experience and joy. The National Committee was responsible for releasing news of the Week in the press. Within the frame of this responsibility it prepared posters for the Week, and reported on the events in the written and electronic media.

In Budapest on the 14th of October the National Committee held the Week's closing programme, the Celebration. The regional coordinators, the associations which had organised the local events, foundations, church and informal groups, institutions; countless volunteers who participated in local work and approximately 1300 inquirers, including –unofficially– István Stumpf the minister of the Prime Minister's Office, took part. Dr Ferenc Mádl, President of the Republic, opened the event and indeed filled the post of patron for the Week and the Celebration. Following the opening, Péter Harrach, the Minister of the Social and Family Affairs Ministry gave a charter of appreciation to the organisations that coordinated the events of the Week.

With the completion of the Volunteer's week and the Celebration the National Committee began to assess the financial issues and prepare special accounts of the two programmes. Besides this the members continually debated and prepared the plan for the National Volunteer Centre.

During November representatives of the Committee took part in the meeting of committee representatives from around the world, staged in Geneva, where unfortunately no-one from the government side represented Hungary. Apart from this it was a true pleasure to draw together the diverse parts of the year, the quality and quantity of the results. Apropos of this meeting Hungary was included in an all encompassing international research involving ten countries, through which the impact of the week could be examined, and finally a report was prepared for the UN about the success of the Year in these countries.

During the winter the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs and the Healthcare Ministry held the closing conference of the Year of Volunteers, at which serious evidence came to light that volunteer programmes and activities were to be supported and, it seems, that from within these two ministries at least there was some degree of political desire to be involved. On the

other hand it is an unfortunate fact that the elections totally froze specialist work, thus the representatives of the organisations were only able to wait until the end of this period, until they were able to continue the work they had begun.

The progress made during the course of years has put volunteerism on the political and social map in Hungary. The representatives of the civil organisations argued increasingly vocally that a coordinating organisation was needed to deal with the theme. This did not mean the creation of a new „peak service” for volunteering, but it was all too obvious that the tasks emerging connected with the theme were very diversified. It became undeniable that it surpassed the time capacity of even the most enthusiastic and committed person. Moreover, if such an organisation existed, it could take the necessary steps to ensure continual progress. In September 2002 the Volunteer Centre Foundation was created, which will undertake the popularisation and development of domestic volunteerism.

The Centre hopes to fill the holes on the following areas that are noticeably missing from Hungarian civil society:

1. Registration, enlistment and mediation of volunteers.
2. Registration of volunteer workplaces
3. Information, education
4. Civil media centre
5. Representation of the domestic volunteer movement abroad
6. Shaping of the jurisdiction coming with volunteer connections
7. Research and surveys
8. Organisation of national and local programmes
9. Creation of regional volunteer centres and formation of a national network
10. Lobbying activity

At the present moment we are working on ensuring that the civil strategy places due emphasis on volunteerism and that this should create a favourable and regulated legal framework for those undertaking volunteer work.

III. Legal framework

Although there are several laws and regulations that mention the topic there is no overall law on volunteering as such at present in Hungary. Current regulations deal with volunteering only in the following areas: voluntary blood giving, volunteering in hospital, voluntary fire service and volunteering in civil defence sphere. The legal status of volunteers is still unsettled.

The preparatory works of the law on volunteering has an almost four year long history.

In connection with the Year of Volunteers autumn 2000 the initiative of settling the legal status of volunteers emerged. The outcome of this deliberation was a meeting convened in September 2000 by the Ministry of Health Care and attended by some 70 non-profit groups. The meeting agreed upon the main aims for International Year of Volunteers in Hungary and the decision was taken to set up four task groups to help meet these aims. The themes of the four groups were Recognition, Improvement and Legal Environment Team, Co-operation Team, Training Team and Fact-Finding Team. At the same time a subgroup was created that dealt with the clearing the legal issues of volunteering exclusively. As societal judgement and acceptance of volunteerism was not regarded as satisfactory, taking this onboard the work group wished to concentrate on legal acceptance and promotion, understanding the fact that getting volunteerism moving without suitable social involvement and with an absence of suitable legal regulation would be very difficult. The first thought was to settle the legal situation through modification of already existing laws and regulations. After identifying the main legal problems, and based on these findings the workgroup prepared the first version of the „Legal Recommendations Regarding the Recognition of Volunteer Assistance” document, which was passed round for the organisers of the year to debate. As a result of the continuous debates among civil organisations, professional opinions and recognition of international examples at the beginning of the year 2003 the idea to create a comprehensive and independent law on volunteering emerged. The first draft of the law was ready by April 2003.

