



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԿԱՐԻՏԱՍ  
ARMENIAN CARITAS



Federal Foreign Office



# MAPPING OF VOLUNTEERING ORGANISATIONS IN ARMENIA

Sociological research of best practices



The mapping has been carried out with the assistance of Youth Studies Institute



---

# Mapping of Volunteering Organisations in Armenia

Sociological research of best practices

**Author: Marina Galstyan**

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
1. Situation Analysis of Volunteering in Georgia, Germany, Russia and Ukraine .....	5
1.1. Volunteering in Georgia.....	5
1.2. Volunteering in Germany.....	7
1.3. Volunteering in Russia.....	10
1.4. Volunteering in Ukraine.....	12
2. Volunteering in Armenia .....	16
3. Mapping of volunteer involving organizations in Armenia: Survey of best practices .....	19
3.1. Legal framework for volunteering and factors affecting development of volunteering in Armenia .....	19
3.2. Administration and governance of volunteering .....	22
Voluntary organizations in Armenia .....	22
Administration of volunteers in Armenian NGOs.....	25
3.3. Perspectives for developing volunteering in Armenia.....	28
4. Recommendations .....	31
Appendix 1. List of Organizations Participated in the Research.....	34
Appendix 2. Interview Guide.....	36

## Introduction

There are lot of governmental and non-governmental organizations in Armenia, which usually deal with volunteers, invlove volunteers or implement volunteering activities in their daily work. The main objective of this research is not to cover all those organizations but to identify key issues and study best practices in order to develop recommendations for stakeholders. For this purpose, 17 in-depth interviews have been conducted and 14 online questionnaires have been filled by representatives of well-known volunteer involving organizations of Armenia. This research has been conducted in October-November 2018.

This mapping of volunteer involving organizations in Armenia is conducted in frames of “Promoting of Volunteer Structures and Volunteerism in Eastern European Countries” Program of the “Armenian Caritas” Benevolent NGO.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. Mapping of volunteering organizations in Armenia,
2. Mapping of methods, tools and formats of volunteer management, application and monitoring processes,
3. Development of recommendations for developing volunteerism in Armenia.

In order to compare and identify the differences with situation of volunteering in Armenia desk review of volunteering in Georgia, Germany, Russia and Ukraine has been conducted and presented in this paper.

The research was implemented with support of Youth Studies Institute.

The interviews were conducted with the assistance of two volunteers of Armenian Caritas - Tatev Avetisyan and Artur Yengoyan.

# 1. Situation Analysis of Volunteering in Georgia, Germany, Russia and Ukraine

There are different laws, criterias, methods and tools used by countries with respect to volunteering. In order to compare and identify the differences from the situation of volunteering in Armenia, situation analysis of volunteering of the following countries has been conducted and presented in this chapter: Georgia, Germany, Russia and Ukraine.

## 1.1. Volunteering in Georgia

The culture and practice of volunteering in Georgia, has experienced significant shifts over the last three decades, mostly in line with the general changes in social and political reforms. According to "EU Youth Wiki Georgia"<sup>1</sup> report, volunteering is a very recent policy area in Georgia. Over the first two decades since independence, there were no legal steps towards promoting and developing volunteer activities in Georgia. Until 2015/2016 it wasn't considered necessary to encourage volunteering through laws and formal regulation. Labour and tax codes were the main documents regulating issues relating to employment, salaries and taxes. The legislation did not in any way reflect the notion of "volunteer" or voluntary work. One of the key impulses for policy development in the field of volunteering in Georgia emerged following the deadly Tbilisi flood of 13 June 2015. Thousands of volunteers, mostly young people, across the country mobilised within hours of the flood to help the affected families, distribute supplies to flood victims and clean the streets and public spaces. Soon after the flood (on 23 June 2015) the Parliament of

---

<sup>1</sup>[https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/10536484/YouthWiki\\_volunteering\\_Georgia.pdf/a9f68cba-ed65-c160-0fc3-62b71e168dd7](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/10536484/YouthWiki_volunteering_Georgia.pdf/a9f68cba-ed65-c160-0fc3-62b71e168dd7)

Georgia began discussing a draft law on volunteering which was introduced by the Civil Society Institute (CSI) in March 2014. The law was adopted in December 2015. The **law** provided a basic **definition of volunteering activity and volunteers** and regulated volunteer status outside the labour code.

According to the **Law of Georgia on Volunteering**<sup>2</sup>, "Volunteering is a socially useful activity voluntarily and gratuitously performed by natural persons, using their knowledge and skills, under organised conditions in accordance with the law." The law also defines such important aspects of volunteering as:

- Volunteer relations and parties,
- Rights and obligations of volunteers and host organisations,
- Compensation for expenses incurred in the performance of volunteering activities,
- Ensuring volunteers' safety,
- Liability of the host organisation,
- Volunteer agreements and
- Working hours of volunteers.

