

Final Report

Study on Perception of Volunteering among Youth and Volunteer Recruitment, Retention and Recognition of Civil Society Organizations in Gyumri, Armenia

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Acronyms

CSO	Civil society organization
IT	Information technology
NGO	Non-governmental organization
YIC	Youth Initiative Centre NGO
YP	Youth Policy
RA	Republic of Armenia
TV	Television

1. Introduction

From small volunteer led community groups to big charities volunteers make a difference in a whole range of organizations. Especially civil society organizations (CSOs) in the youth field rely on volunteers to undertake their work. Involving them helps them to reach their beneficiaries and to engage a more diverse range of knowledge, experience and skills. They build relationships within the community in which CSOs work and make a big contribution to supporting others in the community. By providing volunteering opportunities CSOs provide space for social inclusion, skills development and routes to professional engagement. Some CSOs also recruit their staff members from volunteers to adapt and to stay relevant to what beneficiaries and community needs.

However CSOs do have to invest in supporting volunteers to keep them motivated, involved and active. Having a clear strategy for recruitment, retention and recognition of volunteers plays a key factor in this field. From the point of view of CSOs it is therefore of special interest to understand what makes young people volunteer and what keeps them off from volunteering in order to establish/optimize volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition strategies.

For many years the legal situation in the Republic of Armenia (RA) didn't oblige and support CSOs in establishing standards for volunteering in their organizations at all. The „law of of the Republic of Armenia on non-governmental/public organizations“ adopted on the 6 December 2016 represented a major progress in comparison to the old law from 2001 by providing clearer provisions on volunteers and voluntary work. This includes a description of voluntary work, how it should be maintained and rights and responsibilities both parties, organization and volunteers have towards each other, but still lacks the necessary level of detail of a separate law on voluntary work.

Since 2009 some efforts have been undertaken to draw up this law under the direction of a working group formed by the RA, but the document - mostly taking inspiration to a large extent from Polish and Czech laws on voluntary work - still remains a draft with its last amendment in May 2017, because a lot of people see risks in adopting it due to its strict regulations (abuse of power, hidden labour etc.). As a consequence lots of of uncertainty and ambiguity exist among civil society organizations in the RA.

2. Motivation and initiation

For the Youth Initiative Centre (YIC) in Gyumri volunteering always has been a flagship theme by creating volunteer opportunities both locally and internationally as a host and sending organization and activities towards capacity building for other organizations working with volunteers. With its legislation for volunteering, national networks, contacts, experience and methodologies of doing voluntary work YIC forsees volunteering as one of its strategic goals for the coming 4 years (2018-2022) and needs a certain knowledge base to continue to work in this direction productively. As the amount of data regarding youth's perception on volunteering and recruitment, retention and recognition of CSOs available for the target region Gyumri is not existent, very limited or to a large extent not specific enough YIC had the plan to carry out this research for a long time and decided

to realize it when Dominik Rohde with his experience in volunteering offered to coordinate the project.

Last but not least we want to particularly emphasize that the realization of this research - in line with the topic - was based entirely on voluntary work of all involved persons (project coordinator, sociologist, translators, survey volunteers, designers).

3. Objectives of the research

In the framework of this research the following objectives can be identified:

3.1. Perception of volunteering among youth

The first part of this research aims to provide more detailed knowledge about the motivation, reasons, needs and obstacles for volunteering from the perspective of the youth (16-30 years old) in Gyumri, Armenia. It also intends to gain information about the question to what extent volunteering is depended on sociodemographic factors and educational background.

3.2. Volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition of CSOs

The other main objective of this research is to gain a quantitative and qualitative overview over existing volunteer recruitment and management within CSOs in Gyumri to investigate to what degree it corresponds to the needs of youth. Another purpose is to make CSOs aware of the benefits and importance of an established recruitment and management to attract new volunteers and for retaining existing ones. CSOs should be motivated and encouraged to question and strengthen related procedures respectively establish a volunteer policy in their organization in case it doesn't exist.

On a long-term basis it is furthermore intended to strengthen the cooperation between the CSOs in Gyumri in the field of recruitment, retention and recognition of volunteers.

4. Research methodology

With regard to the objectives and different target groups the conduct of the research has been divided into two parts, each consisting of a cross sectional study, meaning that they analyzed the situation at a specific time (March 2017). In order to avoid methodological mistakes such as bias and to ensure correctness of all steps a sociologist was closely involved.

4.1. Volunteering survey

The survey about motivation, reasons, needs and obstacles of volunteering is based on a questionnaire with closed, multiple choice questions and numerical/verbal rating scales. Free response questions allowing the responder bigger flexibility were avoided since they are difficult to record and score, requiring extensive coding. Closed questions in contrast can be coded and scored much easier although they diminish expressivity and spontaneity as well. The conduct of the survey has been realized with the help of volunteers from YIC within one week.

4.2. Face-to-face interviews

The second part of the conduction of the research consisted of face-to-face interviews with 13 local CSOs based on a prepared questionnaire which were serving as guideline for the oral questioning and recording answers. Elements of in-depth interviews like open questions and interview recording have been applied to capture a bigger amount of qualitative data.

The data of both parts has been collected, analyzed and presented during a presentation at YIC. This final report sums up the results of the research.

5. Overview over recruitment, retention and recognition strategies

In order to support the understanding of the questions and results of the volunteer survey and the face-to-face interviews with the CSOs this chapter will give an overview over recruitment, retention and recognition strategies in social organizations. The relevant topics will be addressed in the following order:

- Volunteering policy
- Recruitment of volunteers
- Retention of volunteers
- Recognition of volunteers

5.1 Volunteering policy

The volunteering policy is a foundation and framework for a volunteer program and should exist in every organization involving volunteers. It defines the role of volunteers within the organization and lays out how volunteers can expect to be treated.

Topics covered in an extensive volunteer policy should be:

- Reasons/aims/objectives of volunteer involvement
- The recruitment process for volunteers
- Induction and training
- Supervision and support
- Expense management
- Problem solving and complaint procedures
- Health and safety
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Responsible staff members

To ensure the volunteer policy remains current it has to be reviewed on a regular basis and whenever external impulses (changes in law etc.) require to. Furthermore importance should be given to the communication of the policy both to volunteers and to staff as they work and interact with volunteers in the organization.

It is evident that the size of the volunteering policy might differ according to the size and nature of the organization itself. Small organizations might have a short policy that mostly refers to other documents, bigger ones should have a policy that lays out relevant aspects in detail and with specific regard to volunteers.

Although not directly subject to the research risk assessment and insurance of volunteers shouldn't be neglected. They may face risks of personal injury, loss of property or damage to foreign property and the organizations may be liable for such incidents.

In general having a written volunteering policy has the following advantages:

- Shows that care and thought have gone into the volunteer program.
- Ensures consistent, equal and fair treatment of volunteers.
- Prevents arbitrary in decisions taken regarding volunteers.
- Ensures that paid staff and management understand why and in which role volunteers are involved in the organization.
- Gives volunteers security in that they know how they can expect to be treated and shows them ways out in case of miss-treatment.

5.2 Recruitment of volunteers

Visibility and recruitment channels

Civil society organizations willing to involve volunteers can't passively wait for people to come to their organization without putting effort in reaching out for their target groups. They need to have public relations and create visibility to promote their activities both to beneficiaries and potential volunteers and increase public trust with a positive reputation. Many organizations do great social work but sell themselves short when it comes to getting their message across although a lot of possibilities to recruit volunteers exist. Let's introduce some of them:

Social media

Building visibility over social media plays a key role in times of omnipresent platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram especially due to their high penetration among youth. In comparison to other channels it is easier to use and requires only minimal resource management. Retrieval of information about the organization and its activities become independent of time and make interaction with target audiences much simpler. Nonetheless usage of social media on a professional level in order to increase visibility and share the mission with a large audience requires profound training.

Website

Setting up an organization's website is a form of creating online visibility achieved by providing relevant information on the homepage of the organization. It is of special relevance to keep the website updated and reflect the current activities otherwise potential volunteers might get the impression that the organization isn't vivid and responds to requests slowly.

Word-of-mouth

Word of mouth is the passing of information from person to person by oral communication. While most of the CSOs trust on self-spreading, others may try to influence it by actively undertaking word-to-mouth marketing strategies, though this is very difficult to control.

Cooperations with educational institutions

As some organizations' fields of work is quite specific to certain professions (e.g. teachers, sociologists) they try to get in contact with their target groups via cooperations with educational institutions like schools or universities. A CSO working exclusively with becoming psychologist volunteers is likely to be more successful in recruiting volunteers by organizing informational events at the psychology department of a university than advertising over TV or radio.

Conventional advertising

Conventional advertising is advertisement over media channels that exist already for tens or even hundreds of years. This includes e.g. TV, radio, billboards, magazines and newspapers. For social organizations working with young people these may lose importance due to youth's decreasing usage in favor of more modern media.

Informational events

Informational events offer a great opportunity to get know the organization, its activities and members directly. Potential volunteers don't need to search for relevant information on extensive web pages or FAQ sections, their questions directly get answered in a face-to-face conversation. Some organizations organize their own informational events while others (also) prefer to participate in joint events to benefit from bigger publicity.

Personal contact

Personal contact still remains an important recruiting channel for CSO as people working in the social field often know each other. Asking friends or partner organizations is a common way of recruiting new volunteers.

Recruitment process

Organizations should be aware that recruiting volunteers is different than recruitment of staff members and has to be treated as a separate process within the organization. The main objective of volunteer recruitment is to match the volunteer's skills and interests with the requirements of a role. The whole process in general should be rather informal and not taking too long as volunteers may lose interest in volunteering due to a too detailed and intimidating process. The approach might differ from organization to organization according to the field of activity and size, so we try to present the most common elements of a recruitment process.

Volunteer role description

The volunteer role description is a useful tool to help organizations in their recruitment efforts. It is a written outline/description of a volunteer role and lists related important information. The document includes the intended outcome of the work and offers a list of tasks so the volunteer can compare these with their expectations and skills. As the objective of recruitment is to make a match between volunteer's skills and interests and the requirements of a role descriptions they should be formulated flexible so that aspects of the role are negotiable with regard to the volunteer's needs and interests. After involvement of a volunteer the document also provides a good basis for management and measuring activity levels/performance.

Typical information included in a role description is:

- Volunteer role title
- Purpose of the position (Affect of volunteer's work on project's / beneficiaries' outcome)
- Work location (Home work or in the organization, public transportation info near the site)
- Responsibilities and duties
- Qualifications (Skills, abilities, education, experience, personal characteristics)
- Commitment (Length of service, time per week/day)
- Training (general and position specific)

Ways of distributing the open volunteer position are numerous and might be the organization's website, social media, personal contact, mouth-to-mouth, email newsletter etc.

First contact with volunteers

When volunteers are getting in contact with the organization (via phone call, email, directly etc.) the most important thing is to provide a quick response because volunteers offering their valuable time and skills expect the organization to value and recognize these. The type of response may include further information about the organization, the volunteer role and an invitation for a face-to-face meeting with - if available - the volunteer coordinator or another responsible person.

Face-to-face meetings

A face-to-face meeting with the potential volunteer is the most common way of getting to know the candidate and checking her/his suitability for a role because attributes like enthusiasm, general attitude, maturity and stability can't or can only be partially figured out in a written form. The interview also gives both parties an excellent opportunity to get to know each other on the same level.

Questions asked by the organization should include why the volunteer applies for the role, what she/he wants to achieve by doing the service, what kind of skills, experiences and hobbies she/he has relevant to the role. On the other hand the interview should give the volunteer an opportunity to ask questions about the volunteer role, the organization itself and to express her/his needs. It should be also taken into consideration that the role might be altered to meet the interests and/or needs of the volunteer. Beyond that practical issues like volunteering hours and expenses are normally part of the meeting.

At the end of the interview the organization should make clear what the following steps are and when the decision - if not taken instantly - will be taken. If the process will take longer the organization should keep the volunteer updated frequently to avoid resignation, though lengthy decision-making processes should be avoided as far as possible.

Volunteer information form

In addition to face-to-face meetings an information form is a good way of matching volunteers with roles. It provides a basis to evaluate the volunteer's profile based on questions on role relevant issues.

Special attention should be paid to the readability, length and complexity of the used language of the form because demotivating potential volunteers with a formal document consisting of innumerable abstruse questions from the very beginning is undesirable.

Collected information should only include relevant personal data to make sure it is clear whom to contact in special need or emergency cases. It is recommended to include an agreement/declaration that the information stated by the volunteer in the form is correct to make sure they can be asked to leave the organization in case of false statements.

Organizations not looking for specific roles may create a more extensive form to capture ideas and suggestions for possible projects the candidate could be creating or could be involved in.

Making the volunteer fill in the form just before or during a face-to-face meeting has the advantage of being able to explain the reasons for requesting the information and helping if the candidate is not able to complete the form due to problems like lack of clarity or further queries. In general it is also considered to be a less official and more friendly way.

References

Although not common in Armenia references from the volunteer should be taken up by the organization, especially in cases the person will work with vulnerable beneficiaries like children or elderly people. These could be preferably references from other civil society organizations involving volunteers or - if not available - from previous work places, family or schools. Whilst considered exaggerative according to the organization's field of activity in rare cases a check of the criminal record at the responsible authority should be done. In this case the organization has to ask for permission in a written document with volunteer's sign, most suitably in the volunteer information form.

Decision taking

In case the volunteer coordinator/responsible staff member has doubts about the suitability of the volunteer e.g. due to lack of specific skills needed for a role concerns should be discussed with a third party within the organization to reduce subjectivity and to make sure the responsible person is fair in his concerns by gaining a second view.

According to the degree of concerns this process may result in involving the volunteer in special initial training activities to eliminate the lacks regardless of independently provided planned initial training for the role and all new volunteers. It is also recommended and reasonable to arrange a closely supervised trial period in a situation like this.

In the case of a negative decision or clear cases of unsuitability from the beginning like lack of common denominators regarding the organization's philosophy the candidate should be contacted either by having a face-to-face meeting, a telephone call or writing a letter or mail to let him/her know the decision. A polite explanation that a suitable match for both sides couldn't have been made should be provided and her/his interest nonetheless still be appreciated. Furthermore this also gives a good opportunity to suggest the candidate to explore and take part in other opportunities of the organization.

5.3 Retention of volunteers

It is evident that all volunteers need support and supervision but form and degree should vary according to volunteers' skills, experience, disabilities, service length and the project/event itself.

A volunteer helping in a single event needs different support than long-term volunteers. For that reason support must be appropriate to the individual volunteer and his/her role. There are several components of supporting and managing volunteers.

Providing facilities and volunteer expenses

The fact that volunteers are - per definition unpaid - doesn't mean that there are no financial implications for their involvement or in other words being unsalaried in a CSO doesn't make them free. In the same way paid staff members do they also require space and equipment. A volunteer without working space being totally dependent on staff members' good will likely get demotivated. Providing needed facilities before the volunteers start to complain about it is essential.