In October 2003 the Office of the Prime Minister adjured Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány to finalise the civil-professional preparation of the bill. To achieve this the Foundation organised 5 regional preparatory forums throughout the country. As a result of the section-work the final

version of “Legal Recommendations Regarding the Recognition of Volunteer Assistance” document was presented to the government, Equal Opportunities Office, Directoriat for Civil Relations for submission to the Parliament. The document is still under codification, as there is a favourable political will the law on volunteering is due to come into force at the beginning of the year 2005 after a vote in the Parliament November 2004.

Aim of the law:

To regulate and create the legal background of volunteering in Hungary

To shape the regulatory environment with respect to the specific features of voluntary activity.

To support and encourage voluntary activity.

In order to accomplish the above-mentioned aims the document took into consideration the followings:

legal regulations should be organisation-indifferent,

it should differentiate regular and ad-hock voluntary activity,

it should support and encourage various forms on voluntary activity,

it should support real needs of volunteers, entitled and organisers of voluntary activity with appropriate regulations.

The law defines the term of voluntary work based upon three main elements.

The activity is not a legal entity;

The activity should be undertaken through free choice and not be the result of coercion;

That the activity should be of benefit to society (as well as of benefit to the individual).

Main regulations of voluntary activity according to the Law:

The bill regulates the details of voluntary activity in order to achieve set goals and avoid unwanted effects such as black economy or tax-avoidance.

Given activity should not be considered as voluntary if it involves remuneration except those outlined in the bill.

As a further significant issue, responsibility system associated to the legal framework of voluntary activity will be justified in the document.

Hungary permits volunteers to receive an expense allowance tax-free and free of contributions. The bill deals with the issue of liability insurance for volunteers.

IV. Results of surveys

According to The Central Statistical Office survey (1995) the number of ‘informal’ volunteers (not connected to organisations) exceeded 2,263,780 adults (29% of the adult population). At the same time the number of volunteers working in formal organisations was 400,207 adults, 5% of the adult population (2001), their working hours is approximately 35 and a half million. It is in accordance with 17,500 full-time employees’ working hours, which is worth approximately 18 milliard forints according to the experts’ estimation.

Though the moral impact of voluntary contribution on the society is invaluable for both the volunteer and those who benefit from the service due to the underdeveloped nature of the voluntary sector in Hungary only a limited number of surveys are available.

The only survey on “informal” volunteering available today was prepared by The Central Statistical Office in 1995. The results of this survey represent the situation of volunteering in the year 1993, presumably in the meantime passed off social-economical changes had an effect on the present state of individual volunteering.

As a new initiative, together with the Non-profit Research Group Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány would like to repeat this research in the country. At present we are looking for the financial support for this project.

Survey on informal volunteering: Individual giving and volunteering in Hungary, 1995

The survey was prepared by the Central Statistical Office Department of Social Statistics, Section on Voluntary Sector Statistics and the Research Project on Non-profit Organizations, it was supported by Aspen Institute Non-profit Sector, Research Fund, Charities Aid Foundation, Fondation de France, National Research Fund (OTKA), Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Background of the survey: one of the most striking figures produced by the surveys carried out by different organizations (Central Statistical Office, Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, Research Project on Non-profit Organizations) was the relatively high

share of private donations among the revenues of the non-profit sector. Tax records have also indicated that both the number of donors and the amount of money donated to foundations have increased very rapidly. These findings were all the more surprising and thus needed in-depth analysis and explanation because they clearly contradicted all knowledge and beliefs about the financial conditions of people and the general state of the Hungarian society. This massive manifestation of solidarity was rather unexpected under the circumstances of the declining standard of living and germinating individualism. A sample survey seemed to be necessary in order to measure the size of the phenomenon and to identify the possible factors determining the rise in charity.