The results of a 2017 Caucasus Barometer survey in Georgia show that 80% of Georgians (of which 57% thinks that it is extremely important) thinks that **it is important for a good citizen to do a volunteer work**. At the same time 91% of Georgians thinks that it is important for a good citizen to support people who are worse off (of which 75% that it is extremely important).

Another recent study has shown that although Georgian citizens recognise the benefits that volunteering can bring and they are open to state-supported volunteering programmes, they prefer to be

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/download/3132612/0/en/pdf>

involved in organised volunteering, rather than initiate volunteering activities themselves.<sup>3</sup>

As of May 2018, very few action plan commitments relevant to volunteering have been implemented. Most of those are the actions that had already been implemented or planned by the ministries as part of other programmes or activities. They include: involvement of young people in volunteer activities, popularisation of volunteering among youth, involvement of volunteers (both national and international) in the European Youth Summer Olympic Festival 2015 and involvement of international volunteers in the programmes carried out by the Crime Prevention Centre. All of the above activities have been implemented under the programmes implemented by the central state bodies like the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (now the Ministry of Education and Science) and the Centre for Crime Prevention.

Georgia is involved in the EU European Voluntary Service (EVS), part of the Erasmus+ Programme. Since the beginning of Erasmus+ in 2014, Georgian-based organisations received over €2.1 million in funding for a total of 403 Georgian young people volunteering in Erasmus+ Programme countries. Georgian youth's participation in the programme is monitored by SALTO Youth Eastern Europe and the Caucasus Resource Centre.

## **1.2. Volunteering in Germany**

A large proportion of people in Germany are engaged in voluntary work, and this rate of engagement has increased considerably over

---

<sup>3</sup> Volunteerism in Georgia: Survey Summary and Recommendations (2012), Eurasia Partnership Foundation and Caucasus Research Resource Centres (CRRC), available at: [http://crrc.ge/uploads/tinymce/documents/Completed-projects/Volunteerism\\_Report\\_\\_ENG.pdf](http://crrc.ge/uploads/tinymce/documents/Completed-projects/Volunteerism_Report__ENG.pdf), accessed 9 June 2018.



the past twenty years. Of the resident population of Germany aged 14 and above, 47%<sup>4</sup> stated that they had engaged in volunteering within the last twelve months. The forms of volunteering that they engaged in are extremely varied in terms of the organisational framework in which the volunteering was done, the degree of formality with which their function was defined and the actual tasks carried out. There are a number of different national and international state-funded voluntary services in Germany young people can engage in.

The concept of a Voluntary Social Year<sup>5</sup> for young people first appeared in 1954. In 1958 the Catholic church established the campaign Young people for young people. In the early 1960s, independent welfare associations and the organisations affiliated with them laid the groundwork for a voluntary year.

On 1 April 1964, Germany adopted the Act to promote a voluntary social year. This act, along with the Act to promote a voluntary ecological year, was superseded in 2008 by the Act to Promote Youth Voluntary Services. This 2008 act is the legal framework for opportunities for volunteers, the educational support they receive, and their social security. In 1993 Germany introduced the Voluntary Ecological Year, followed in 2011 by the Federal Volunteer Service. Under this scheme, volunteers can opt to work in various areas such as social welfare, sports, projects involving children and young people, monument preservation, culture, peace projects or activities to support refugees.

Main actors of volunteering in Germany are presented below:

---

<sup>4</sup> Volunteering in Germany, Forth German Survey on Volunteering

<sup>5</sup> <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/21-general-principles-germany>

- 1.1. Within the Federal Government, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is primarily responsible for the political framework around civic commitment.
- 1.2. In 2015, a department for civic commitment policy was set up inside the Ministry.
- 1.3. Within that department, section 123 is responsible for the Federal Volunteer Service, while section 124 is responsible for the youth voluntary services. (more detailed information on administration and governing of volunteering in Germany is presented [here](#)<sup>6</sup>.

According to survey results<sup>7</sup> people get involved in volunteering in a variety of different sectors which are presented below:

1. Sport and exercise-16.3%
2. School or nursery area-9.1%
3. Culture and music-9.0%
4. Social area-8.5%
5. Church or religious area-7.6%
6. Leisure and social interaction-5.8%
7. Youth work outside school or adult education-4.0%
8. Politics and political interest groups-3.6%
9. Environment, nature protection or animal rights-3.5%
10. Accident of ambulance service or voluntary fire brigade-2.9%
11. Professional interest groups outside work-2.5%
12. Health area-2.5%
13. Justice and criminality-0.7%

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/22-administration-and-governance-youth-volunteering-germany>

<sup>7</sup> Volunteering in Germany, Forth German Survey on Volunteering

The motives for volunteering are many and various, but interestingly the pleasure the volunteers themselves get out of it is of particular importance. When one makes a comparison between the genders, women can be seen to be slightly more likely than men to mention their own well-being and social factors, while men tend more than women to appeal to motives connected to material or immaterial utility.