Furthermore organizations that do not reimburse out-of-pocket expenses are missing out on the skills and enthusiasm of young people who would like to volunteer, but can't due to lack of financial means. Covering out-of-the pocket expenses like transportation is recommended practice.

Orientation / Induction

Orientation or induction is the process of making the volunteer feel comfortable and to accelerate the process of making him/her able to contribute. Getting the induction process right helps the organization retain its volunteers. Typical parts of a volunteer induction will include:

- Introduction to other volunteers and staff members
- Explaining contact persons in case of questions and problems
- Showing the organization's building, working place and equipment
- Informing about working hours and break times
- Organization's policy for private use of equipment (e.g. telephone, internet usage)
- Making the volunteer understand their volunteer role
- Explaining the organizations working philosophy, history and volunteer policy
- Explaining how to claim expenses

CSOs should avoid to flood new volunteers with policies and procedures and make them read related documents since it is demotivating and contra-productive. Most of this information is better left to a later time after the volunteer has gone through day-to-day practicalities and can ideally be discussed in the presence of the supervisor/volunteer coordinator to respond to arising questions.

Training

Volunteers are charged with tasks that take knowledge and understanding to be done properly. Only a small number of volunteers will come with all required skills to be able to start instantly, but many times people willing to help the organization but lacking relevant skills will show up. While

enthusiasm is great, it needs to be gathered and focused to meet the organization's objectives. In most cases civil society organizations therefore need to provide some kind of training.

Volunteer's educational background may vary from highly qualified graduates to people who left school with no formal qualifications. Some volunteer's motivation could be to build experience to get into paid work. Others may want to volunteer in roles that are different from their professional job to get distraction from their every-day work. The organizations therefore have to be aware that there is no typical 'volunteer' and need to understand the volunteer's needs to provide the right trainings.

When planning training activities a lot of different aspects have to be taken into account. The results of these considerations should give answers to the following questions:

- Who should be trained? (Participant)
- What should be trained? (Content)
- How should training be provided? (Training method)
- Who should give training? (Trainee)
- How often and how long should training be provided? (Frequency and duration)
- Where should the trainings take place and what is needed? (Facilities)
- How much money is needed? (Budget)

Typical training methods that exist are:

- Classroom / instructor-led trainings
- Interactive trainings (Group discussions, brainstorming)
- Hands-on trainings (Supervised, e.g. buddy-system, volunteer shadowing)
- Computer-based trainings
- Online / E-Learning

According to recurrence and frequency a lot of organizations also distinguish between initial and ongoing trainings although the boundaries between both are sometimes fluid. Initial trainings are trainings provided to prepare the volunteer to fulfill its role and to get to know the organization. This might be a one-time session with the supervisor or a training taking place every day in the first two weeks of the service. Planned or unplanned ongoing trainings on the other hand are based on the idea of continuous learning. They offer the volunteers to improve or to gain new skills that aren't necessary related to their work in the organization.

On the whole providing training to volunteers has several benefits:

- Helps new volunteers get to know the people, the program, and the work quickly.
- Makes a statement towards the organization's professionalism and the importance of its work
- Establishes of a minimum competency level among the volunteers
- Teaches volunteers skills that may be helpful in another place or get them a paying job.

Impact and performance assessment

No one wants volunteers to offer their time uselessly. Organizations should know what impact volunteer work in their organization causes and it is also good to make the volunteers to know that they and their work is making a difference (volunteer recognition).

The common way to do this is periodically assessing how well volunteers are performing assigned work, both to applaud valuable effort and to improve or correct problems. The organization should make the volunteers know that this process is not to control them, but to benefit all in the end. Any constructive feedback will help them to get better and to contribute more productively. While on the other side lack of assessment allows volunteers to waste their time.

There are several methods to realize volunteer assessment, but having a volunteer role description is the starting point to determine if a volunteer is successful or not. With the help of this document it is possible to find out what has been accomplished and whether there have been differences from the original role description. Some organizations also establish special assessment tools like learning badges to directly connect supervision with recognition by celebrating volunteer accomplishments.

Organizations must be aware that individual and group assessments may bring unexpected issues and unpleasant findings to light. For that reasons the decisive point is how they react to it. Possible actions taken - among lots of others - might be revision of the role description, changes in the project implementation, additional trainings (both for volunteers and staff members), providing additional facilities or making the volunteer take a break and work temporarily on a special project.

An organization should definitely include the volunteers in the process of searching for solutions because it is a great opportunity to learn about itself from the volunteer's perspective as well. If no actions are taken the organization not only loses on their beneficiaries due to weak impact, they also send a message to volunteers and staff members that volunteer's work is not valued.

Getting feedback from volunteers

Getting feedback from volunteers will improve the volunteer management and other aspects of the organization. Apart from the one received during the performance assessments additional methods particularly focusing on getting feedback like questionnaires, interviews and focus groups can be established in the organization. Modern ways like online surveys or discussion groups on social media are also a considerable methods of realization.

Furthermore collecting information anonymously will encourage the volunteers to respond honestly and in case they are interviewed about their experiences of being managed, it could be wise to conduct this part not with the person being responsible for the organization's volunteers.

Collecting feedback is a process that can be scheduled on a recurring basis to use the outputs for the organization's planning and including the views of volunteers leaving the organization is also worthwhile.

Mentorship

A mentor acts as a one-on-one guide having regular meetings with the volunteer. As someone who should care about the volunteer they also often become a trusted friend. The role of the mentor may not be misunderstood as a therapist or parent-like reference person. Mentors support the volunteer in identifying the volunteer's goals and targets, build confidence and empower the volunteer to make his/her own decisions. Mentoring has been shown to improve youth's self-esteem, behavior, and performance. For foreign volunteers the mentor plays a key role in the volunteer's adaption process to her/his new environment.

In the best case the mentor is a person not directly involved in the volunteer's organization but still familiar with the work of civil society organizations, or in other words: assigning a staff member in the volunteer's organization is suboptimal because it has the disadvantage of possible bias in case of significant problems with the organization due to the staff member's professional engagement in it. Volunteers should have the possibility to share their problems to an unrelated party that can act as an intermediary between the organization and the volunteer.

5.4 Recognition of volunteers

Recognizing volunteers for their contributions is a way of demonstrating appreciation. An organization should care about whether volunteers enjoy their service and feel their efforts are appreciated because it keeps them motivated and happy. This is in the organization's interest for the following reasons:

- Motivated volunteers are more likely to come back to volunteer again and less likely to leave the organization (Retention)
- Happy volunteers might recommend the organization to others who maybe will start to join. (Recruitment)
- The organization wins them for still supporting the cause even if they don't continue after finishing their service.
- Volunteers are a kind of ambassadors of the organization during events and projects, so their motivation level will directly impact the way in they represent the organization or its mission.

Thus making recognition part of the organization's culture and developing an on-going process with recognition strategies for volunteers will have an impact on the organization's success.

Formal vs. informal recognition

Recognition strategies can be divided into two subgroups, namely: formal and informal recognition: Organizations can decide whether they want to focus more on informal or formal recognition or a combination of both.

Formal recognition consists of planned actions, usually happening on a repeating schedule (e.g. annually) and leaves only little room for spontaneity. These can be events honoring volunteers once a year or at the end of a project/program. Because formal recognition strategies are planned they are measurable.

On the other hand informal recognition expresses gratitude to other people based on smaller, everyday gestures. Those actions are usually initiated by supervisors and more personal and spontaneous. Examples for informal recognition might be visiting a volunteer in the hospital in case of illness, wishing get well cards and leaving motivating notes or sweets at the working place. Measuring informal recognition is - by its very nature - not or only possible to a limited extent.

Key elements of volunteer recognition

In order to create successful and efficient recognition strategies some key principles should be taken into account. These are the following ones:

Priority

Volunteer recognition should be a fundamental part of the organizations volunteer policy in order to retain current and attract new volunteers. Assigning someone in the organization to be responsible for recognition is a good step to express priority and seriousness.

Focus

Emphasizing contribution by saying „You did a great work“ is much better than saying „This is great work“. So focus should be put on the person, not the work.

Regularity

Recognition should happen on a regular and frequent basis. Formal events e.g. could be hold on a year-round basis, but informal recognition methods like orally appreciation of volunteers much more frequently.

Variety

A good mix of spontaneous treats and formal events is crucial. Civil society organizations should find a balance between formal and informal recognition and vary its methods. A volunteer won't be surprised if he gets the same tea cup everybody else in the office has.

Appropriateness

Service and recognition method must be in reasonable proportion. A volunteer leaving the organization after several years of service should be recognized differently than a one-time volunteer helping in the realization of a single event.

Consistency

Organizations should make sure that the standards of recognition that they have established can be consistently maintained because former recognition sets up expectations for future volunteers.

Timeliness

Organizations should try to arrange recognition timely to achievements. Nothing is more futile than recognizing volunteers months or years after they have left the organization and already made further steps in their lives.

Customization

Recognizing on an individual level according to volunteers' interests is important to make them feel special and personally addressed. This requires sincere efforts by the organization in getting to know its volunteers individually.

6. Perception of volunteering survey among youth

As mentioned in the introduction and outlined in the objectives of chapter 3 of this research youth's perception on volunteering is an important factor for CSOs to develop and apply successful recruitment, retention and recognition strategies. Thus the following research questions were set to be identified:

- What kind of sociodemographic backgrounds do volunteers have?
- Which sociodemographic backgrounds show higher/lower affinity towards voluntary work?
- What is the attitude towards volunteering and civil society organizations?
- What are the reasons/motivations making people volunteer? What hinders them from volunteering?

6.1. Details of the research methodology

To identify the questions/problems a quantitative in-person survey based on a questionnaire with 13 question/question blocks has been carried out among young people in Gyumri. Regarding the objectives some of the questions were only asked to young people who volunteered or are volunteering right now and some of them only to youth who didn't volunteer so far. The conduct of the survey has been realized with the help of 8 volunteers from YIC.

Description of the quantitative research sample among Gyumri youth

In the framework of the research a multistage quota sample was applied. The research sample has been calculated in the following steps:

Step I	Calculation of sample size
Step II	Calculation of quotas
Step III	Selection of locations

Step I - Sample size

The sample size has been calculated with regard to the number of 16-30 year old young people in Gyumri who are the subject of this research. Population size has been taken from the 2011 population census as no newer data was available at the time of conduct, so it is assumed that population size has changed only negligibly since 2011, thus: $N = 29.023$. Choosing a conventional confident interval of $\gamma = 95\%$ with delta $\Delta = \pm 5$ gives a required sample size of $n = 380$.

Step II - Calculation of quotas

With regard to the given age distribution in the 2011 populations census report the following quotas have been set:

1. Gender	Male	Female	
2. Age	16 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

As a result we have the following breakdown according to gender and age:

	16 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30
Male	71	61	50
Female	69	67	62

Table 1: Targeted age and gender distribution of the sample

Step III - Selection of location and time

To achieve highest possible randomness of the sampling, more specifically to avoid bias due to proximity to influencing spots like buildings of civil society organizations ,neutral' and more than one location have been chosen for the conduct of they survey. A group of 8 volunteers from YIC split up into smaller groups of 2-3 which then spread out and conducted the survey within one week in different places at different times of the day.

6.2. Presentation of the results

After describing the details of the research methodology let's have a look at the obtained results starting with the sociodemographic indicators of volunteering.

Volunteering according to socio-demographic indicators

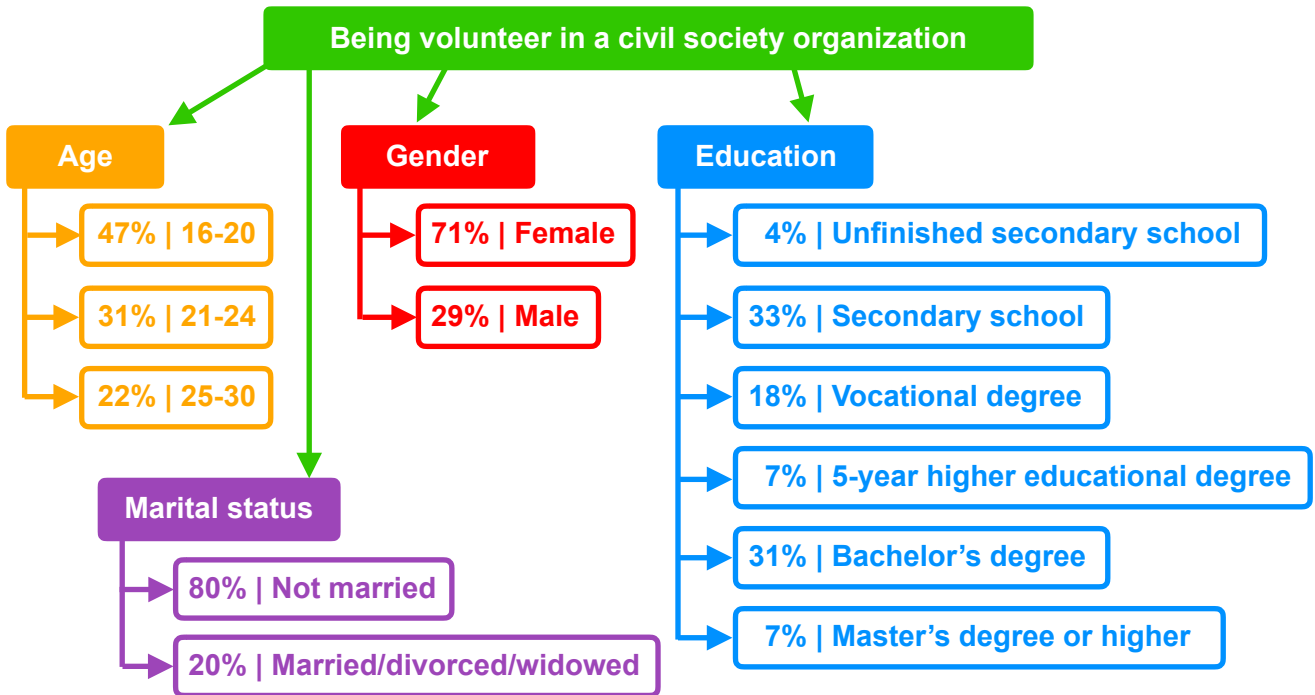


Chart 1: Breakdown of youngster being volunteer according to socio-demographic indicators

As seen in the above chart 1 females significantly prevail over males among volunteers (71%) and most of them are youngsters between 16 and 20 years old (47%). A big majority of youth volunteering is unmarried (80%) and has either a secondary school (33%) or bachelor's degree (31%). 40% of youth has volunteering experience, though the percentage of current volunteers among people from 16-30 years old in Gyumri is low (12%).