The method used to conduct the survey: The information provided in this study was obtained from 14,833 in-home personal interviews. The sample was randomly selected. The interviewees were adults aged 18 and over. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their charitable behaviour, including in-kind donations, cash donations and voluntary work. In order to gross up findings for respondents to figures for Hungary as a whole the figure of 7.8 million was used to represent the size of the adult population. The study presents the grossed up data and the indices calculated on their basis.

Definition of volunteers in our survey: individuals helping organizations and people outside the circle of their family and friends.

Results of the survey: The respondents have reported that in 1993 almost two thirds of the adult population voluntarily helped other people, charitable organizations, or contributed to the solution of social problems emerging either at a local or national level.

The imputed value of the voluntary work was high - it exceeded 14 billion HUF. (The estimation was based on the figures for the average wage of employees.) In short, individual giving and voluntary work have turned out to be important not only morally, but economically, too.

Women are better donors, but they volunteer less than men do. The best givers are those well educated, highly positioned people aged between 30 and 60, who live in large cities with consolidated (2 children) families, have a relatively high income from various sources, and are connected to voluntary organizations not only as supporters but also as members.

The answers to the questions about the motivations of donations and voluntary work seem to suggest that solidarity is a basic value of the Hungarian society. While citizens feel obliged to take part in the solution of social problems, they think that the government also has a

responsibility. Trust in the supported organization and clarity of the organizational aims to be achieved play an important role in the selection of supportees. Donors and volunteers are much better informed than people who neither give nor volunteer.

The emotional reward associated with giving and volunteering is definitely the most important element in the motivation for charitable activity. Most of the donors and volunteers firmly agreed that it was rewarding to feel that they had helped people in need.

Trust in the supported organizations was also important for cash contributors and volunteers.

A significant part of the volunteers reported that their voluntary work was motivated by some concrete aim.

Both donors and volunteers firmly denied that tax advantages, cost reimbursement and improvement of their living conditions or services received by them would have motivated their charitable activities.

All the positive statements about the necessity of donations and voluntary work met a general agreement, especially the one which expressed the moral obligation to help the children, the elderly and the handicapped people. Solidarity toward the poor and refugees proved to be somewhat weaker, but still significant.

On the topic of formal or organized volunteering there have been carried out a survey by

Klára Czike, Volunteering in numbers, 2001

The aim of the study is to summarize figures, data, terms, definitions and theories available in national and international professional publications. The study was prepared in order to serve as a source for theoretical information on volunteering and on operation of civil sector.

After describing different definitions of social capital it gives detailed data on social sector and compares the data of 1995 survey on informal volunteering to the data available since then.

Results of the survey: According to the KSH survey the number of 'informal' volunteers (not connected to organisations) exceeded 2,263,780 adults (29% of the adult population). At the same time the number of volunteers working in formal organisations was 400,207 adults, 5% of the adult population. Since then more surveys have been carried out on the formal volunteer sector, according to these the number of volunteers has decreased continuously since 1995. Unfortunately there has not been a newer survey across the population since 1995; therefore we do not know whether in the case of the informal volunteers this can be called a tendency.

Looking at the contribution of non-profit institutions which in general assist households and which are predominantly funded from private sources to gross domestic production, the sector's importance, the productive role of civil capital becomes still more apparent. The added brut value of production to GDP in 1999 was 76.7 billion forints, in 2000 84 billion forints (KSH 2000:23). In 1999 the added value to the national economy achieved 0.8%

Table 1: The contribution of non-profit organisations to GDP 1994-1999

Year	Income Including Inflation (Billion Ft)	Calculated value of GDP %	National Economy Output Contribution %
1992	110,2	n.a.	n.a.
1993	121,7	n.a.	n.a.
1994	144,1	1,2	1,4
1995	195,6	n.a.	n.a.
1996	239,0	0,8	1,7
1997	284,3	0,7	1,7
1998	358,7	0,7	1,9
1999	415,6	0,8	1,9

Source: KSH 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

It is clear from the table that although the scale and income of the sector continuously grew, the scale of the contribution to GDP did not change significantly in the examined 5 years. It is important to stress that the sector's continual and stable contribution to civil society can be clearly observed. If we examine the development of the sector it is unarguable that significantly in 1999, the income since 1993 continuously grew and that the rate of growth was always greater than the rate of inflation.