According to Forth German Survey on Volunteering results the number of people engaged in volunteering is growing: as of 2014, 44% of Germany's resident population aged 14 and above do voluntary work. During 2000-2014, the rate of volunteering has increased by almost ten percentage points. During that period, the rate of participation grew at a faster pace than in earlier periods. The increase in engagement can be traced back to such social change as the expansion of education and the increased intensity with which voluntary engagement is being addressed in politics and among the general public.

### **1.3. Volunteering in Russia**

The surge of organized youth volunteer movement in Russia occurred in the period Winter Olympics in Sochi in 2014. The Association of Volunteer Centers was created as continuation of the volunteer program "Sochi-2014". This became a catalyst for development volunteer movement in Russia. At the moment there are already more than 100 centers in 56 regions of the country. The centers are coordinated by committees for youth affairs, universities, Ministry of Education structures.

During the "Volunteer of Russia" award concert which was held in December, 2017, President of Russian Federation declared **2018 as a Year of Volunteers.**

In February 5, 2018 the President of Russian Federation signed the Federal Law On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation on Volunteer Work. The Federal Law establishes the legal framework for regulating **relations in the field of volunteering**<sup>8</sup>. In particular, the law clarifies the **concept and objectives of volunteering**, determines the **legal status of volunteers**, stipulates specific powers of state authorities and local government bodies in this area, and specifies the details of attracting volunteers for religious organisations. To implement the state policy in volunteering, the Federal Law provides for the building and maintenance of a single database containing information on individuals who participate in volunteer work.

According to the Law, currently an organizer of a charity event, a volunteer action, can sign a **civil law contracts with volunteers**. The organizer can prescribe **the right of a volunteer** to food, equipment, hiring premises and even, if necessary, life and health insurance. Besides, information about the participation of a volunteer in a charity project can be entered at his request in the **volunteer's personal book**. The law also clearly defines **the mechanism of interaction with volunteers of various authorities**. Now organizers of charity events and events can receive support at the municipal, regional or federal levels - including in the form of cost recovery and insurance.

If a person decided to devote his free time to volunteering activities, or is interested in voluntary organizations he or she can follow the link of a single portal [добровольцыроссии.рф](http://dobrovolycyrossii.ru). Creation of this website is also provided by the Law. Organizations which are needed in volunteers (museums, hospitals, orphanages, animal shelters) can

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://en.kremlin.ru/acts/news/56800>

leave applications here, and people are looking for what exactly they can do to help their community.

Some of the **active volunteer organizations** in Russia are presented below:

1. The Federal Agency for Youth Affairs and FGBU Rospatriottsentr,
2. The Association of Volunteer Centers of Russia,
3. The Agency for Strategic Initiatives,
4. The Russian Movement of Schoolchildren,
5. The All-Russian Public Movement "Victory Volunteers",
6. The All-Russian Public Volunteer Movement in the sphere of healthcare "Volunteers-doctors",
7. The All-Russian Student Corps of Rescuers.

## **1.4. Volunteering in Ukraine**

Volunteering activities are identified as part of the policy of various executive bodies in Ukraine. The beginning of hostilities and the increase in volunteering movements in 2014 forced various authorities to respond to the needs of volunteers and to recognise that it is difficult to manage some situations without involving volunteers.

Volunteer movement development in Ukraine is influenced by the following basic directions:

1. **Volunteer – free labour in non-commercial organisations** helping different groups of people in any activity, education, development spheres. Such a volunteer movement direction which is not age restricted enables their creative and social self-realisation, self-development and self-observance;
2. **Systematic or episodic volunteer assistance**, provided to state institutions as part of their social policy implementation – help,

aimed at educational establishments in their work, social assurance institutions in their work with children and youth with special needs, as well as with aged people;

3. Volunteer activity is a result of **creative self-development and the education of others**, but it is not a professional activity;
4. **Pedagogically orientated volunteer activity** is a mechanism to develop personality, its socialisation and spiritual foundation. This direction develops in children and youth unions (with the aim of socially significant activities), in different Family and Youth Social Services Centres (FYSSC).

The volunteer movement's characteristic feature, spontaneously developing within different social institutions, organisations and unions in Ukraine, is an inclusion of the 15–20-year-old youth taking part in volunteer activities.