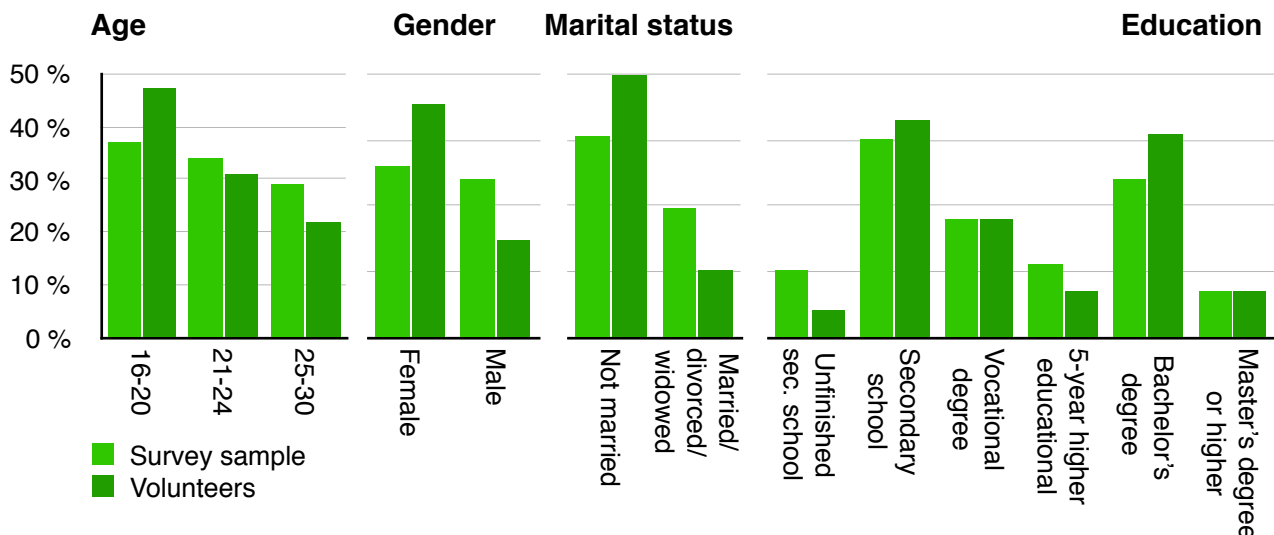


Chart 2: Comparison of volunteer distribution and survey sample according to sociodemographic indicators

Comparing the relative distributions of volunteers with the sample according to socio-demographic indicators in chart 2 shows that especially people from 16-20 years old (27% higher than among all respondents) and females (37% higher) take the decision to volunteer. A similar difference can be seen in the marital status as 61% of the people are not married, but they account for 80% of the volunteers (31% higher). In other words: unmarried people volunteer more than married ones or once married people tend to volunteer less. Differences in the distribution regarding educational background can be noted among youth with unfinished sec. school, 5-year higher educational degree and bachelor's degree but these figures have to be treated with caution as the number of volunteers with this educational background in the sample is low and therefore statistically not meaningful.

What is/would be your motivation to volunteer? Please specify to what extent you agree with the following aspects:

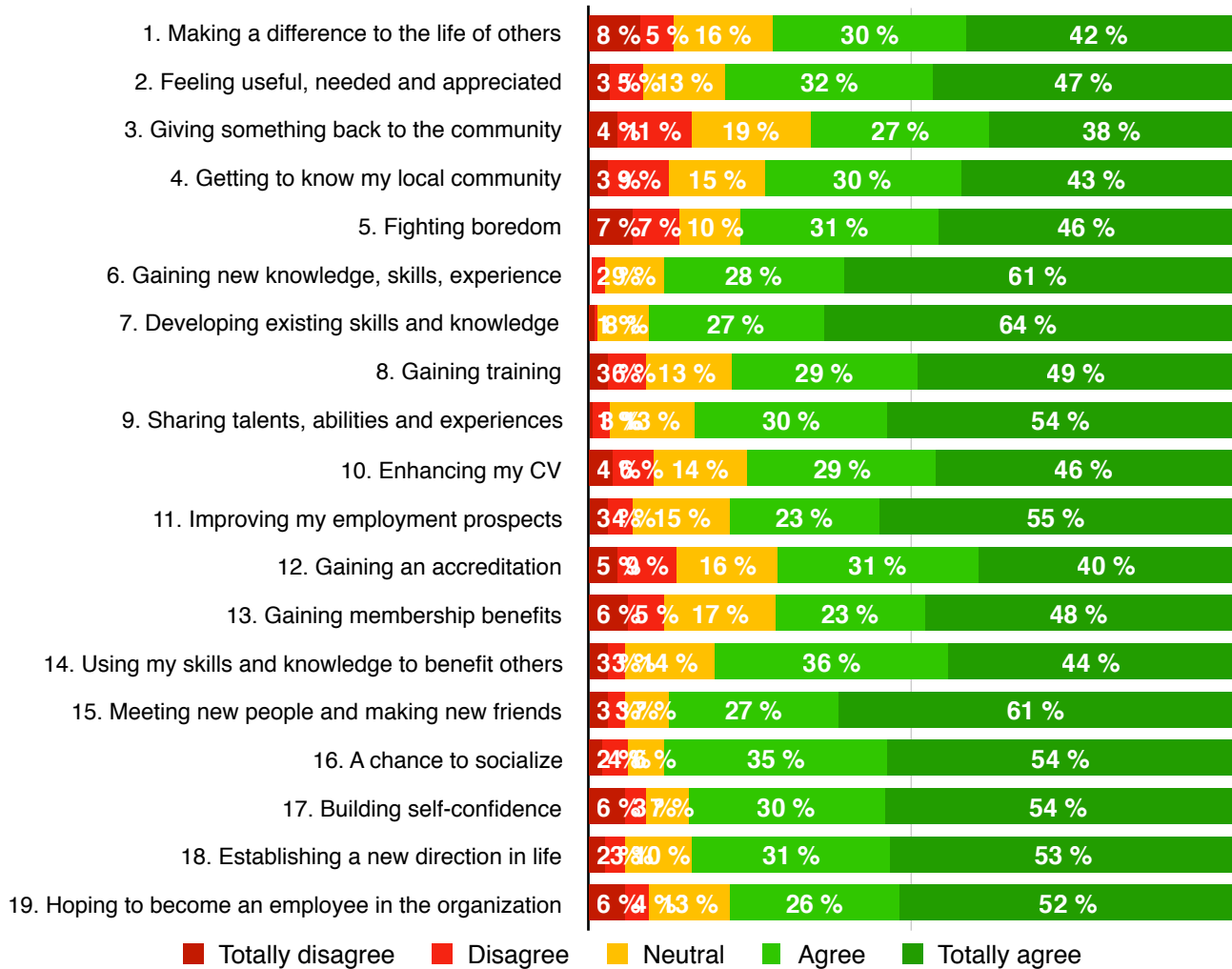


Chart 3: What is/would be your motivation to volunteer?

Chart 3 indicates that all of the presented motivations obtained consent (light and dark green areas), though identifying a ranking is non-trivial due to response classification. Converting the responses into a rating scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree) as intended when designing the questionnaire and calculating means for every motivation results in chart 4. The chart shows that „Developing existing skills and knowledge (rating: 4,52), „Gaining new knowledge, skills and experience“ (4,46) and „Meeting new people and making new friends“ (rating: 4,41) are the most favored motivations for volunteering. This indicates that youth sees volunteering at CSOs primarily as an opportunity for self-development and socializing with likeminded people and sharing.



Rating scale: 1 - Totally disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Neutral | 4 - Agree | 5 - Totally agree

Chart 4: What is/would be your motivation to volunteer? (Calculated means)

How many hours a week do you volunteer?

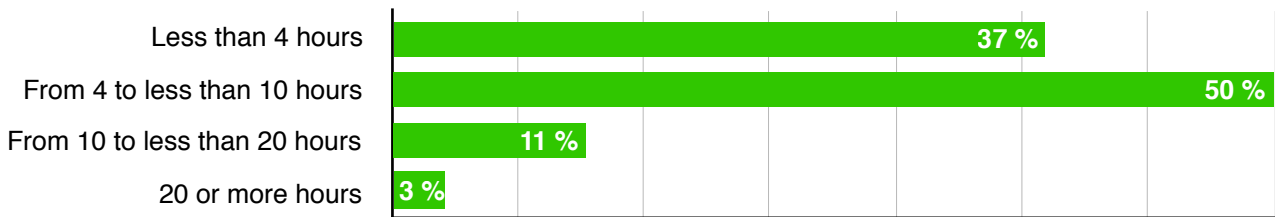


Chart 5: How many hours a week do you volunteer? (n = 147)

When asked for how much time volunteers spare for their volunteer service most of the respondents (50%) stated from 4 to less than 10 hours, followed by 37% volunteering even less than 4 hours a week. Only a small minority of 14% does a service of 10 or more hours.

Was there any training needed for your voluntary role?



Chart 6: Was there any training needed for your volunteering role? (n=147)

A majority of 59% of the respondents stated that training was needed for their volunteer role.

Did you receive one or more of the following training forms? If received please rate the quality of the training:

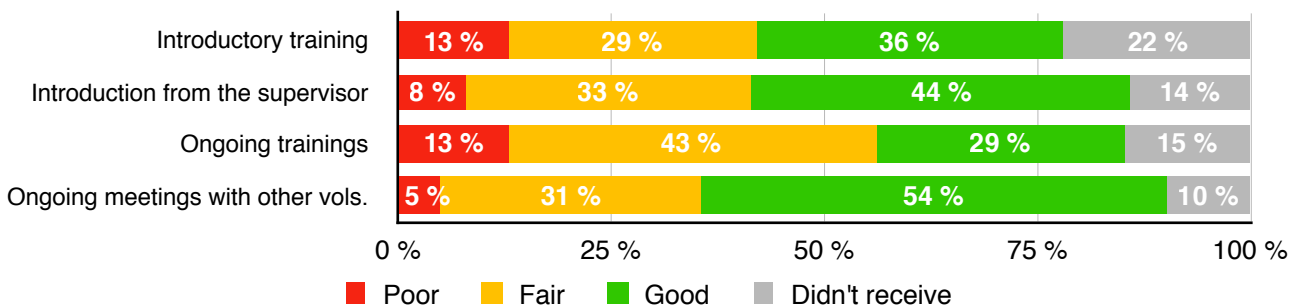


Chart 7: Received training forms and their quality according to volunteer respondents (n = 147)

Chart 7 shows that - if received - all of the 4 training forms have been rated poor only by a small majority of volunteers (5% - 13%). Nevertheless ongoing trainings are only rated good by 29%. Furthermore it doesn't surprise that ongoing meetings with other volunteers have been rated good by an absolute majority of 54% of the respondents most probably due to intensive contact with likeminded people.

Please specify to what extent you agree with the following statements:

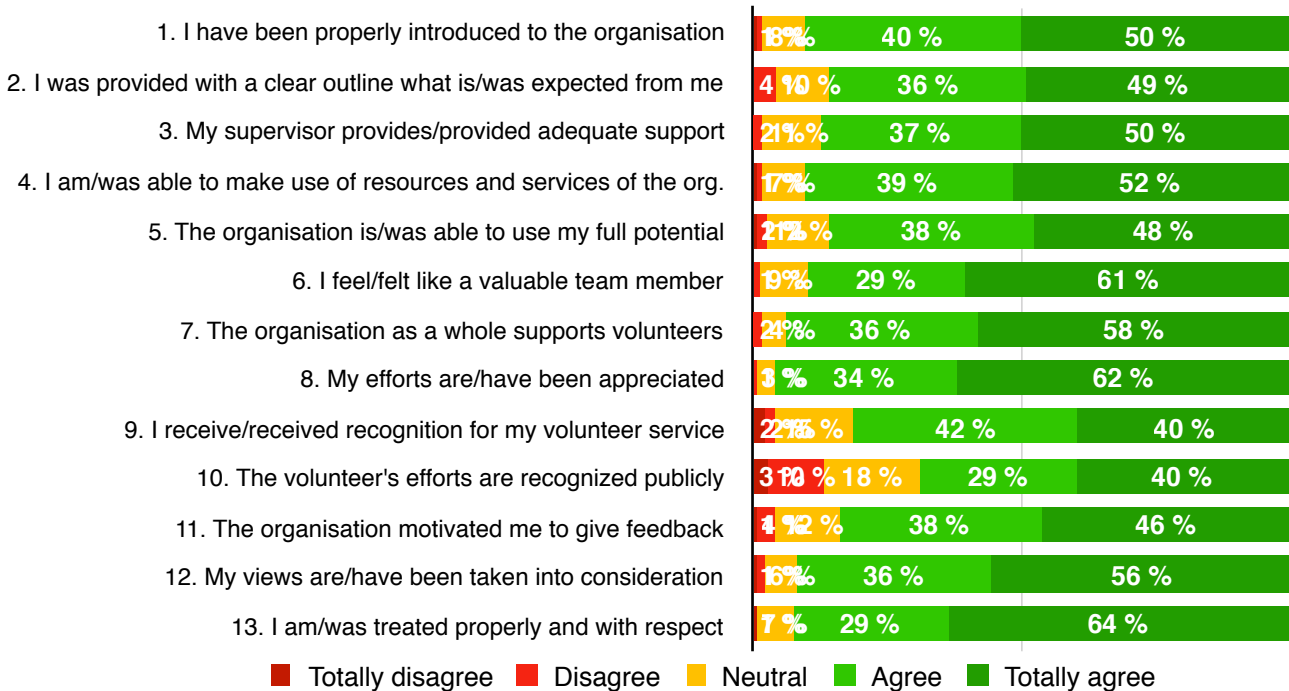
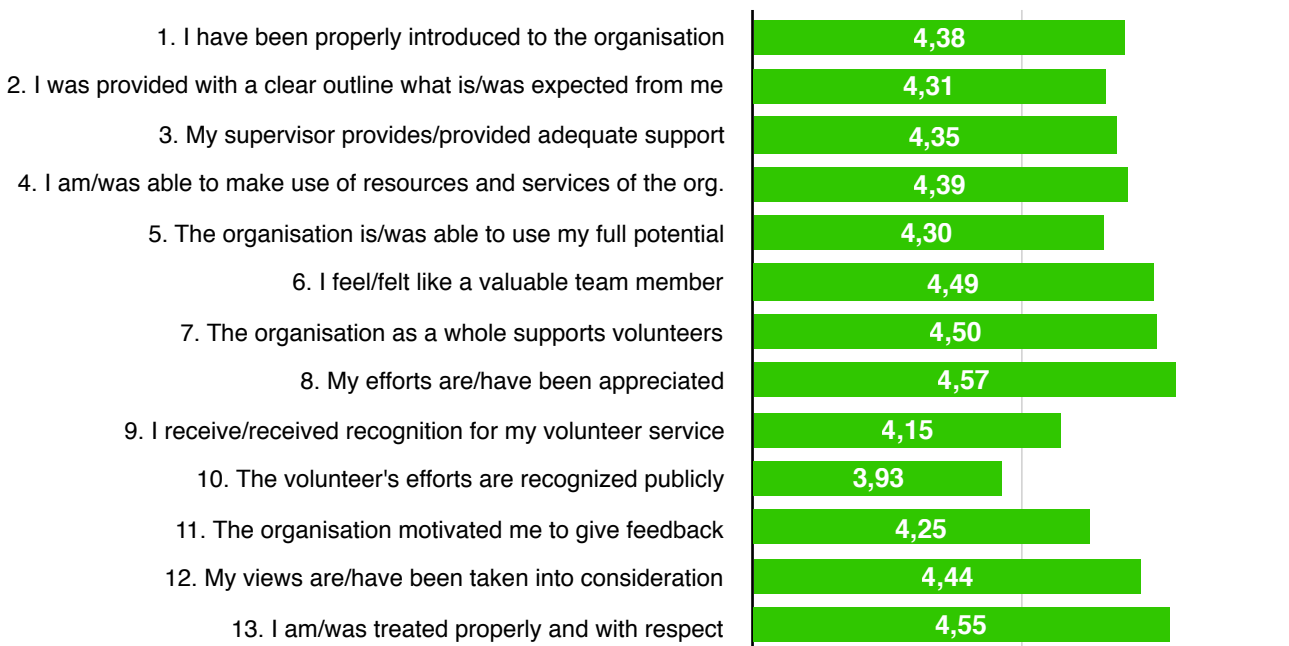


Chart 8: Please specify to what extent you agree with the following statements (n = 147)



Rating scale: 1 - Totally disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Neutral | 4 - Agree | 5 - Totally agree

Chart 9: Please specify to what extent you agree with the following statements (n = 147, calculated means)

Chart 8 shows that all in all of the presented statements received more or less positive agreement. A look at chart 9 showing the calculated means identifies that „My efforts are/have been appreciated“ received the most agreement (4,57) and ranks first among the statements. Although still in the positive range „The volunteer’s efforts are recognized publicly“ (3,93), „I receive/received

recognition for my volunteer service“ (4,15) and „The organization motivated me to give feedback“ (4,25) gained more disagreement and less agreement than the other statements.