Table 2: The growth in Non-Profit Organisation numbers between 1982-2000

Year	Foundation	Social Non-Profit Organisation	Total
1982	-	6 570	6 570
1989	400	8 396	8 796
1990	1 865	14 080	15 945
1996	17 109	28 207	45 316
1999	19 754	28 417	48 171
2000	19 700	27 444	47 144

Since 1994 public foundations are included in the numbers of foundations, within the numbers of non-profit organisations are included public service organisations and public corporate bodies. Source: KSH 2000.

Based on table 2 we can say that while the numbers of foundations has experienced some growth, the growth in numbers of civil organisations has ceased and a process of decline has begun.

It is clear from the data that the number of social non-profit organisations (associations, united movements, public corporations and social help societies) is stagnating, or rather is not growing but neither is it stagnating significantly.

The data in table 3 shows the number of non-profit organisations and the number of people reaching each organisation.

Table 3: The membership numbers of associations and the client base per organisation 1862-2000.

Year	Membership of Organisations (in thousands)	Number of Adults Per Organisation
1862	114	326
1878	352	184
1932	2 998	209
1970	2 171	244
1982	2 305	351
1989	2 979	350
1993	5 322	295
1994	5 517	243
1995	5 523	239
1996	3 552	145
2000	3231	151

Source: KSH 1995:32 and 1996:40 and 2000:173

According to the 1995 release from the KSH (Population Donations and Volunteer Work) the behaviour of charities shows a close dependency on the characteristics of the social demographic.

Table 4 suggests that women donate more happily, but complete 3% less volunteer work than men. The active age range (30-60 years) in general live in families, are well qualified, have a high income and are citizens living in the capital or bigger provincial towns.

Table 4: Donators and Volunteer Workers as a Proportion of the Adult Population According to Gender

Gender	In Kind	In Money	Volunteer Workers
	Donators		
	As Percentage of Adult Population		
Men	31	42	31
Women	37	48	28
Together	34	45	29

Source: KSH 1993:18

Women are better givers, at the same time because of their traditional roles (childrearing, domestic work) they more often excel in the building of informal relationships. Men –also a function of their traditional roles- undertake more public roles, take part in more active civil organisations, in voluntary work on the board of trustees for example. At the same time it is traditional in Hungarian society to find more men on the board of trustees of organisations, while in the solution of concrete tasks (employees, general volunteers) the role of women is larger. The workforce in tasks achieved by non-profit organisations is 45% women, and in the case of Budapest organisations this number even passes 50%. (KSH 1999:214, table). As is clear from the data in table 5, the proportion of women among the membership of associations almost doubled between 1989 and 1992.

Table 5: The distribution of Association Members According to Gender, (%) 1932-1992

Year	Men	Women
1932	80,9	19,1
1970	76,3	23,7
1982	73,6	26,4
1989	72,1	27,9
1992	64,4	50,5

Source: KSH 1994:34

In Hungary women traditionally perform for example caring and attending activities, a larger proportion occupied in the areas of healthcare, education and social provision than men. This effect is also observable in the civil sector, the proportion of females occupied within the areas of healthcare (75.3%), politics (66.7%), social provision (65.4%) and education (55.3%) is greatest, but more than 50% are within the areas of representation (54.7%), research (54.6%) and culture (52%). According to table 6 the kinds of occupation represented by the lowest number of women are in the areas of sport, outdoor activities and civil defence

activities, tasks traditionally undertaken by men. In the first glance the high number of women taking part in politics is interesting, however this may be misleading if we consider that in political organisations the administrative tasks are in general undertaken by women, while the more senior political actors in general are not employed by the given organisation and thus do not appear in the figures.

Table 6: The Proportion of Females Occupied in Non-Profit Organisations According to Activity

Activity	Total Numbers Occupied	Proportion of Women
Culture	5 681	52,0
Religion	380	49,7
Sport	9 114	28,2
Outdoor, Hobby	5 702	27,6
Education	11 236	55,3
Research	2 117	54,6
Healthcare	4 551	75,3
Social Provision	9 948	65,4
Civil Defence, Fire fighting	415	6,2
Environmental	1 654	31,6
Local Development	9 151	22,7
Economic Development	8 195	39,4
Defence of Rights	539	47,6
Social Security Defence	181	30,7
Multiple donors, nonprofit associations	3 404	45,7
International Relations	512	47,3
Specialist, Economic Representation	8 078	54,7
Politics	115	66,7
Total	80 973	45,8

Source: KSH:1999:175

Table 7 shows the amount and value of work completed by volunteers between 1993 and 1999. It is not possible to say why the estimated 106.5 million volunteer work hours decreased to less than half that amount in the following year. In all probability the data here is not comparable. If we ignore this drastic decrease, it is indisputable that while until 1999 the numbers of volunteers continuously decreased, the time spent on volunteer work and the relative surplus value of production by volunteer activity grew.