According to the Law on Volunteering Activity<sup>9</sup>, the Government of Ukraine (Cabinet of Ministers) is the main responsible body for the implementation of policy in the field of volunteering, the development of State Target Programmes on volunteering and for the co-ordination of the responsible ministries in the field of volunteering (Article 3, p. 2). There are no special regulations regarding which ministries should implement this policy or about how they should do this, as no strategic document has been adopted. According to the Law, by implementing volunteering policy the central executive body should secure, promote, inform and support non-government and charity organisations in volunteering (Article 3, p. 3). The same relates to the regional administrations and local self-governments.

The facilitation of various initiatives was under the responsibility of the presidential administration and the government. As a result,

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3236-17>

besides the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Social Policy, which were partly responsible for volunteering issues before 2014, four other ministries developed their own frameworks and regulations as a response to the new situation: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance.

Nowadays the Ministry of Youth and Sports is the only executive body at the national level related to the issue of volunteering of young people. The Ministry of Social Policy according to the Law on Volunteering Activity and the Law on Humanitarian Assistance co-ordinates the international charity activity and provides a database and certification of NGOs working in humanitarian aid (cargo) and international volunteering. The Ministry of Health communicates with medical volunteers in a non-formal way and formally within the Civil Society Consultative Council.

There is no particular nationwide managed volunteering system in general and youth volunteering. There is no data on how many young people participate in military volunteering and volunteering for ATO (even in this regard, there is no co-ordination between the ministries). Therefore, there is no co-ordinated division of responsibility and co-operation either at the national level, or between the national, regional and local levels.

There are thousands of volunteer organisations and initiatives that have emerged since 2014, and it is impossible to determine the number: it is constantly changing, and many volunteers do not advertise their activities. There are networking practices between various volunteering groups at regional and local level; nevertheless, conflicts and antagonisms are also present.

Today, there are the following volunteer movement centres in Ukraine<sup>10</sup>:

- Coordination Council on Volunteer Movement Development and Support within the Labour and Social Policy Ministry of Ukraine;
- Ukrainian Civic Centre "Volunteer"; – Civic Organisations Development Resource Centre "Gurt";
- Ukrainian National Centre for Youth Social Services;
- „Pensioner" Volunteer Organisation, War Veterans Organisation Councils;
- Civic Organisations and Initiatives Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Ukraine.

According to surveys conducted by sociological organisations in 2014-2016, volunteers enjoy the greatest confidence of the population among all public and state institutions: 60-70% of the polled Ukrainians trust them. In modern Ukraine, the volunteer movement has become more and more popular.

---

<sup>10</sup> "The volunteer movement in Ukraine and its role in the cross-sectoral partnership", Serhiy Troyan, Pawel Troyan



## 2. Volunteering in Armenia

Volunteering has a long history in Armenia starting from the pre-Christian era up to the present day. In Armenia, emergency situations were important incentives which have affected the development of culture of volunteering. As a result volunteering became related more to charity. Particularly after the 1988 Spitak earthquake and during the 1990s Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Armenian volunteers reacted immediately and aided the survivors of the earthquake as well as war victims.<sup>11</sup>

It is no accident that the [RA Law on Non-Governmental Organisations](#), put into circulation in 2014-2015, was adopted in 2016, which then [regulated the work with volunteers in civil society organisations \(CSOs\)](#). Despite the definitely established tradition of volunteering, no nationwide research on the current situation of volunteering in Armenia has yet been conducted. Nevertheless, based on some research it can be concluded that volunteering in Armenia is mainly non-formal. According to 2014 CIVICUS data, 14% of the Armenian population has been involved in voluntary work. In the case of formal volunteering, it turns out that only 2% of volunteers are involved in public and charity organisations; the larger amount of them, 9%, are involved in political parties and 6% in religious organisations.<sup>12</sup>

In December 2005, the Republic of Armenia ratified the European Convention on the Promotion of Transnational Long-Term Voluntary Service for Young People and took up obligations of promoting and encouraging volunteering. A similar obligation is also specified by the

---

<sup>11</sup> EU Youth Wiki, Armenia Chapter II: Voluntary activities, Marina Galstyan

<sup>12</sup> See above

UN letter of recommendation on "Assistance to Volunteering" (10 January 2002).

Armenia is taking part in the Erasmus+ programme, and in line with that there are several organisations accredited for sending and hosting EVS volunteers.