In case you are not/never were a volunteer: What are the reasons? Please specify to what extent you agree to the following statements:

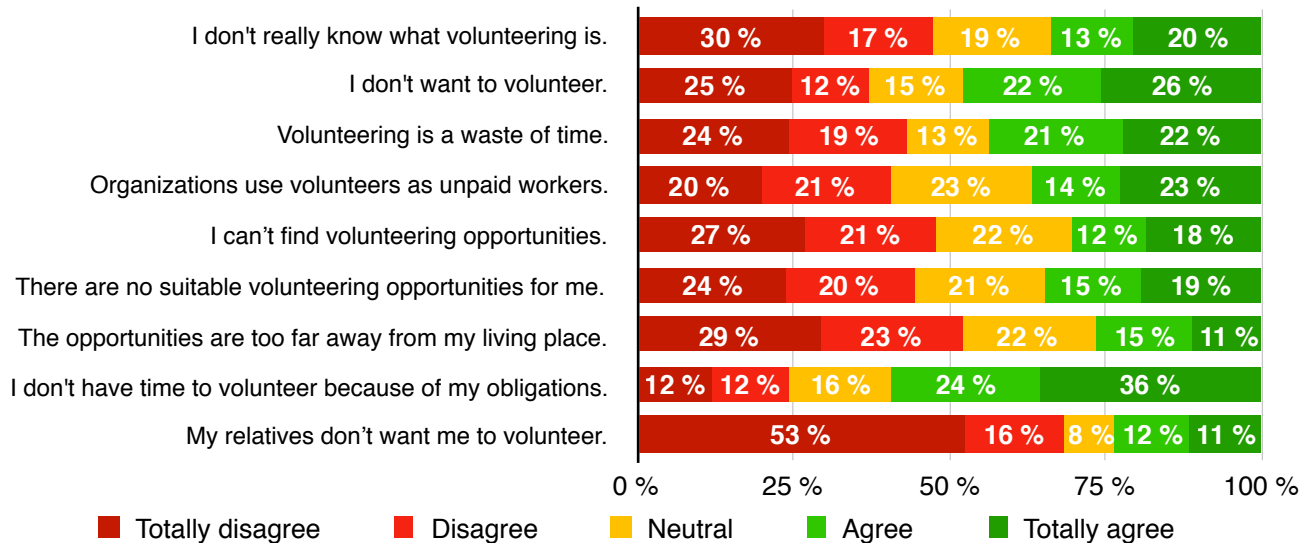


Chart 10: Please specify to what extent you agree to the following statements

The above chart 10 shows that - if an answer was provided - a significant minority of 37% of the youngsters doesn't know what volunteering is. 48% totally or partly agree on the statement that they don't want to volunteer, whereas 37% (partially) think that organizations use volunteers as unpaid workers. It's remarkable that 60% state they don't have time to volunteer because of their obligations making this statement the most agreed statement among the others. According to the respondents relatives' will only plays a subordinate role as a reason for doing no volunteer service (69% total or partial disagreement).

7. Volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition interviews

In the same way objectives for the survey about youth's perception on volunteering have been formulated, objectives for the interviews about recruitment, retention and recognition strategies of CSOs have been identified. These are the following:

- Do the organizations have an understanding what recruitment, retention and recognition is and what it consists of?
- Do organizations have a written volunteer policy?
- How do the organizations create visibility of their organization?
- How do the organizations recruit their volunteers?
- What kind of strategies do the organizations apply to retain volunteers?
- Which methods of recognizing volunteers are applied among the organizations?
- How is the organizations' self-evaluation regarding the recruitment, retention and recognizing volunteers?
- Do the organizations see a need for and endorse a closer cooperation in the field of volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition and if yes, which ways do they recommend?

7.1. Details of the research methodology

Description of the selection of CSOs for the interviews

According to the regional branch of the „A.D. Sakharov Armenian Human Rights Protection Center NGO“ Gyumri has more than 300 registered CSOs, but only 50 - 60 are active ones. Among these approximately 20 organizations are active on a daily basis.

Due to the fact that interviews with all registered, or even all active CSOs in Gyumri would have been highly time consuming regarding the conduct and subsequent analysis a selection among the CSOs had to be made. 17 of the organizations working on a daily basis have been contacted by the research team (YIC was intentionally not considered as interview partner to avoid bias) and 13 instantly agreed in participating as an interview partner. 13 interviews with the most active CSOs of Gyumri seemed to be a reasonable number to gain a good qualitative, but also quantitative overview of the situation, though it needs to be emphasized that the data is statistically not representative for **all** registered CSOs of Gyumri. Nonetheless we can surmise that lacks regarding recruitment, retention and recognition of volunteers in smaller and less rarely active organizations are more likely in case the data indicates lacks even among the most active and professionally working CSOs in Gyumri.

In order to proof that a broad range of different CSOs regarding field of work and size has been selected the presentation of the results in the next subchapter starts with data about the fields of activity and number of involved staff members and volunteers for each of the interviewed organizations.

Description of the interview methodology and questions

In order to increase the willingness to participate and to get truthfully answers anonymous presentation of the data has been guaranteed and the methodology of the research has been explained transparently to all participating organizations before and at the beginning of the interviews. For this reason the results of the interviews are presented in a way that doesn't allow conclusions about the identity of the participants.

In case the interview partner didn't know English the interviewer was accompanied by a translator from YIC translating both questions and answers instantly from English to Armenian and vice versa.

The questionnaire used in the interviews contains both open and closed questions to gain qualitative and quantitative data. Elements of in-depth interviews like open questioning, interview recording and subsequent transcription have been applied to gain more qualitative data. Whenever closed questions with defined responses were asked questions regarding additional, not mentioned aspects have been added and their responses correctly included and mapped to the relevant topic.

The question blocks follow the logic introduced in chapter 5 of this research by dividing the interview into topics related to the voluntary policy, recruitment/visibility, retention and recognition strategies of CSOs.

Finally it should be noted that in case a translator was needed the citations and the data for those organizations presented in the next section are based on the translations. Consequently the citations might not be 100% identical with the Armenian terms but they do reflect the meaning of the respondent.

7.2 Presentation of the results

In what field is your organization active?

Activity field	Interviewed organizations												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Child protection			X										
2. Youth empowerment	X	X	X		X								
3. Disability						X			X				
4. Charity				X			X						
5. Law and legal affairs		X											
6. Rural development							X						
7. Technology	X												
8. Education	X			X					X	X	X		X
9. Environment		X										X	
10. Family care			X	X				X					
11. Health							X					X	
12. Agriculture		X										X	X
13. Mining		X											
14. Migration							X						
15. Tourism													X

Table 2: Activity fields of the interviewed organizations

The conscious selection of different organizations led to a broad range of activity fields. 6 civil society organizations stated they are active in the field of education, followed by youth empowerment (4), agriculture (3) and family care (3), health (2), environment (2), charity (2), disability (2), child protection (1), law and legal affairs (1), rural development (1), technology (1), mining (1), migration (1) and tourism (1).

How many people do you involve in your organization?

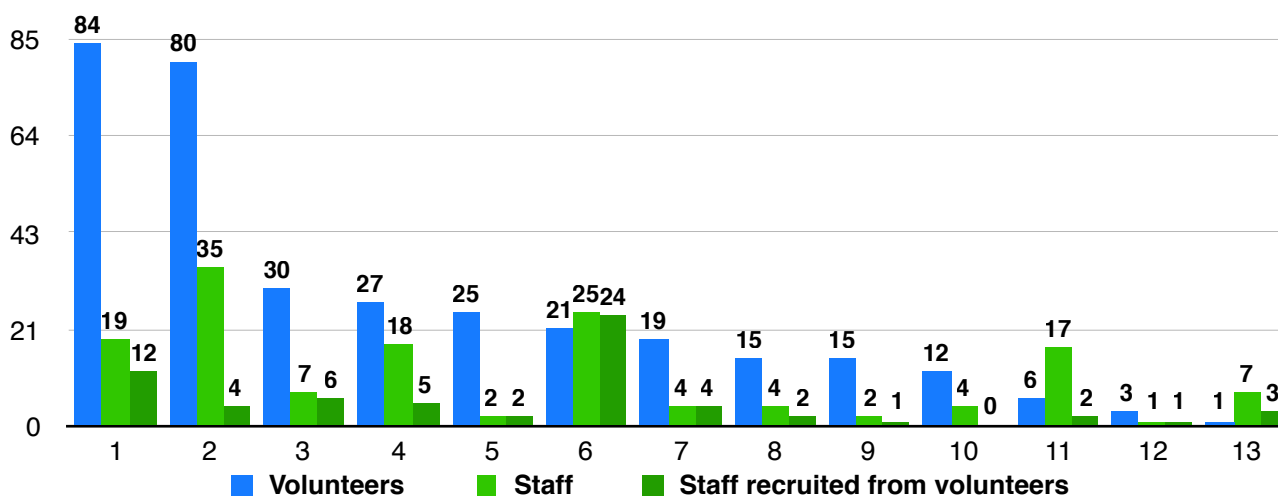


Chart 11: Number of volunteers, staff members and staff members recruited from volunteers for each organization ordered by volunteer count

In the same way the selection of CSOs led to a broad range of activity fields the chart a broad spectrum of size regarding the number of involved staff members and volunteers in each organization has been achieved as well. While the biggest organization is currently working with 84 volunteers one of them had only one at the time of the interviews. The figures also show how the volunteer/staff number ratio differs from organization to organization and doesn't seem to follow a rule.

Why do you involve volunteers in your organization?

Rank	Reason	Number of mentions
1.	Provide development opportunities/professional engagement	6
2.	Lack of staff members/staff member skills	5
3.	Use competences/ideas/problems of volunteers	4
4.	Recruitment of staff members	2
5.	Civil society/youth empowerment	2
6.	Understanding the potential of united volunteers	1
6.	Develop the culture of volunteering	1
6.	Involve old people	1
6.	See how a volunteering system in a state organisation works	1

Table 3: Reasons for involving volunteers ordered descending by number of mentions

Citations from the interviews

„Because we want to actively see [...] how they can help their community. Do community service learning projects, imagine what they can change in their communities [...] Because we have lots of work that we can't organize only with our own staff members. (3)

We try to involve old people in the volunteering team, I think that it will help us to have a ‚healthy‘ society and we try to take all necessary steps in order to [achieve] the result. (10)

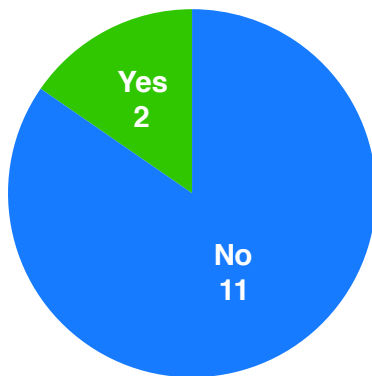
„In our organization we try to create a democratic environment, so we always involve volunteers for changing the ideas of a generation [...]. We like to get ideas from young people and also the problems, because we are more aware of real problems young people have. So we can create the projects taking account of those problems. [...]. We involve young people, young beginner teachers, so that we can develop their skills and prepare skillful teachers. And it's also one of the best ways to find human resources.“ (11)

„[W]e involve for 2 reasons. Maybe not 2 reasons, maybe there will be many reasons. To develop the culture of volunteering in Armenia. The second is to develop that people can give and also receive this thinking and also another thing: that young people become more active and responsible through volunteering and experienced. [...] And also nowadays whenever you go to a job interview they ask whether you have experience. So this is a really good experience for them to present themselves that they have experience. [...] There are specific projects which we can't run without volunteers.“ (13)

Most mentioned reason for involving volunteers is providing development opportunities/ professional engagement (6 mentions), closely followed by lack of staff members/staff member skills (5). Usage of competences/ideas/problems of volunteers was mentioned 4 times, whereas recruitment of staff members and civil society/youth empowerment appeared each 2 times. The number of mentions indicates that involvement of volunteers is seen as a relationship of „giving and taking“ among the interviewed CSOs. This can be also observed from the selected citations.

Does your organization have a written volunteer policy?

Citations from the interviews



Yes - „We have [...] and we also have a certain policy for the recruitment of the volunteers and also the work that is later on done by the volunteers and how it is done, what rights they have [...] and also digests and responsibilities [...]“

Yes - „Yes we have. [...] We have some changes in the law and they are not clear for the organization and we sent some questions to the lawyer to understand what they can do for our policy.“

No - „No, we don't have a written policy, but we are working on it.“

No - „No, because Armenian Government for many years didn't have any policy for volunteers. Now it is in [progress], so that is why we don't have any special policy.“

Chart 12: Number of CSOs with written volunteer policies

Two of eleven organizations have a volunteer policy. Four from the nine organizations having none stated that they are currently working on one. Most given reason for non-existence is the lack of legislative regulations from the state for a long time.

Do you revise your volunteering policy?

Remark: This question was only asked to the two organizations having a written volunteer policy.