Table 7: The Amount and Value of Work Completed by Volunteers 1993-1999

	Number of Volunteers	Number of Volunteer Hours	Value of the Work
1993	418 739	106,5 million hours	14 billion Ft
1995	506 142	39 million hours	n.a.
1996	400 206	20,3 million hours	n.a.
1997	381 221	19 million hours	n.a.
1998	379 393	n.a.	n.a.
1999	313 000	30 million hours	12 billion Ft
2000	400 000	35,5 million hours	18 billion Ft

Source: KSH 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

Analysing this phenomenon, from the earlier presented data we know that the growth in organisation numbers stopped, that we reached the end of the expansion period. The decrease in the numbers of volunteers was a distressing symptom, but the growth in output value and the time spent in volunteer work is reassuring. Euphoria undeniably decreased, at the time it is possible to speak of a more and more efficiently functioning, quality producing service. The organisations organise their work in a more and more thought out and conscious way, they collect donations, they turn attention into visible production; their size grows, they work more and more hours and the value of their work shows an increase.

Table 10: International Data Regarding Volunteer Work 2000

Country	In Formal Organisations	In Informal Organisations
As Percentage of the Population		
United Kingdom	48 % (1999)	78 % (1999)
Denmark	28 % (1993)	31 % (1995)
Holland	32 %	n.a.
Germany	34 % (above 14, 1999)	n.a.
Sweden	48 % (above 16, 1999)	52% (above 16, 1999)
Hungary	5 % (1995)	29 % (1995)

Source: Closing materials at the Volunteerism and the Role of the State Conference Utrecht, Holland Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk. 2000.

From table 10 it is immediately clear that the size and activity of volunteers in Hungary plays a small role compared to the other European countries featured in the study. (Unfortunately among the results of featured countries other E. European countries do not feature, except for Poland, in this case that data does not feature either, thus we cannot relate the conclusions of this research to the region). From the Polish data it also turns out (www.ngo.pl/base/stat/stateng.htm) that the majority of civil organisations –very similar to the Hungarian data- 47%-63% do not employ a paid workforce.

The advantage of volunteerism is that it promotes the integration of society, contributes against poverty, combats social disintegration and assists full employment. It also contributes towards the functioning of society from an economic point of view, in general making up between 8% and 14% of GDP in E. Europe.

Giving is Receiving: Selected Hungarian Research Papers in Conjunction with the International Year of Volunteers.

The International Year of Volunteering resulted in several important research studies on volunteering, a number of which were brought together by the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs in a collection of essays entitled **Giving is Receiving: Selected Hungarian Research Papers in Conjunction with the International Year of Volunteers.**

Included within this publication were the findings of the first government survey of volunteering in the social services. Conducted by the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs, and based on a questionnaire survey of over 4,000 community groups listed on the departments data-base (with completed returns from 800 groups), the research found amongst other things that:

- The 800 organisations involved over 100,000 volunteers;
- Volunteers were involved in a wide variety of activities, but mainly in the fields of administration and support rather than front-line service;
- Volunteers were more likely to come from higher educated groups in society;
- Two thirds of volunteers were in full-time paid employment;
- Sixty nine per cent of volunteers were women
- Fifty six per cent of volunteers were involved in some form of training.

V. Assessment of voluntary experiences in Hungary

Study by the Ministry for Youth and Sport

A **study by the Ministry for Youth and Sport** based on questionnaires mentions the topic of evaluation of voluntary experiences. The questionnaires were prepared by a team of experts and were available on the internet. The target groups were young volunteers and organisations employing young volunteers. The study was obtained from the answers of 28 organisations and 171 young people. Apart from the opinion of the interviewees the study presents data from other studies by the National Youth Research Institution.

The relevant question was whether voluntary activity has national recognition and what improvements and developments are to be expected in connection with volunteering.