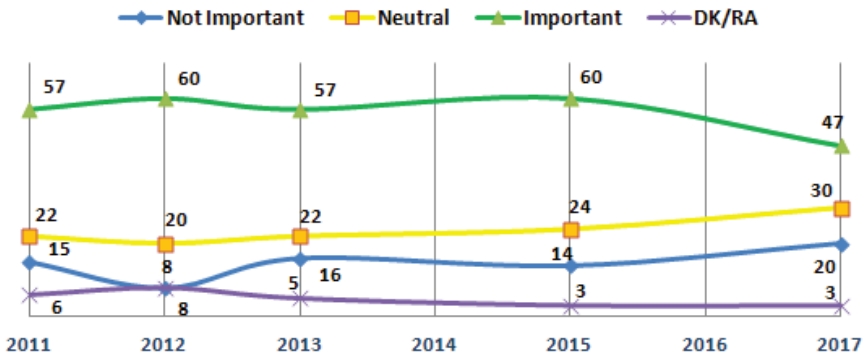
The Info Centres are organisations experienced in the Erasmus+ programme in Eastern Partnership countries and Russia. In every country of the region SALTO EECA selected one organisation to manage the official Info Centre. Gyumri "Youth Initiative Centre" (YIC) NGO is in charge of co-ordination of activities of the Erasmus+ Youth. Info Centre in Armenia, which started its operations in 2017.

The results of a 2017 Caucasus Barometer survey in Armenia show that 47% of Armenians (of which only 25% think that it is extremely important) thinks that it is important for a good citizen to do a volunteer work. If we compare this result with the previous survey which was conducted in 2015, we may notice that level of importance of volunteering has considerably decreased and it is at the lowest level compared to the previous 6 years<sup>13</sup>.

---

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb-am/IMPGCVW/>

**How important it is for a good citizen to do volunteer work meeting the needs of the community without expecting any compensation? (%)**



At the same time the **actual participation** in volunteering decreased slightly: 32% of Armenians mentioned that during the past 6 months they have been involved in volunteering without compensation, compared to 37% in 2015 (from 2011-2013 this percent was lower than 32%). Decrease in volunteering activities is somehow correlated with increase of **online participation**: only 5% in 2015 made a comment in the internet with respect to important questions, while in 2017 18% of Armenians mentioned so. According to previously conducted volunteering related surveys in Armenia and abroad, there is a strong connection between volunteer work and public participation. Volunteering is perceived as the highest level of public participation.

### 3. Mapping of volunteer involving organizations in Armenia: Survey of best practices

This mapping of volunteer involving organizations in Armenia is conducted in frames of “Promotion of Volunteer Structures and volunteerism in Eastern European Countries” Project of the “**Armenian Caritas**” Benevolent NGO.

#### 3.1. Legal framework for volunteering and factors affecting development of volunteering in Armenia

The main factors that have a negative impact on the development of volunteering are the existing “compulsory volunteering” stereotype, difficult social-economic conditions, the relevant imperfect legal framework and the perception of volunteering as a contributing factor to career development. The use of the voluntary potential is mostly spread in civil society structures. Various youth movements also had an impact on the spread of volunteering in Armenia in the 1990s. In Armenia volunteering is closely connected also with charity. It is no surprise that the term “voluntary” has been specified by the **Law on Charity of the Republic of Armenia (RA)**.<sup>14</sup>

Article 9 of the Law on Charity of RA reads: “**Volunteers** are the physical persons that proceeding from the purposes of the Law implement unpaid work for the beneficiaries.” Relations upon the volunteering and voluntary work in the country are definitely regulated also by the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations of RA.

---

<sup>14</sup> EU Youth Wiki, Armenia Chapter II: Voluntary activities, Marina Galstyan

The **Law on Non-Governmental Organisations of RA** allows the non-governmental organisations (except for religious organisations, parties and trade unions) to involve volunteers in their non-entrepreneurial activity. If voluntary work exceeds 20 hours per week, definite repayment regulations on signing a contract with the volunteer and on the contract content of the voluntary work are specified.

Legislative omissions of regulating voluntary work also concern the lack of regulation of volunteering and its relation to other similar activities. The other concept of voluntary activities relates to **internship**, regulated by the **Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia**. Article 201.1 of the Code reads: "The employer, at his or her expense where necessary, may organise the professional training of students or persons being accepted for employment for 6 months thus paying the students a scholarship at least the minimum salary established by the Law throughout the training."

During this research the interviewees/respondents mentioned number of **obstacles existing in Armenia for development of volunteering**:

1. Imperfect legal framework, absence of Law on Volunteering,
2. There is no mechanism to reimburse any of the costs related/done by volunteers, Imperfect and non-clearly defined process of voluntary compensation or repayment regulations,
3. Volunteer work does not count as experience, but in many cases the tasks can be similar,
4. Lack of financial and time resources to support volunteering in Armenia,
5. Absence of mechanisms to organize the field leaves volunteers unprotected against any incidents, legally organizations would

not be responsible for anything that happens during their work,

6. Many organizations strongly rely on volunteer work, but it does not have any legal mechanism to facilitate, so all organization find a way around,
7. Gaps in Labour Code with respect to rights and responsibilities of volunteers,
8. Voluntary compensation is taxed,
9. Problems in signing contracts with foreign volunteers, related with accommodation and payments
10. Absence of unified voluntary recognition system, volunteer registration database.