Citations from the interviews



„The organization is two years old and once we already did changes, we revised. It's situational.“

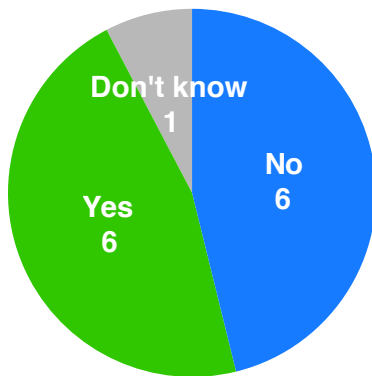
„We did it last year. [...] We don't do it every year, but actually whenever we have some changes in our programs or what projects we implement, based on that, based on the strategic plan of the center, we also change the work by the volunteers that is done and what is needed to be done. Based on that we are also changing our policy.“

Chart 13: Revision of volunteer policy

Both of the organizations owning a written volunteer policy revise it on a non-frequent basis. According to them impulses for revision are situational and triggered by changes in the organization's programs and projects.

Do you have written role descriptions for all volunteer positions?

Citations from the interviews



„For our club leaders we have role descriptions. After they started working for us, we give them this job description, they sign it.“ (3)

„We have volunteer agreements where written is what their responsibilities and roles are.“ (12)

„No, we don't have anything.. that kind of things. It depends on the coordinator..“ (1)

„No, we don't have. We tell that during the project.“

„We don't have written forms for volunteers. It's only oral. If there is a job for a volunteer we tell it orally.“ (12)

Chart 14: Existence of role descriptions for all volunteers

6 organizations have and 6 don't have written role descriptions for all volunteer positions. One organization didn't know whether they have at the time of the interview.

Recruitment

Which ways do you use to recruit volunteers?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Ttl
1. Social media	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	11
2. Word-of-mouth		x						x		x	x	x	x	6
3. Educational institutions			x			x		x					x	3
4. Website	x						x						x	3
5. Personal contact	x	x			x									3
6. Television or radio				x					x	x				3
7. Email		x		x										2
8. Posters								x						1
9. Local events							x							1

Table 4: Ways of recruitment of volunteers

Eleven from the 13 organizations mentioned that they use social media to recruit new volunteers, which makes it the most used way for recruiting volunteers. Six, a little bit less than the half rely on word-of-mouth to get new volunteers, followed by educational institutions (4), website, personal contact and television/radio with 3 mentions each.

In case you use social media to share volunteer opportunities, which platform(s) do you use?

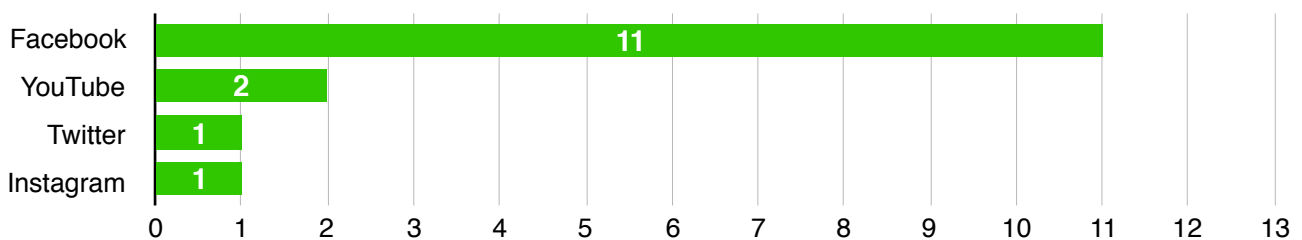
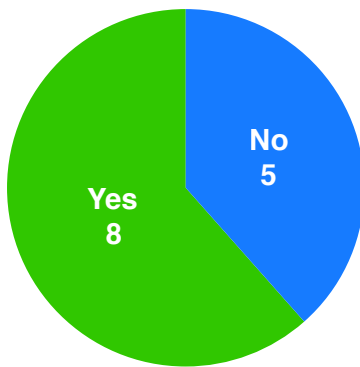


Chart 15: Social media platforms used to share volunteer opportunities

Facebook is the most preferred social media platform among the interviewed organizations to share volunteer opportunities (used by 11 of 13). Two of them additionally use YouTube, two others use Twitter, respectively Instagram as addition to Facebook.

Do you inform partner organizations about open volunteer positions?

Citations from the interviews



Yes - „We have really close partners and every time we need volunteers, we want to recruit volunteers we address those organizations and also when the other organizations need volunteers they can address us“ (12)

Yes - „Not, so much. If we really need volunteers, we do that. If not, we don't, because we are not interested in having many volunteers, we don't have so much work.“ (1)

No - „We didn't have any kind of big projects, so we didn't need volunteers from outside, but now we have applied for 3 Erasmus+ projects, so if [...] those projects get approved we will need volunteers from outside. (11)

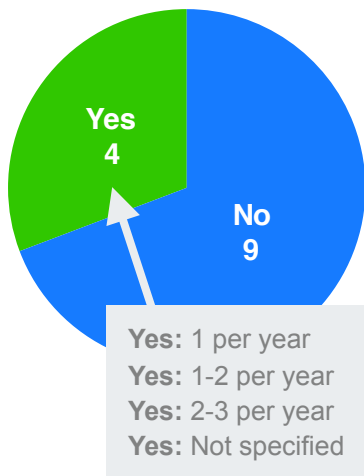
No - „We take our volunteers ourselves. We send volunteers to different organizations.“ (6)

Chart 16: Organizations informing partner organizations about open volunteers

8 of 13 organizations stated that they inform partner organizations when they have open volunteer positions. Half of those 8 added it's done only sometimes or rarely. Among the 5 organizations not informing one noted they will reach out if they get approval for their recently applied projects.

Do you organize information events/days for people interested in membership/volunteering in your organization? If yes, with what frequency?

Citations from the interviews



Yes - „Twice or three times a year. We try to make some [...] events to cooperate with the old generation generation. We plan some events in museums and try to do everything to have as much as possible old people.“ (10)

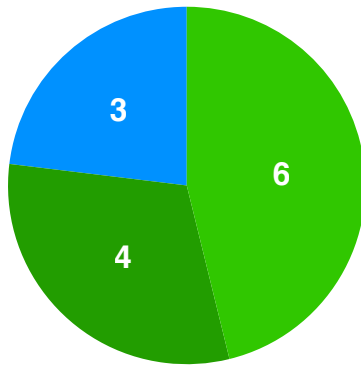
No - Such kind of special days in order to gather people or involve volunteers or new members we don't organize. During our special events we have small info desks where - if people are interested - they go and explain what they have, what they do.“ (2)

No - „We don't see the need to do this. [...] Because we have so much requests that if we [did we would you have to refuse a lot].“ (13)

Chart 17: Number of organizations organizing information events/days for people interested in volunteering

A minority of 4 interviewed organizations organizes events/days for people interested in membership/volunteering in their organization. Frequency ranges from 1 to 3 events per year whereas one organization was not able to specify. Among the 9 not organizing reasons mentioned are their participation in the International Volunteer's day's collective event, small info desks during their own events and too much volunteering requests. Furthermore one organization stated that they have been organizing in the past and another noted that they are a new organization existing for less than a year.

Do you participate in the International Volunteer's Day by organizing a special event dedicated to this day?



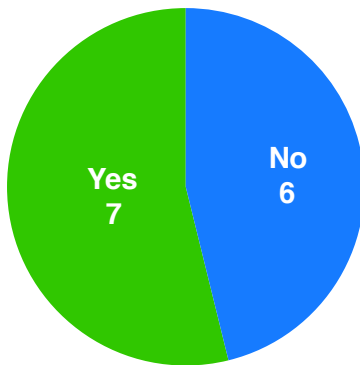
- Yes, joining collective event
- Yes, organizing own event
- No

10 of 13 interviewed organizations stated they participate in the International Volunteer's Day by organizing a special event dedicated to day. A thin majority of 6 of them joins a collective event, whereas the other 4 organize their own internal events/celebrations.

Chart 18: Do you participate in the International Volunteer's Day by organizing a special event dedicated to this day?

Do new volunteers have to fill in an application form?

Citations from the interviews



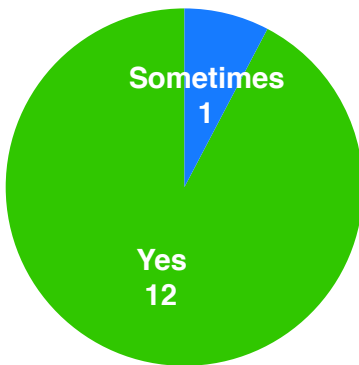
Yes - „Yes, we do. We have a special kind of application form with which they also give their documents like passport, diploma, certificates [...] to show what experience they have they and also what skills or specialization they have [...]“ (4)

Yes - „For involving volunteers we have 2 forms.. [one] is online and [one] is [in] paper [form]. The online form contains about 40 questions. Such questions as 'Can you be involved in the organization 20 hours?' about the people's occupation, how busy he is. About their ideas, their dreams. Our questions are very general, we don't want to find specifically somebody. As we have diverse projects, we want to have as many people as possible. So when we include them when we have projects we will look: okay, this person is matching to this problem. [...] If at first the person doesn't match the characteristics, the criteria then we give the opportunity to come and learn and then.. why not? Maybe they will give us something else what we were not looking for.“ (2)

Chart 19: Number of organizations making new volunteers fill in an application form

7, a slight majority of the interviewed organizations make new volunteers fill in an application form, the remaining 6 are not.

Do you take photos/videos of your volunteers' activities and share them publicly?



All of the interviewed organizations take photos/videos of their volunteers' activities and share them publicly. Two added that the photos/videos are not orientated towards the volunteers' work in special but they are included in the others. One stated that it's done sometimes.

Chart 20: Number of organizations taking photos/videos of their volunteers' activities and sharing them publicly

How would you describe your current experience of recruiting volunteers?



Chart 21: How would you describe your current experience of recruiting volunteers?

Citations from the interviews

Very easy - „So far we did not have any problems in finding volunteers because we get help from universities, colleges or from Facebook and besides our volunteers are really free and we organize everything with [them]. And we take into account what the needs of the volunteers are.“ (6)

Easy - „In the beginning its hard but now we can say easy. [...] At the beginning they didn't know the organization well but now - maybe due to friends - they know the organization better. (8)

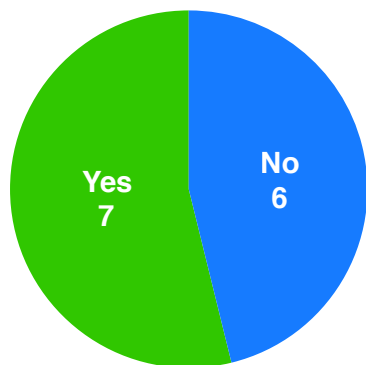
Hard - „When we recruit the volunteers we need to understand the volunteer if we are in the same boat, if they understand the philosophy of our organization or the project in which they will be involved. E.g. if somebody comes and says: 'I don't care about the population, the city'.. what will he do in a citizenship project?“ (13)

Hard - „It's hard because you should feel the feelings of these persons. So what she or he wants and what they are going to do. [...] if you will say: 'Okay, we only have this type of work', [...] nobody will come and [...] help the organization. But when we feel that they want this [...] you [create] for them opportunities and they start [to] fill [...] that. [...] Because, if we directly say: 'we have this event and come here', it's not working. We make a psychological effect that they [don't think] 'we should do it',but 'we want to do it'.“ (2)

7 of the organizations stated that recruiting volunteers is very easy or easy. According to the ones who give a reason connections to educational institutions, personal contacts, openness for all kind of volunteers and accommodation towards the volunteers needs and restrictions (e.g. time-wise) take place. On the other hand 6 stated that it's hard or very hard. Reasons given here are the need of understanding the volunteer as an organization, the volunteers' need to understand the organization's philosophy and lack of time because of unemployment and related to that the hope of getting a job after engagement as a volunteer. One organization was self-critical stating that it might be due to lack of experience and no dedicated staff member in this field.

Do you make volunteers sign an agreement with a clear outline of their responsibilities and rights?

Citations from the interviews



Yes - „Yes, we do. We have a special kind of application form with which they also give their documents like passport, diploma, certificates [...] to show what experience they have they and also what skills or specialization they have [...]“ (4)

Yes - „It's included in [the] application form which they start [fill in] about their feelings, about their skills, about what they want or what they don't want and [at the bottom] there is [...] an agreement. (2)

No - „We don't have written forms.“ (12)

Chart 22: Do you make volunteers sign an agreement with a clear outline of their responsibilities and rights?

A majority of 7 interviewed organizations make volunteers sign an agreement or agreement-like document with an outline of their responsibilities and rights. 2 of the 7 stated specified that this agreement is integrated in the application form.

Which of the following initial training activities do you provide to your volunteers?

Orientation training about the organization/department

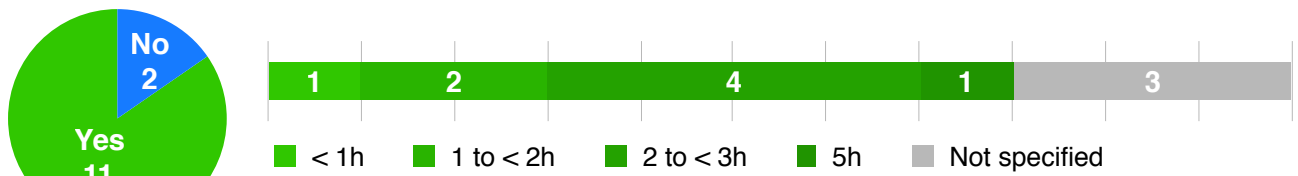


Chart 23: Orientation training about the org./department and provided durations

Introductory training in the field the volunteer will work

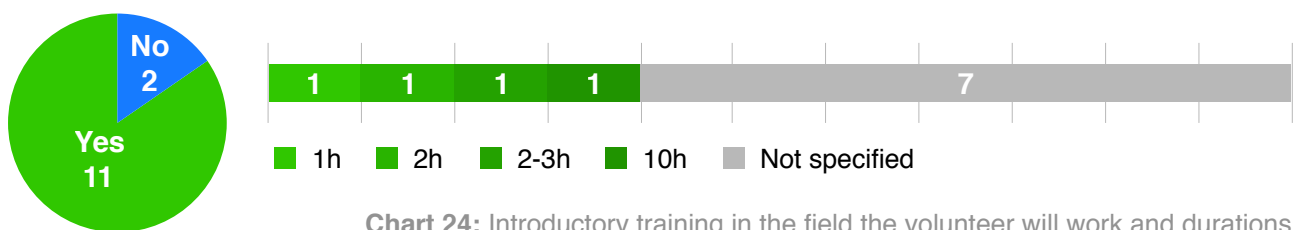


Chart 24: Introductory training in the field the volunteer will work and durations

Meeting/training with the supervisor

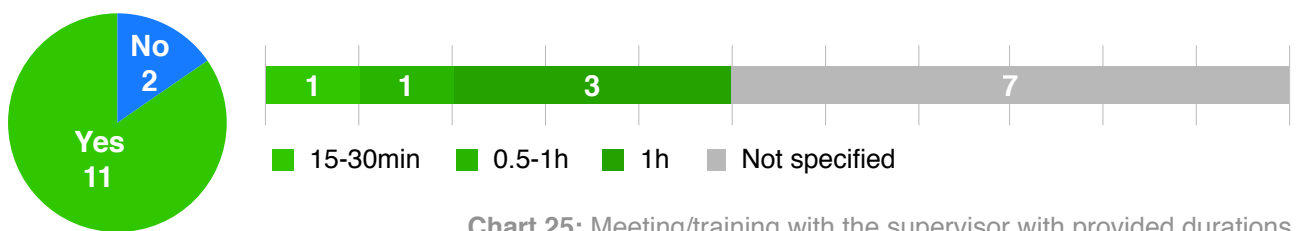


Chart 25: Meeting/training with the supervisor with provided durations

For each of the 3 initial training activities 11 organizations stated they provide, whereas 2 noted they don't. As far as stated duration for..