From the answer to the question it is clear that there is no uniform, standardised assessment, evaluation or appreciation of voluntary activity at national level.

Voluntary activity of youth is supported by the tendering system on collective level, while on the level on the individual volunteering is facilitated by giving awards and honours.

The Social and Family Affairs Ministry and the Ministry of Education have examples of giving awards for voluntary activity though this is not as habitual pursuit.

Voluntary work on social issue is recognized with the certificate called „volunteer of the year” from 2001.

The Ministry of Sports and Youth has officially five different honours, the only award that can be given for voluntary activity is the Ministerial Certificate for „exceptional help in validating the interests of youth and children, improving the life situation of youth and children, education youth for healthy lifestyle”.

90% of the organisations partaking in the survey are on the opinion that voluntary activity in Hungary doesn't have appropriate recognition.

Voluntary activity is not recognised appropriately even by civil organisations sates one fifth of the answers. Interviewees think that voluntary activity in general is less recognised as youth voluntary work. However it is almost impossible to differentiate general voluntary work from voluntary activity accomplished by youth.

According to this study appreciation of voluntary work is to be realised at the most in an informal way. Structured systems of evaluation and appreciation have not yet been developed even for organised voluntary work. Acknowledgement of volunteering is negligible and sometimes those involved in voluntary activities are not clearly aware of it's meaning.

Those volunteering in different religious dominations are, at most, rewarded by acknowledging their usefully role to the community and they are accepted as an important member of the group.

In the education system there exist no generally applied appreciation concept to facilitate the voluntary activity of students organised by schools. Appreciation varies by schools, teachers and the nature of the activity. The rewording given to students will influence neither the result of the maturity test, nor that of the university entrance exam.

According to the study only some multinational companies concenter any voluntary or community work as relevant and as a potential source of knowledge (gained during non – formal learning) for job applicants to employ. For this reason, the measure of this kind of acknowledgement is still not enough to encourage voluntary activity to a higher extent.

Organisations coordinating voluntary activities, even the most well known ones – such as WWF, Hungarian Red Cross, have no elaborated strategy to assess, evaluate and credit volunteers. There is no common practice to use cards for acknowledgement, certificates and letters of gratitude.

IYV Global Evaluation, Report

Prepared by the Institute for Volunteering Research In association with the Development Resource Centre, South Africa, 2002

The evaluation of the International Year of Volunteers 2001 (IYV) in Hungary is one of seven country case studies, which have been carried out by the Institute for Volunteering Research and the Development Resource Centre as part of their global evaluation of IYV for the United Nations. Separate reports have been prepared on the other six countries: Brazil, Canada, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda.

The evaluation in Hungary was carried out during a study visit to Budapest in March 2002 by means of a series of face-to-face interviews with a range of stakeholders involved in the International Year drawn from government, the media, business and the non-profit sector. This information was supplemented by written documentary evidence, including a review of activities carried out during the Year prepared by the National Committee.

The aims of the evaluation were to: assess the achievements and impacts of the Year according to its four aims of promotion, recognition, facilitation and networking; identify the challenges faced during the Year; make recommendations; and provide an input to meet reporting requirements of the UN Secretary General.

All interviews were conducted using a series of semi-structured interview schedules which had been drawn up by the Institute in consultation with UNV and the evaluation steering group for use in each of the seven countries, although these were amended to take account of the specifics of the Hungarian experience. In total, interviews were held with 17 people

One of the key goal of IYV was recognition. The evaluation pointed to considerable success with 86% of responding countries claiming they were successful in raising recognition for volunteering during the Year. Indicators of success included volunteer awards and recognition events; political statements of support for volunteering; and research on volunteering.

Award ceremonies were a key mechanism for raising public awareness during IYV. Such awards were hosted at national, regional and local levels.

67% of respondents to the international organisation survey used IYV as an opportunity to introduce new forms of recognition, mainly in the form of awards

The evaluation, which has spanned 14 months from March 2001 to May 2002, has taken the form of five separate but inter-linked elements:

- Developing an evaluation framework;
- A baseline survey of all participating National Committees to establish the position of volunteering in each country prior to the Year;
- A follow-up survey of committees to report on the activities and achievements of the Year;
- seven country case-studies to provide detailed pictures of the IYV experience in different global settings;
- An organisational survey to assess the impact of the Year on the activities of large international volunteer-involving agencies and NGOs.