Based on the above mentioned information we can state, that most of the obstacles for developing volunteering in Armenia have related to the absence of necessary legal regulations and law.

However, not all the respondents agree that there is a need in a separate Law on volunteering. Most of the respondents (21) mentioned that there is a need in separate law, 5 of them thinks that there is no need, and it was difficult to answer the question for 5 of them. Respondents mentioned several pros and cons arguments with respect to Law on Volunteering, which are presented below:

<b>Arguments <b>for</b> having a Law on Volunteering</b>	<b>Arguments <b>against</b> having a Law on volunteering</b>
Existence of clear mechanisms of volunteer work	Volunteering is already regulated by other laws
Coordination, regulation and management of voluntary activities	There is a risk that the law could limit the activities of volunteers
Separation of voluntary work from internship	The involvement of volunteers (especially foreigners) could become more complicated

### **3.2. Administration and governance of volunteering**

In Armenia there is no common **system of volunteering governance**. Volunteering as an employment type is regulated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the RA. The Programme of the Government of the RA 2017-2022 involves the Labour and Social Policy directions. It was planned that the legal basis of establishment and development of voluntary work will be completed by the end of 2018, but it is not completed yet.

There is no cross-sectoral co-operation between ministries and agencies. However, the drafting of the volunteering law project has been realised on co-management principles. There is no common system of volunteer registration in Armenia. Information about volunteers and possibilities of volunteering may be available through various sources; besides, they are co-ordinated by the NGOs.

Generally, since the 1990s the volunteering development has been closely related to the activities of public and charity organisations in Armenia.

#### **Voluntary organizations in Armenia**

There are number of NGOs and state institutions which are dealing with volunteers or involve them in their activities. Some well known voluntary organizations are as follows:

1. The **"Armenian Volunteers' Bank" (AVB)** started working in 2013, and in 2016 it was registered as an NGO working with youth. The AVB is missioned to promote the formation and development of the culture of volunteering. The AVB co-ordinates the work of more than 1 500 volunteers. The AVB has three areas of activity:

- managing the relations between volunteer and the organisations where they volunteer (provision of volunteers),
  - organising events,
  - professional practice.
2. Volunteers of “**Armenian Caritas**” (NGO) mainly perform the organisation’s mission and ideology as they have been involved in various activity spheres of the organisation since its establishment. Since 2010, the process of implementing volunteering in Armenian Caritas has become institutional; Armenian Caritas organised the establishment of the Youth Council of Armenian Caritas (YCAC), which included volunteers and also those interested in volunteering according to their common interests and issues. From 2014, it was renamed “Armenian Caritas Volunteer Corps”, as the principle was the encouragement of volunteering rather than the involvement of youth. At present, more than 80 volunteers are involved in various projects of Armenian Caritas. They work with the aged, children with disabilities and with adolescents of socially indigent families, they participate in diverse community projects as well as in carrying out administrative work in the offices and centres of Armenian Caritas. Since 2010, the organisation has had more than 330 volunteers from various cities of Armenia as well as from the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany and the USA.
  3. The **Armenian Red Cross (ARC)** is one of the organisations the volunteers actively participate in. A volunteer member of the ARC is a person who wishes to work unpaid for the ARC. At present, the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) has a vast group of volunteers who participate in implementing various projects aimed at meeting the needs of vulnerable and indigent people.
  4. The **Voluntary Service of Armenia – Republican Headquarters of Student Brigades (HUJ)** was founded in 1965 and is registered as a non-governmental organisation, with headquarters situated in

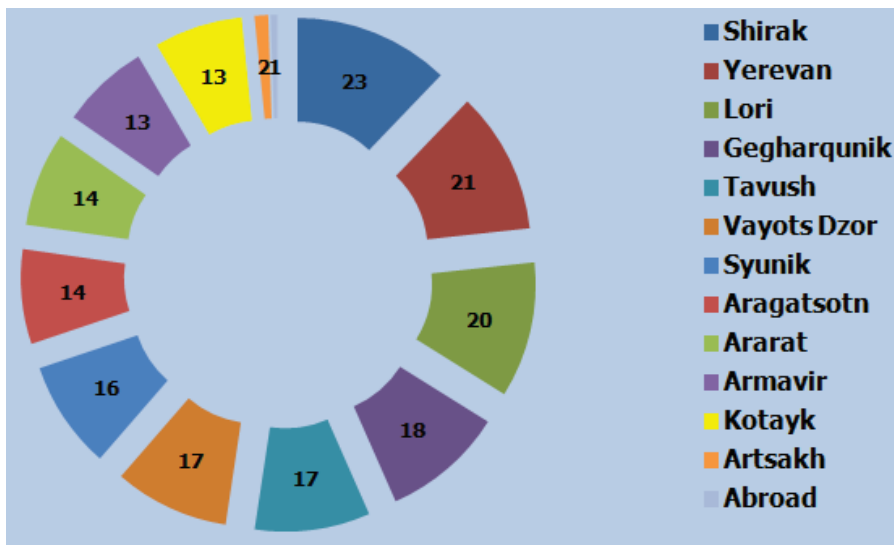


Yerevan, Armenia. HUJ is a full member of two big international networks active in the field of International Voluntary Service: the Co-ordinating Committee of the International Voluntary Service at UNESCO and the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations. At present HUJ organises volunteer exchanges with 120 partner organisations abroad and holds a database of registered volunteers exceeding 3 000 people.