- the orientation training about the org./department ranges from less than 1 to 5 hours.
- the introductory training in the field will work ranges significantly from 1 to 10 hours.
- the meeting/training with the supervisor ranges from 15 minutes to 1 hour.

Which of the following ongoing training activities do you provide to your volunteers?

Ongoing planned trainings for all volunteers

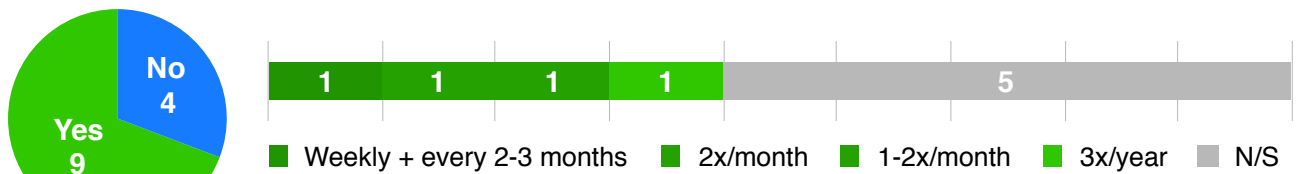


Chart 26: Ongoing planned trainings for all volunteers

Citations from the interviews

Yes - „For our clubs, there are volunteers coming and participating in our trainings. [...] [W]e teach them active citizenship, employability, social entrepreneurship, [...] we are organizing data collection trainings, how they can collect the information, how they do surveys, how can they [write] reports, in our debate clubs we are organizing trainings, how they debate with other people. We have trainings, we are doing every week, we have trainings we are doing [every] 2-3 months.“ (3)

No - „No, we don't have that sort of trainings. Of course, I usually ask [an institution's name] that when we have someone who we feel that really works hard, I, myself like to do something for them, but our resources are very [limited]. So that is why we can't. Of course we would like to.“ (1)

One-on-one training with experienced volunteers

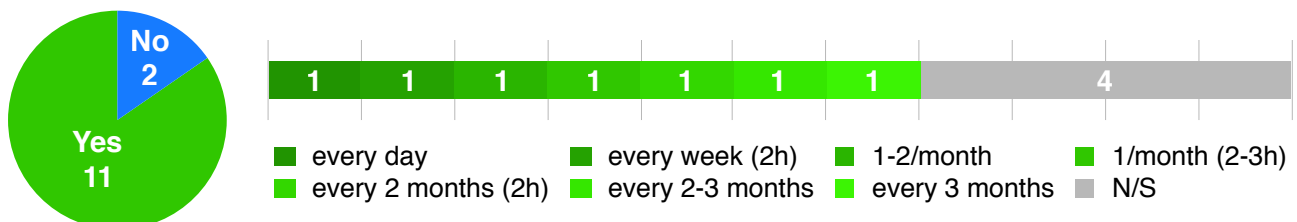


Chart 27: One on one training with experienced volunteers

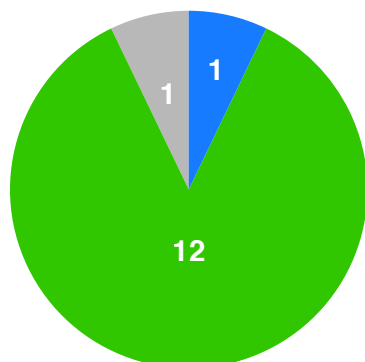
Citation from the interviews

Yes - „Yes, our previous volunteers are also involved in the new project[s] to have this exchange and their contact with the new volunteers. For this year we thought that this mentorship period would be 3 - 4 months and then the mentors can really [do] their job. [...] [T]hey are sitting together, they are looking for the information, they are preparing the activity, they are going out, they are searching for the participants, they plan. Our mentorship is not the mentorship as for EVS volunteers. [...] It's really working together. (13)

9 interviewed organizations arrange ongoing planned trainings for all volunteers. Frequency varies from 2-3 hour weekly sessions to block trainings 3 times a year. From the 4 not providing those trainings reasons - as provided - were limited financial resources (1x) and focus on individual training needs of volunteers (2x). Furthermore 11 interviewed organizations have one-on-one trainings with experienced volunteers whose frequency varies from every to every 3 months. The 2 organizations stating not to have this one-on-one training system didn't give a reason.

How do you proceed if there is a special training need for individual volunteers?

Solutions ordered descending by number of mentions



- Don't make volunteer
- Provide a solution
- Didn't have

Rank	Reason	Mentions
1.	Organize own trainings/trainings sessions	4
1.	Forward to skillful staff members/volunteers	4
3.	Send to external trainings	3
4.	Involve more actively in own activities	2
5.	Forward to other CSOs	1

Table 5: Solutions for individual volunteers with special training needs ordered descending by number of mentions

Chart 28: How do you proceed if there is a special training need for individual volunteers?

Citations from the interviews

„In this case the project directors and the assistant would be involved. They can organize a special session for this volunteer. We had such an experience. Also we keep them in our base to send them to international training courses.“ (13)

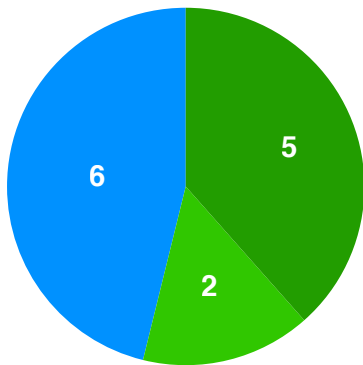
„I usually do a survey and I ask them before they start [volunteering] what they would like to learn. What trainings [they] would [...] like to have organized for them. And when they say that they need this [...] we organize those trainings for them. [...] [T]he plan of the trainings is made by them.“ (4)

„We had people which we didn't want to speak in front of big audience (note: joking). So we organized [...] book readings. [...] [E]verybody should take a book and start to read it loudly. They started to read and everybody heard his or her voice and the other times they started to communicate with the others. This is a small example. [...] From time to time when people have some needs the NGO [...] is not able to [solve them]. [...] [S]ome of them had problems with transportation, some of them had problems with other things, [...] that's why we have the cooperation with the other NGOs and we start to ask them [...] or send them to that NGO and ask to work with them. (2)

11 of 13 CSOs said they try to provide a solution for the training needs of individual volunteers. Mentioned solutions were organization of trainings/training sessions in the organization (4),

forwarding to skillful staff members/volunteers, sending to external trainings and more active involvement in the organizations' activities (2). On the other hand one organization stated they don't make people with special trainings needs volunteer and another one expressed they didn't have this case.

C.7 Do your volunteers have a mentor? If yes, what is her/his relation to the organization?

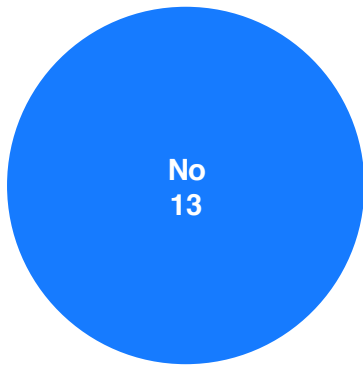


- A staff member
- Another volunteer
- No specific mentor

8 organizations stated that volunteers in their organization have a mentor from which 6 appoint a staff member and 2 a more experienced volunteer. 5 organizations don't have a specific mentorship system, but one noted they apply collective 'mentorship' in the organization and 2 others remarked 'mentorship' is sometimes done by external people.

Chart 29: Do your volunteers have a mentor? If yes, what is her/his relation to the organization?

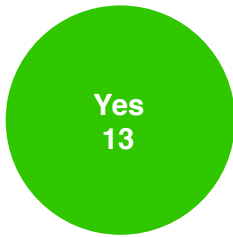
Do you create visibility of volunteers in service in your organization (e.g. a board with pictures/names of volunteers in highly frequented places)?



At the time of the interviews none of the organizations created individual visibility of volunteers in service in their organization. One added that they had in the past but due to relocation currently not. One stated they it is in progress and 2 other have plans for the future. When asked 3 other instantly noted that it's a good idea to think about.

Chart 30: Do you create visibility of volunteers in service in your organization?

Do your members have privileges in making use of resources and services of the organization?



Resources/services ordered descending by number of mentions

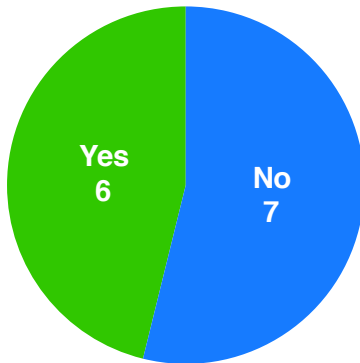
12 - Computer	2 - Working materials
10 - Space	1 - Educational fees
6 - Printer	1 - Bicycles
3 - Internet access	1 - Driving organization's cars
3 - Projector	1 - Discount for fee-based own training
3 - Encouragement/living assistance	1 - Free excursions
2 - Food during trainings	1 - Preferential participation in projects
2 - Transportation costs	1 - Camera
2 - Participation fees for ext. trainings	1 - Telephone

Chart 31: Do your members have privileges in making use of resources and services of the organization?

All of the interviewed organizations give their volunteers privileges in making use of resources and services of the organizations. Most mentioned ones are the usage of computers, space and printers. 3 organizations give monetary encouragement money or living assistance.

Do you have a special project/event whose creation and carryout is exclusively responsibility of new volunteers?

Citations from the interviews



Yes - „Yes, of course. [...] [F]irst they are introduced to how to write project proposals then we provide money for them to write a project. [...] Right now we have a project like this, it's a community care project. Now we are waiting for their proposal to give them money. 3

Yes - „The project about creating our website.. in that project 2 - the most new volunteers - are involved. So we gave them [...] responsibility to present the organization. (11)

No - „No, we don't have [...]. Because it's specific and our events must have some [professional] part. That's why we don't focus every time on new volunteers. [...] Nowadays it's impossible. Maybe later yes. Now, it's not.“ (2)

No - „No, because it's not differentiated. We have [equal] events, everybody is involved.“ (4)

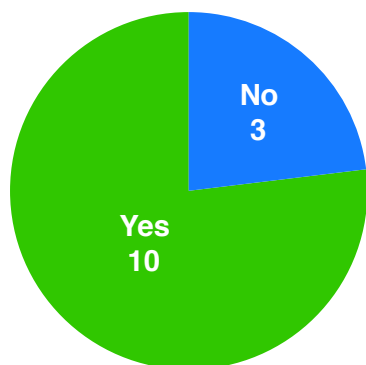
No - „We didn't risk (laughing)“ (12)

Chart 32: Number of organizations having special project/event whose creation and carryout is exclusively responsibility of new volunteers

A strong minority of 6 organizations has special projects/events whose creation and carryout is exclusively responsibility of new volunteers. From the 7 organizations who stated that they don't have justifications included lack of expertise, risk and equality of all their projects.

Are volunteers involved in team meetings and all matters that affect them? If yes, how do you achieve that? If not, why?

How do you achieve that?



1. Meetings with the volunteers (8 mentions)
2. Discussion over a Facebook group (1)
2. Staff meetings with feedback from vols. before decision (1)

Chart 33: Are volunteers involved in team meetings and all matters that affect them?

Citations from the interviews

Yes - „Yes, especially if we have an important decision to make about certain projects we gather with volunteers and we make our decision. After making the decision with volunteers we present it to the board.“ (6)

Yes - „There is no [distinction between] the staff, volunteers and so on. Whenever there is taking place any meeting or discussion it takes place with the participation of all the volunteers and the team. [...] [It's so] important because if we will not ask we [will be] losers. Because if you want to do something you should understand how many people would be involved [and] interested. That's why we ask them every time.“ (5)

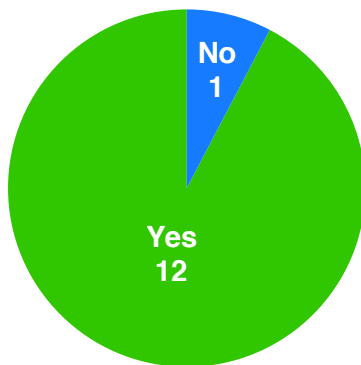
No - „They don't take part in making decisions but inside the centers there are coordinators that regulate and make [know] the volunteers about the latest news/projects. Only representatives of the centers take part in such kind of meetings. [...] Sometimes it isn't possible because if a volunteer comes here and takes part in such kind of meeting, their work will stop.“ (7)

No - „We would like to, but they have never been involved in.“ (1)

A majority of 10 interviewed organizations involve volunteers in meetings and all matters that affect them. 8 of them conduct that by doing meetings with the volunteers, whereas one realizes it with a Facebook discussion group and another one by communication with the volunteers before decision taking. 3 organizations stated they don't from which one justified this by interruption of volunteer's work. Another one noted they would like to.

Do you engage volunteers in professional development? If yes, how?

Citations from the interviews



Yes - „Yes. We usually work with the staff members. For example if their [educational subject is] psychology, they work with the psychologists and learn special skills and improve also their skills. [The professionals] share their experience with the others, with the new volunteers and so this is some kind of ongoing process during which - whatever they learn - they pass to the newcomers.“ (4)

Yes - „Definitely yes, because in the ongoing trainings which are not [specific] in the field of mentoring, we try to - for example - teach them how to write a CV or to go to an interview.“ (8)

Yes - „For example we suggest our volunteers to go to ‚Sakharov Centre‘ where they [have] [theoretical] trainings.“ (2)

No - „No. We have never had.“ (1)

Chart 34: Number of organizations engaging volunteers in professional development

Except one all interviewed organizations engage volunteers in professional development. Mentioned ways are organization of own trainings, seminars, workshops or projects (7 mentions), followed by working with professional staff members (2), meetings with professionals (1), cooperation with the local employment center (1), sending volunteers to external trainings (1), meetings with local municipality (1) and providing supplies to create their own business (1).

Do you survey new volunteers' needs according to a time schedule at defined time(s) after they started to volunteer in your organization? If yes, when and in what way?