Indicators of success at increasing recognition include: volunteer awards and recognition events; statements of support for volunteering; research into volunteering and its impacts; and an increase in the number of people volunteering.

One key mechanism favoured during the Year for raising public awareness was the awards ceremony. A host of new Volunteer Awards and ceremonies were introduced during IYV; while many existing Award schemes were given a new spin for the Year. Some were undertaken as one off events, but many countries noted that the Awards initiated during IYV would continue after the Year. As one respondent said: ‘The spirit of volunteerism awards will continue for years’. Such awards were hosted at national, regional and local levels by individual organisations, consortiums and umbrella bodies that spanned all sectors – public, private and voluntary.

Awards were also issued during the Year by individual organisations. 67% of respondents to the international organisation survey used IYV as an opportunity to introduce new forms of recognition, the majority in the form of awards. For example, one organisation issued a diploma with the IYV logo to volunteers around the world; while another hosted additional award ceremonies to honour young volunteers who served their communities. Other forms of recognition adopted by individual organisations during the Year included, distributing lapel pins, bookmarks or mugs to volunteers, and including volunteer stories in in-house magazines, journals and annual reviews. Additionally, there was a move by a number of organisations to develop a volunteer visa that would recognise the legal status of volunteering; as part of the activities during the Year 100,000 fake volunteer visas were published and distributed to embassies and governments around the world.

VI. Organisations interested in AVE project

This part of the study aims at uncovering and examining the existing tools, forms, methods, and the outcomes of volunteers' work assessment in Hungary.

Most of the organisations I have visited have some kind of assessment of the experiences of volunteers involved with the organisation, such as certificates, written report if asked but non of them have a systematic, structured way of identifying, evaluating and recognising skills and knowledge gained through voluntary work. However they were aware that such a method, tool of assessing voluntary work experiences would be not only useful but necessary and were interested in implementing and applying such a tool as well as to developed their services offered to volunteers as well as to improve the situation of voluntarism in out country.

The Hospital Volunteer Helping Service,

An example of a hospital volunteering service is the Hospital Volunteer Helping Service. Set up in 1998, with financial support from the Open Society Institute, the Service involves 120-150 active volunteers and approximately 100 not active helpers. It provides a range of support services to medical staff across five hospitals. It was one of the first organisations in Hungary to involve volunteers in hospitals, although there was a well-established tradition of volunteers in hospices upon which to build. The Service prides itself on being almost totally volunteer-run, with only 2 paid staff member. One of their main aim is promoting and raising awareness more generally of the contribution volunteers can make in the health service in Hungary.

They offer various training programmes – based on a effective and well adoptable method worked out by them on the strengths of their experiences –for their volunteers as well as for organisations that would like to involve volunteers into their work but have not enough experience to run such a program, to assess their theoretical and practical skills and knowledge. Their system includes volunteer coordination, lifespan of volunteers, recognition and rewarding voluntary work. They have also monitor the motivations of volunteers and

prepare statistical statements about them based on their observations. The assessment of skills and experiences is due after the first three months, during the training and it is ongoing. Twice a year there is a personal deep interview with the volunteer coordinator on which the assessment takes place. The recognition of the volunteer comes from the side of the volunteer coordinator and the Hospital. The means can be giving presents, using his/her idée, asking his/her opinion, giving more responsible job, new department in the hospital, personal care, sending on trainings and courses.

Motiváció - Foundation for Helping Disabled People

All of the services of the foundation are considered a model, the first of its kind in Hungary. Their own elaborated methodology, their administrative and documentation system, and their evaluation methods needed for financial support also serve as a model for others.

The Foundation exercises its activities in the territory of Budapest and its surroundings.

Their service has been operating for 8 years.

For the present, they offer the following services: the Employment Agency and Advisory Office, its aim is to advise and help disabled people in solving their employment, life style and social integration problems and to offer labour market services in Budapest to disabled people and to those with changed working ability.

The Personal Assistance Service contacts a disabled person on the advice of family doctors, family nurses, disabled people's helping organizations or family members, or through one's own request and provides nursing, care taking and personal assistance services - even 8 hours a day, 5 times a week, if required.

With the Transport Service they help disabled people in getting to workplace, school or medical treatments.