5. **Birthright Armenia** provides young Diaspora Armenians with the opportunity to connect to their ancestral homeland. The programme participants commit to at least 30 hours of volunteering per week, they are given the opportunity to live with a local host family, improve their Armenian language skills, meet and interact with other participants from around the world, travel on an excursion every weekend and gain knowledge and education about the country and culture through forums and gatherings.
6. **The Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC)** invites volunteers of 21 years of age and older, of all backgrounds from across the globe, to volunteer or intern in Armenia for a minimum stay of one month to a maximum of one year, to serve in a job placement of their own choosing.
7. **The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)** Internship Programme gives high-achieving university students valuable unpaid work experience that helps them set a solid foundation for their professional endeavours.

During research the respondents from the well-known 31 voluntary organizations asked to **mention up to five organizations, NGOs which work with volunteers**. Representatives of 16 organizations mentioned from 1-3 organization, the rest 15 respondents mentioned from 4 to 5 organizations.

Regional Coverage of NGOs participated in this research is presented below:

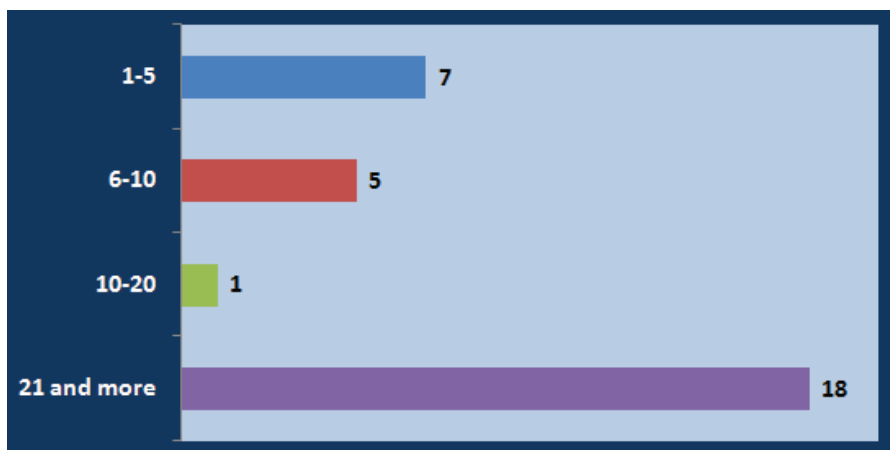


As we may see from the chart NGOs implementing their projects in all Marzes of Armenia. However 15 of 31 NGOs are working only in one region, 2 of them-in 2 regions, 1-in 5 regions, 2-in 6 regions, 1 in 7 regions and 13 in all ten marzes and Yerevan. However according to respondents this coverage does not necessarily mean that volunteers are also working in other regions except the Head offices of NGOs.

## Administration of volunteers in Armenian NGOs

Most of the research participant organizations (18 NGOs) are working with 21 and more volunteers.

However, not all organizations have got or using strict regulations for application, selection, monitoring and overall management of voluntary work in their daily activities.



## Selection of the volunteers

According to the mapping results application and selection of volunteers is implemented in the following ways:

1. Based on the Regulations for Volunteer Coordination. Only one third of the surveyed organizations have such regulations,
2. Potential volunteers are sending CVs; then responsible persons from NGO are conducting interviews; need assessment of volunteers and identification of interests; training of selected volunteers, involvement into organization,
3. Simple application and selection procedure,
4. Directed by partner organizations,
5. Online application (mostly in case of foreigners), online interview, selection of the job type, inclusion.