Citations from the interviews



Yes - „There is one month for each volunteer. After this month we decide whether we continue work with this volunteer or not and after that we have the defined time for them, that is the schedule.. e.g. these volunteers that says that I'll be able to come [...] to do my work from 10 to 11 or 10 to 4. So, I write it down, we make the schedule. Due to this schedule they come [..].“ (4)

Yes - „We will have our next training course in July and we will ask them for the needs already at the end of May to have our agenda“ (13)

No - „We do it in a non-formal way, there is not a (single) week where I don't get in touch with the volunteers, with the mentors and ask how was the meeting with the teenagers and what were the problems.. and also the monthly general meetings with the volunteers.“ (8)

Chart 35: Do you survey new volunteers' needs according to a time schedule at defined time(s) after they started to volunteer in your organization

3 organizations survey new volunteers' needs according to a time schedule at defined time(s) after they started to volunteer in their organization. 9 CSOs stated they don't have a plan but 7 of them added they ask for volunteer's needs in a non-formal way and during meetings respectively. One interview partner had no knowledge about regarding this topic the time of the interview.

Do you ask volunteers for feedback? If yes, how often and how do you proceed?

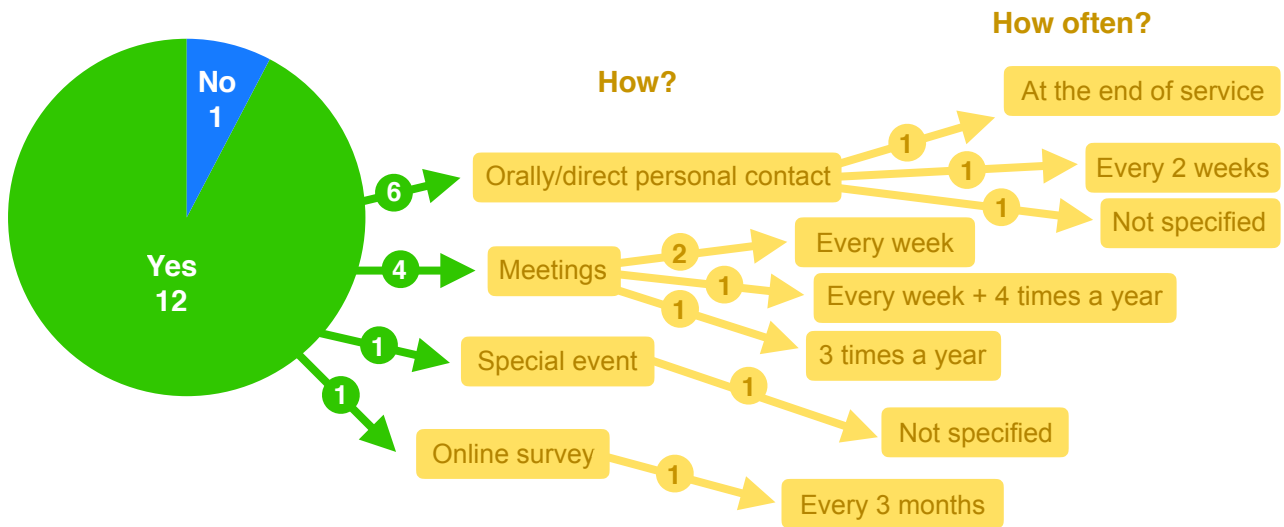


Chart 36: Do you ask volunteers for feedback? If yes, how often and how do you proceed?

Except one all of the interviewed organizations ask their volunteers for feedback. Most preferred way is direct personal contact with the volunteers (6), followed by meetings (4), a special feedback event (1) and conduction of online surveys (1). Frequencies vary from weekly to 4 times a year.

How do you evaluate the performance of volunteers and their service?



Chart 37: Number of organizations engaging volunteers in professional development

Citations from the interviews

No evaluation - „[...] [W]e are not interested in having that evaluation. We don't need it. We don't have any place to use it for. There is no sense in it yet. We haven't found any. (1)

Observation - „How I evaluate? Due to everyday observation of the work that they do and also taking the [opinion of] the supervisors.“ (4)

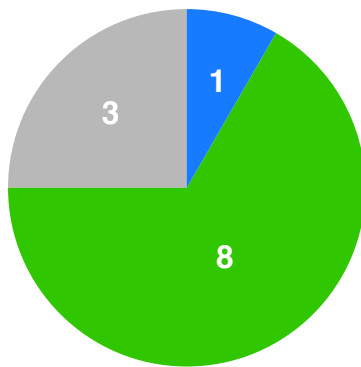
Achievement diaries - „For our [...] clubs we have evaluation tools. [The volunteers] are taking notes about their achievements.“ (3)

Badges, diaries, questionnaire - „Learning badges. [...] [T]his is a badge that you can get whenever you have performed certain things and you assess yourself whether I have developed [...] these competences in me and whether I deserved this badge. [T]hen the project staff confirms and they get these badges. This is the online badge system. This is one thing to evaluate themselves and also from our side to see whether the work is effective. Another thing is the learning diary [...] they fill in every their step. Again some kind of self-assessment tool. [A]nother thing that we developed this year was a document that we worked out with [a psychologist] to evaluate the initial stage when they come and [...] at the end of the program we will do again the same evaluation to compare their initial answers and their final answers.“ (13)

Regular evaluation meetings - „We have an assessment process once a month, but also once in 3 months assessments. [...] In the monthly meetings there are both the mentors and the mentees. So they assess the group work, how productive it was. In the assessment meeting that takes place once in 3 months, that's calculating both.. personal work with the teenagers and also the group work. [...] It's with a questionnaire the [3-month] assessment. [...]“ (8)

5 organizations answered they do evaluation of volunteers' performance and service by observation, whereas 3 organizations stated they don't do at all. On the other hand 4 organizations established evaluation tools consisting of regular evaluation meetings (2), learning badges, diaries, before-after questionnaires (1) and achievement diaries (1). One CSO didn't give an answer to the question. It has to be mentioned that most of the organizations having no or oral evaluation couldn't qualify the term 'performance evaluation' and needed further explanation to give an answer.

Do you provide exit interviews with volunteers who decided to discontinue their service?



- No
- Yes
- Didn't happen

Yes - „At the end of the program we always have an evaluation meeting. If the mentors go out before.. in the middle of the year.. we for sure meet with the volunteer to ask and to understand what was the reason.“ (8)

Yes - If they decide not to continue, in this case we discuss with the volunteer the reason [...] and also I give some kind of description of the work done, maybe a recommendation letter if this volunteer was an excellent one. If the volunteer didn't work so well.. [...] we'll say goodbye. Some kind of farewell party. (4)

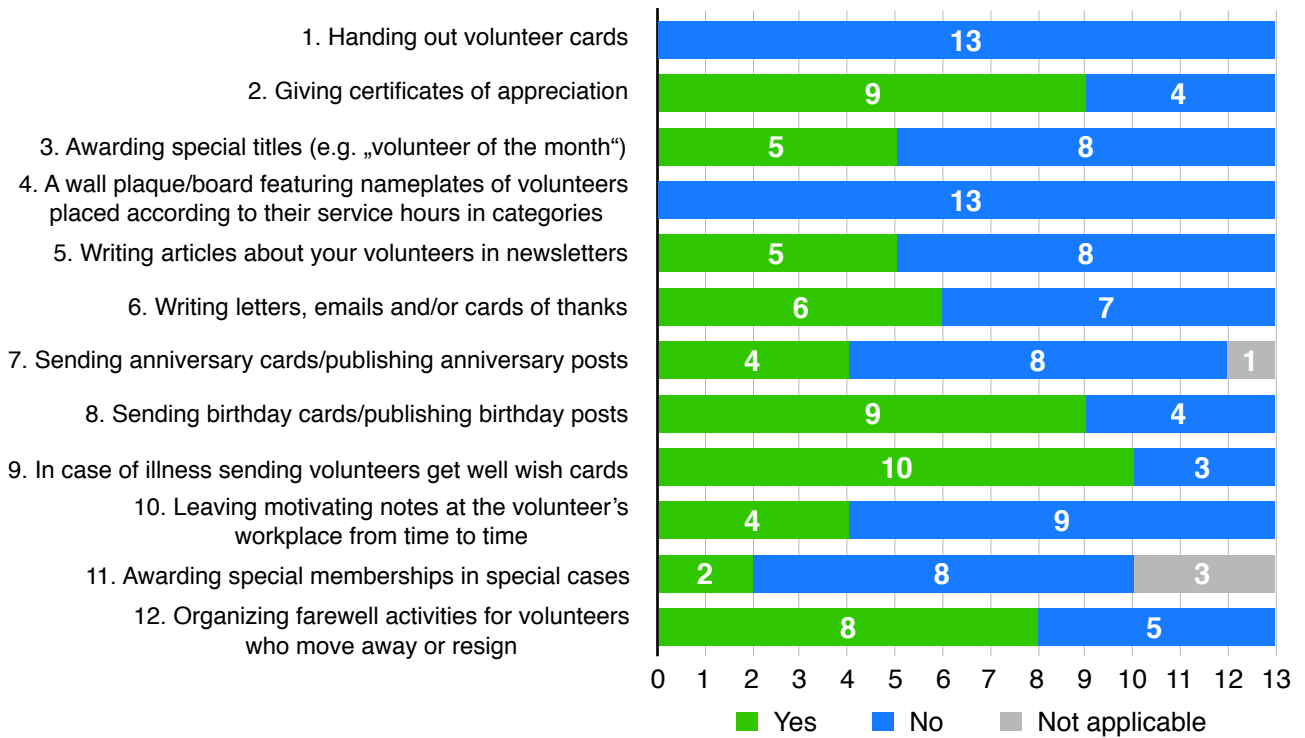
Yes - „Yes of course. We [have] an interview with this person. We give some orientation [...], provide information and also [...] encourage them, even they don't continue the volunteering to encourage them and to be involved [...] not to be a volunteer but to continue to participate in the activities. [...] For example the last girl, she told the reason. She didn't have time. They especially don't have time. Sometimes competences too.“ (13)

No - „We don't have“ (7)

Chart 38: Do you provide exit interviews with volunteers who decided to discontinue their service?

A majority of 8 interviewed organizations provides exit interviews with volunteers who decide to discontinue their service, whereas one said they don't provide. 3 CSOs stated they didn't have the case so far from which added they would organize an exit interview.

Please specify which of the following strategies you apply to recognize your volunteer:

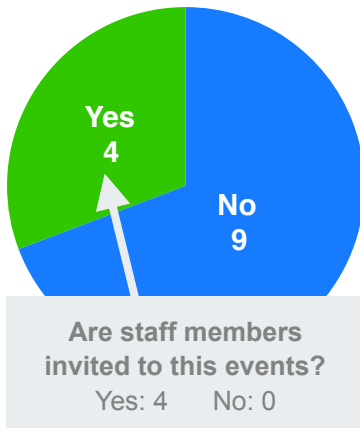


7. N/A - Organization exists for less than a year
 11. N/A - No membership available (2), organization is one year old (1)

Chart 39: Penetration of selected volunteer recognition strategies among the interviewed CSOs

Sending wish well cards (10/13), sending birthday posts/publishing birthday posts (9/13) and giving certificates of appreciation (9/13) are the most widespread recognition strategies among the interviewed organizations. On the other hand none of the CSOs hands out volunteers cards or has a wall plaque/board featuring nameplates of volunteers placed according to their service hours in categories. A minority awards special memberships in special cases (2/10), sends anniversary cards/publishes anniversary posts (4/12), leaves motivation notes at the volunteer’s workplace from time to time (4/13), awards special titles (5/13), writes articles about their volunteers in newsletters (5/13) and writes letters, email and/or cards of thanks (6/13), whereas a majority organizes farewell activities for volunteer who move away or resign (8/13).

Do you hold special social events honoring your volunteers? If yes, are staff members invited to those events?

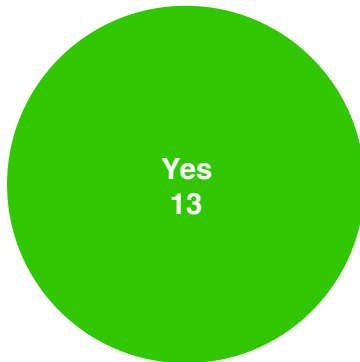


A minority of 4 interviewed organizations organizes special social events honoring their volunteers to which all of them invite their staff members. One organization from the 9 not holding stated that they once honored a volunteer individually. Another of them noted that certificates are given at the end of the project.

Chart 40: Do you hold special social events honoring your volunteers?

Do you involve volunteers in the implementation of projects of the organization?

Citations from the interviews



Yes - „Exactly and also from time to time we made events which depend on their ideas. In general we made a lot of activities which we didn't fix in the beginning of the year for the whole year but every time volunteers are coming [and] they say: 'Okay, we want this kind of event'. We check if we have resources and if we have time we said: ‚Okay [...] we can start‘.“ (2)

Yes - „Yes, of course. Sometimes they are involved in our monitoring team. They are with our staff members. About how we did this project, what are the results. Yes, of course.“ (3)

Yes - „Our staff is very small, so [...] activities are implemented with the help of volunteers.“ (5)

Chart 41: Do you involve volunteers in the implementation of projects of the organization?

All of the interviewed organizations answered that they involve volunteers in the implementation of projects of their organization.

Do you have additional strategies of recognition?

Additional strategies of recognition (Number of mentions)
Express value of volunteer/volunteer's work orally (2)
Recommend volunteer to other organizations (1)
Excursions free of charge (1)
Take volunteer to all kind of events to gain him/her experience/contacts (1)
Give recommendation letter for later work applications (1)
Find educational funds for volunteer (1)
Special events/parties (1)

Table 6: Additional strategies of recognition ordered by number of mentions

Further strategies of recognition that haven't been asked explicitly by former questions include: express the value of the volunteer respectively his/her work (2 mentions), recommendation of volunteers to other organizations (1), excursions free of charge (1), accompany of staff members to events (1), recommendation letters (1), finding educational funds for social and organization of special events/parties (1).