"FFRISS" Youth Service: on the basis of our computer databank, we give information on matters regarding young people, including accessible education, courses, social and free-time activities, sports facilities, tourism, Budapest programs, etc. They give advice to disabled young people on how they can find equal possibilities with the non disabled.

They maintain a computer databank for blind people with a list of literary works and school manuals accessible for them in various forms (on computer, on cassettes or in Braille) in libraries, home collections or via the Internet.

Barrier-free Environment Project they have surveyed 543 buildings in the capital on the basis of accessibility criteria. Several public institutions, higher education institutions and ministries have been made accessible on the basis of their proposals.

Through creating and coordinating a national network of Independent Living Centres, we have established close contact with 52 organizations. The aim of this project is to realize the exchange of information among organizations through e-mail and through a newsletter. The participating organizations can get information on each other's activities and exchange their experiences.

They very much need the assistance of volunteers and would like to promote voluntary activity for disabled people as well. Though they in connection with 100-120 volunteers per year the foundation has no elaborated methodology for them. The executive director is very interested in developing the issue of recognition and assessment of volunteering and voiced her interest in cooperation with AVE project.

The Hungarian Red Cross

The Hungarian Red Cross, which with 20 County districts and some 48,000 volunteers (and almost 300,000 members) is one of the largest voluntary agencies in the country. It has a long tradition of working with volunteers.

The society runs soup kitchens, shelters for women and children who are the victims of domestic violence, as well as for homeless families and individuals. Rehabilitation programmes have been initiated for the inhabitants of such shelters. Summer holidays are organized for chronically sick children. Children are received for summer holidays from disaster-affected areas. Programmes for the elderly include hospital visits, health services, excursions, clubs and holidays. Social aid is provided to more than 500,000 beneficiaries a year in addition to nearly 4,000 refugees and asylum seekers. The society has been actively involved in the recruitment of voluntary non-remunerated blood donors.

Since 1999, a training course is held for volunteers engaged in social welfare activities both inside and outside the Red Cross. Training is also provided for trainers in social welfare and for the staff of those social welfare institutions, foundations, etc. that involve volunteers. Traditionally, training is provided in home care and baby care. Leadership training is carried out for some 1,000 young people all over the country each year.

The HRC has its own system for recognition of voluntary work – giving out different certificates and honours in a staged structure for various activities.

As a new initiative the Red Cross youth section (RCY) introduced the so-called voluntary pass. The first step in the new strategy was to create a register of all volunteers in the Society, which can be used to track trends in volunteering in the future. The pass is valid for one year and it registers all the activities in which the young volunteer was involved.

The HRC started a popular program to involve vulnerable people and marginalized communities. Participatory Community Development program gives the opportunity for field workers and people at grass roots level to decide how to solve their problems. The Red Cross is contributing to empowering communities to exercise the basic right to be involved in decisions directly affecting their lives.

The Program is currently being implemented in six countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia & Montenegro and Kosovo) in the CE Region.

Project implementation should be participatory. It can include volunteer work of community members as well as volunteer management of the process. The role of the Red Cross branch should be to coordinate and support. Phasing out from the community means that the community is able to continue their development process themselves.

The program was successfully implemented in twenty communities, based on needs of vulnerable people in the community such as: community centre for vulnerable people in the community; vocational training courses for unemployed adults; renovating schools to give better conditions for children; hygiene programmes, including increasing the number of garbage containers in the community and building outdoor toilets; establishing a self help club and centre for disabled people; and vaccination of community members.

HRC is interested in pursuing the issue of evaluation and assessment of voluntary experiences in order to enable volunteers to use the acquired skills in other areas of life.

Hungarian Malteser Charity Service

The Hungarian Malteser Charity Service provides caritas services, care for sick people, support for needy with a wide variety of offers. The organisation works closely together with 3000 volunteers and approximately 2000 people help them ad hock. The organisation is run almost only on voluntary based work, paid positions are only for those who carry responsibility.

To recognise the voluntary work the Service gives honour in the frame of a holy service ceremony after one-year help. This means the volunteer has become member of the Hungarian Malteser Charity Service.

The volunteer coordinator deals with the improvement of a framework for volunteers. The Service has been seeking to improve the volunteers' situation within the organisation and the volunteer coordinator expressed her interest in the AVE-project.

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