Please specify to what extent you agree with the following statements:

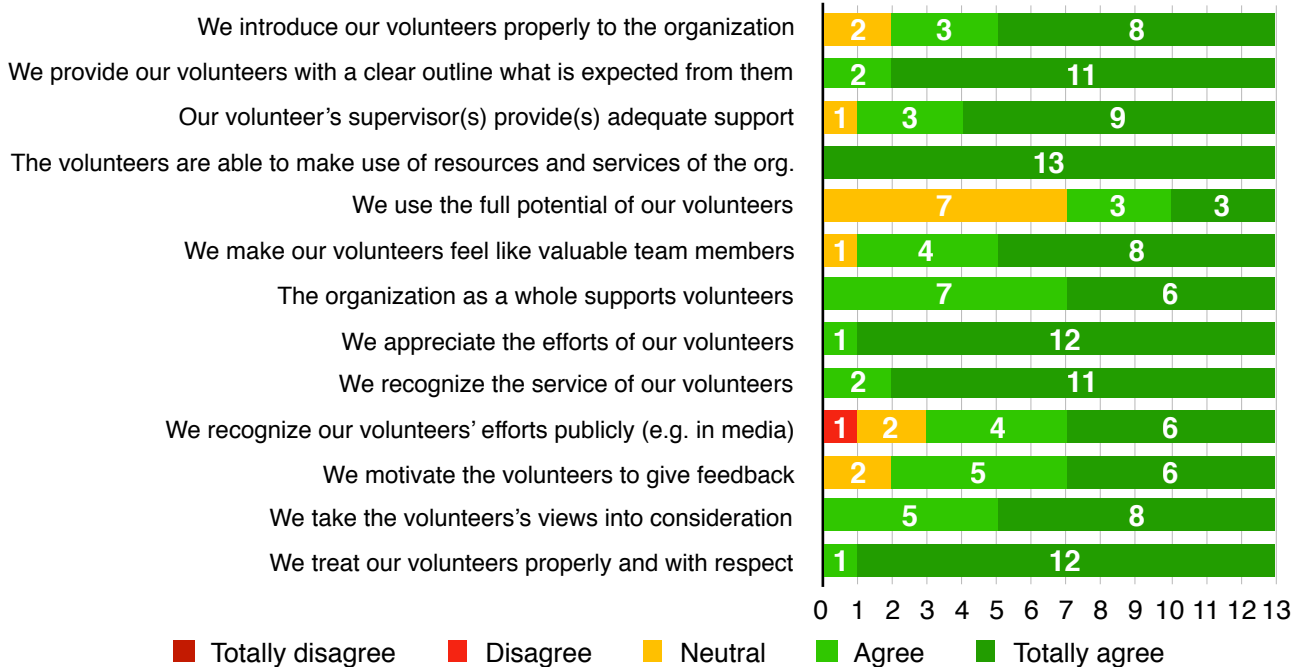


Chart 42: Agreement of statements among interviewed CSOs

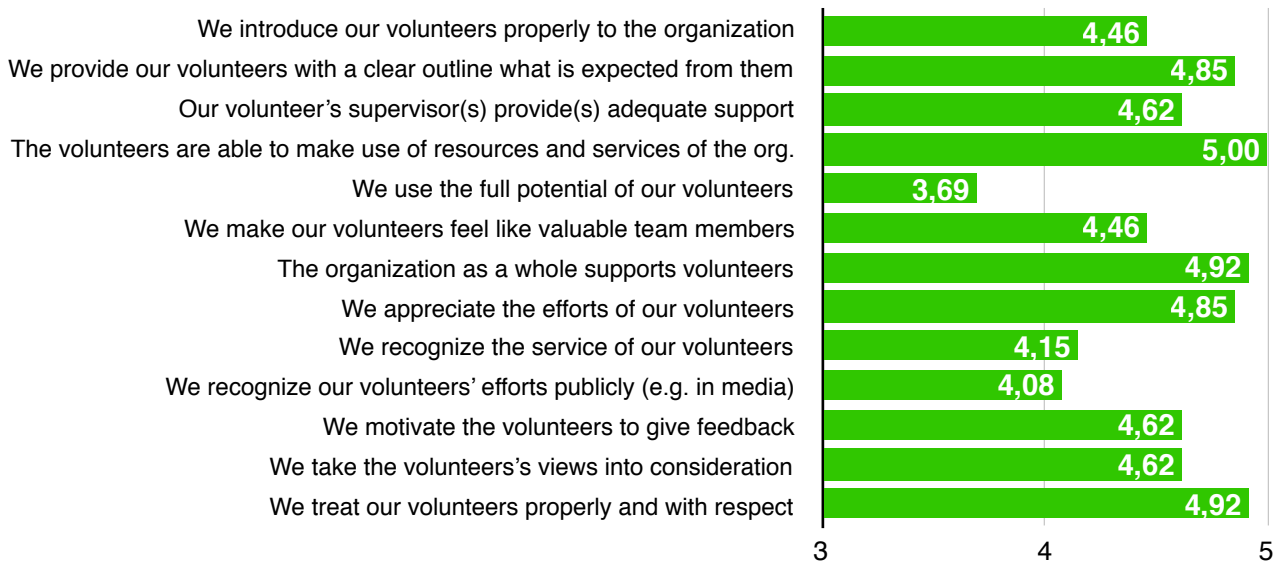
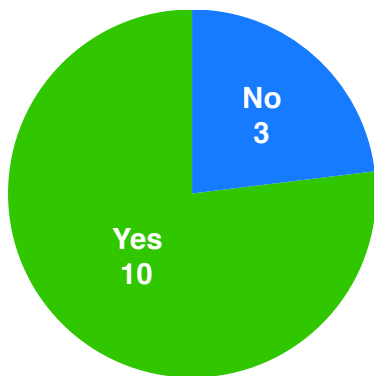


Chart 43: Agreement of statements among interviewed CSOs (calculated means)

All in all the above two charts show that all interviewed organizations agree with the statements (mean value > 3,00). The statements with the highest agreement levels are the ones related to providing facilities (5,00), properly treatment of volunteers (4,92) and support of volunteer in the organization (4,92), whereas 7 were self-critical about not using the full potential of their volunteers (3,69).

Should CSOs cooperate more closely in the field of volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition?



Suggested ways of closer cooperation ordered by number of mentions

1. Face-to-face meetings/conferences
2. Facebook group(s)
3. Online database for volunteers/volunteering opportunities
4. Organization of (much) more cooperate events
5. Exchange of mentors
6. Partnership in the framework of European Volunteer Service

Chart 44: Number of CSOs supporting/not supporting closer cooperation in the field of volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition

Citations from the interviews

„[...] [F]irst I think that we should have a real law“ [...] [A]ll NGOs should cooperate by making some volunteering days and some volunteering appreciation days, some trainings for them at least, because my opinion is that they do a lot for us and I know, some people say: 'You know, they are volunteers, they want to do that'. But I still think if someone does this with their own will we should do everything for them to appreciate their work. They should feel that their work is valuable. (1)

„[...] I think that we should cooperate. Maybe we can start at first by organizing a joined database [...] and also organizing events together, a lot of events. Not only once or twice per year. But a lot of.“ (4)

„We need a huge network with other organizations [...] Other organizations are sometimes not open and they don't want to participate in our projects, we don't want to participate in their projects. [...] we should find a way to connect all these organizations“ (3)

„The first thing that needs to be changed is the way of thinking [...], no-one owns the volunteer and the second one is very important for them to realize that it is very important to provide opportunities for their volunteers to develop [...] no matter whether [the volunteer] later leaves or not.“ (5)

„Yes, it's important to cooperate. E.g. if there is an organization where there is a mature person who can implement this work of mentor. Maybe they can advice and also in our organization, when we have a mentor who [...] can do some work in another place, it's always good to forward this person to that place.“
 „All variants can be used, but probably the online platforms with regard to being busy is not so effective. If there were meetings only about this topic probably it would be more effective.“ (8)

„It shouldn't be, it must be.“ [...] „Meetings face-to-face are the most important one. E.g volunteers from other organizations should come here and our volunteers should go there. It's very important.“ (10)

„We are of course very open for those kinds of ways, methods. [...] Online tools are not the best way, face-to-face meetings are very important.“ (11)

„For this moment we are satisfied with the partnership. [...] We don't need something more in this moment, it depends probably on the project. If we have bigger projects and if we need help or something, but at this moment we don't need.“ (13)

„Cooperation is important between NGOs, but when it comes directly to volunteering systems, it's not necessary. [...] Because their cooperation [...] is not connected to volunteers or volunteering systems. [...] If they have a big event.. in such cases it is important, such as organizing big concerts. In such cases it is important to work with other NGOs, like to find a volunteer. In that case they worked with us. But in other cases no.“ (6)

Ten from 13, so approximately three quarter of the interviewed organizations endorse a closer cooperation in the field of volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition. One organization is satisfied with the current cooperation and another one stated that cooperation between CSOs is not related to volunteering and volunteering systems. Ideas for ways of realization ordered by number of mentions are face-to-face meetings/conferences, Facebook groups, an online database for volunteers and volunteering opportunities, organization of more cooperate events, exchange of mentors and EVS related partnerships/cooperations.

8. Conclusions

Summing up the analysis of the results of the research carried out on perception of volunteering among youth and recruitment, retention and recognition strategies of CSOs we would like to present the main conclusions:

- 1) At the moment of the survey's conduct 12% of youth in Gyumri was volunteering and 40% has volunteering experience. In comparison to other age groups especially youth from 16 to 20 years gets attracted by voluntary work (27% higher than among all respondents) and in general females dominate among volunteers (37% higher). Although 61% of the people are not married, they account for 80% of the volunteers (31% higher).
- 2) A significant part of youth in Gyumri (37%) doesn't really know what volunteering is and therefore isn't able to know about its diverse benefits. 48% agreed partly or totally that they don't want to volunteer.
- 3) When asked for motivations Gyumri's youth sees volunteering at CSOs primarily as an opportunity for self-development and socializing with likeminded people and sharing because gaining/developing skills and knowledge and meeting new people and making friends gained the most agreement.
- 4) According to Gyumri youth the biggest obstacle for volunteering is lack of time due to obligations, but service hours of volunteers show that minor volunteering is common (37% of the volunteers do a service of less than 4 hours, 87% less than 10 hours per week).
- 5) Almost all of the organizations understand the importance of social media platforms for creating visibility. CSOs who are looking for more specific volunteer target groups (e.g. becoming teachers) found a way to reach out via specific recruitment channels (e.g. cooperations with educational institutions).
- 6) A big majority of the interviewed organizations does not only lack a written volunteer policy, their involvement of volunteers is also based on oral information exchange to a large extent. Only around half of the organizations have volunteer role descriptions, make new volunteers fill in application forms and a sign them a document with rights and responsibilities. The current ambiguity regarding the legal situation is clearly noticeable but cannot be held exclusively responsible for the huge lack of formal volunteer documentation.
- 7) Initial and ongoing training activities for volunteers are widespread among most of the interviewed organizations but form, duration, repeating interval and extent differ substantially from organization to organization. Former and current volunteers mostly prefer ongoing meetings with other volunteers (Good: 54%), but only 29% have a good experience with ongoing trainings. A significant minority of 22% didn't receive an introductory training.

- 8) „Mentorship“ is applied by a weak majority of the organizations (7/13), but most of them appoint a staff member with potential risk of bias in case of substantial problems between the volunteer and the organization.
- 9) All of the organizations stated that they provide necessary facilities to their volunteers. 3 of them showed unexpected good example by providing financial support (monetary encouragement or living assistance).
- 10) Tool based performance evaluation and need assessment didn't show only weak spread amongst the interviewed CSOs, some of the interview partners couldn't even qualify the terms and/or differences, needed multiple explanations and how those can be used for the good of all parties.
- 11) Recognition strategies of the interviewed organizations are mostly non-formal. Although all of the organizations take photos and/or videos of the volunteer's activities none of them creates visibility of individual volunteers in their organization. Only a minority of them organizes formal events to honor their volunteers. The results of the youth survey point up these problems because both general and public recognition ranks last among the statements asked to volunteers.
- 12) Although volunteering youth in general doesn't think that their potential hasn't been used by their organization, the majority of the interviewed organizations expressed self-criticism and awareness of this particular issue.
- 13) During the interviews some of the organizations indicated harmful competitive thinking among CSOs and demand for a general change of thinking. According to them these CSOs need to get rid of the idea to see other organizations as rivals and understand that cooperation benefits all.
- 14) About three quarter of the interviewed CSOs endorses a closer cooperation in the field of volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition. Most of the supporting organizations recommend face-to-face meetings.

9. Recommendations

In the closing chapter of this research we would like to present possible solutions to overcome the problems of the current situation:

Establishing of a common honoring event

The analysis has shown the deficit of recognition in general, but formal and public recognition strategies in special, therefore we recommend the establishing of an annual honoring event with participation of all (active) CSOs in Gyumri. This would be a great opportunity to create an official framework to recognize volunteers and demonstrate appreciation for volunteer's efforts beyond each organization's own four walls. In order to emphasize the case we suggest to involve the

municipality by handing over certificates, gifts etc. not only by responsible staff members, but together with local government officials. This formal occasion especially creates a good opportunity for smaller CSOs to establish an important element of formal recognition because holding those kind of events for a small number of volunteers in each organization isn't reasonable. The facilities of the Youth Palace CNCO could be an appropriate place to realize the event. We also want to emphasize that this suggestion shouldn't replace individual recognition events of organizations, but offer a special occasion to appreciate volunteers publicly.

Face-to-face meetings

The wide consent on closer cooperation and recommended ways of realization in the results of this research confirmed the assumption that Gyumri needs a platform to talk about recruitment, retention and recognition strategies for volunteers to overcome the present problems. We consider it as absolutely necessary to establish regular face-to-face-meetings of volunteer coordinators, respectively staff members being responsible for volunteers from organizations involving volunteers (horizontal cooperation) and people involved in law-making (vertical cooperation) from 3 to 4 times a year. The present research made the reasons obvious:

1. A significant number of interviewed organizations doesn't only lack strategies of recruitment, retention and recognition, but knowledge and understanding about these topics as well. The meetings would provide a good opportunity to enhance the common knowledge base and make CSOs aware of the reasons and needs for establishing them by showing more experienced organization's policies regarding voluntary work. A working group could also flesh out a volunteer policy template to simplify work for smaller organizations.
2. There is no handbook for perfect recruitment, retention and recognition of volunteers, methods are evolving and different with regard to organizations' field of activity, size, etc.. The meetings would provide a perfect occasion to share best practices and get impulses for methods that suit everyone's organization best. In this way evaluation tools like learning badges and learning diaries would become much more common.
3. Closer and frequent contact with other CSOs will contribute to overcome prejudices and rivalry mentality which has been expressed by some of the organizations during the interviews.
4. Involvement of lawmakers creates a chance to benefit both sides: The legislative side gets a good overview over the practical reality within CSOs and can therefore estimate consequences of adopting law changes. The organizations on the other hand have direct contact to lawmakers and are able to influence law by speaking more powerful with a single voice. The meetings also provide a great opportunity to eliminate the current ambiguity in the implementation of current and future laws on voluntary work.

Establishing a volunteer and training database

Informing partner organizations about open volunteer opportunities and passing volunteers to more suitable CSOs is exemplary practice, but many times dependent on the subjective decision of a

single person and related to personal contacts. For this reason we recommend the creation of an online database for voluntary work and training opportunities.

The platform would be used bidirectionally by listing both organization's open volunteer opportunities accessible for everyone and people's volunteer offers in a login-secured system based on an online questionnaire to identify interests and skills on the other side. This central approach would create an additional recruitment channel with much higher visibility for CSOs. The bidirectional approach furthermore increases the probability of involvement of people willing to volunteer, but not willing to inform themselves about open volunteer opportunities that suit individual interest by passing the ball over to the organizations. General information and FAQs about voluntary work on the website also give a chance to provide a better knowledge among people being affine for voluntary work.

For the training part organizations would enter their training opportunities with free contingents for external participants. In this way organizations conducting only few trainings could offer their volunteers more opportunities for self-development.

EVS partnerships

During the interviews one organization expressed the will to host EVS volunteers but limited capacity to handle the bureaucratically part and reach out to international volunteers. We suggest to establish EVS partnerships between organizations with large experience in the framework of EVS as host/coordinating/sending organizations and smaller CSOs.

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