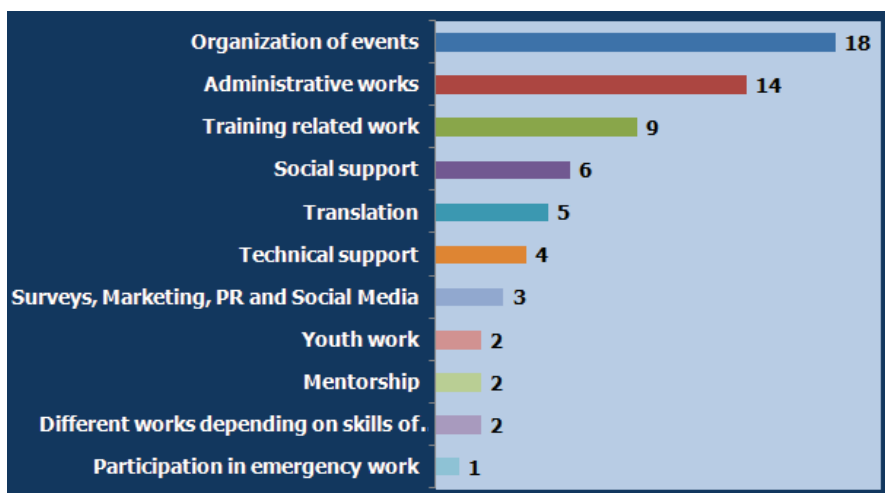
Survey participants mentioned that they are usually conducting assessment of volunteers' needs and skills. This means that Armenian NGOs are usually taking into account the needs of volunteers and are trying to involve them in activities which are best suits to their skills and knowledge. However depending on the peculiarities of the organization and/or volunteers, the ability to select and apply the skills and knowledge they have in certain activity spheres is limited.

Representatives of surveyed NGOs mentioned several issues related to the process of selection of the volunteers:

- Gaps and non-targeted work related with the dissemination of information on existing opportunities in NGOs,
- Not clear job descriptions for volunteers, without clearly defined duties and responsibilities,
- Difficulties related to conducting internal need assessment in organization,
- Absence of database of volunteers and online platform for information dissemination and online application processes,
- Non transparent mechanisms for selection of the volunteers.

### **Administration of the volunteers: approaches used in working with volunteers**

Research participants mentioned several activities in which their volunteers are involved in. According to the research results, volunteers are basically involved in **organizational work (organization of events)** and **administrative work**. All activities of the volunteers mentioned by the survey participants are presented in the chart below:



Representatives of surveyed organizations mentioned several methodological approaches which they are using in their daily work with volunteers:

1. Self-organization of the volunteers' work according to their preferences and skills,
2. Volunteers' involvement according to organization's existing procedure and signed memorandum between organization and volunteer,
3. Training programs for volunteers,
4. Daily or monthly evaluation of volunteers' work,
5. Evaluation of different aspects of Organization by volunteers,
6. Providing support for best volunteers in finding a job.

Summing up the research findings with respect to administration of volunteers' work we can make the following conclusions:

1. **Only one third** of surveyed organizations have special procedure/regulation for administration of volunteers work,
2. Only **two** of surveyed organizations mentioned that they do not have any regulation for volunteers. It is up to volunteers initiative to how and in which form to participate in NGOs activities.
3. The coordination of volunteers work is usually provided by responsible person, a team member or a mentor from Organization.

### **3.3. Perspectives for developing volunteering in Armenia**

According to mapping results, only half of the surveyed organizations are prepared or have got a special program for developing volunteering in Armenia. However all of the surveyed organizations mentioned that even though they do not have a special program, their activities contribute to the development of volunteerism in Armenia.

Relations regarding the volunteering activities of voluntary work are regulated to some extent by RA legislation, but there are still issues, preventing the accomplishment and further development of the area, to be regulated by the law.<sup>15</sup>

Valuing the necessity to comprehensive legislative regulation of volunteerism, as well as considering current developments and challenges in civil society, in 2017 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs circulated the **Draft law of RA on “Volunteering activities and voluntary work”**<sup>16</sup>. The draft has been presented for wider public discussion, and a large number of suggestions have been received, but the process is passive again because of current internal political changes in Armenia and the formation of a new government. As a result, the draft is not yet approved.

The development of the Draft Law of RA on “Volunteering activities and Voluntary Work” comes from the requirement of Article 102, part 2 of the RA Labour Code, according to which the terms and conditions of performing of voluntary work and work for the purpose of assistance are prescribed by law.

The Draft Law was developed according to the Concept of the Law, approved by the **RA Government by the Clause 3 of Protocol Decision of the session N 12 on 23 March 2017**, determined by the necessity to solve certain issues in the area of volunteering activities and voluntary work.

According to the Draft Law of RA on **“Volunteering activities and Voluntary Work”**, the purpose of the law is overall legislative regulation of the volunteering activities and voluntary work, including

---

<sup>15</sup> EU Youth Wiki, Armenia Chapter II: Voluntary activities, Marina Galstyan

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.mlsa.am/?p=12149>

establishment of the united legal regulations and consolidation of acting legal basis in the area of volunteering activities and voluntary work.

According to the draft “Law on Volunteering” voluntary work in foreign countries and foreign citizens in RA shall be regulated by Article 36: Organization of voluntary work in foreign countries and voluntary work of foreign citizens in the Republic of Armenia.

According to the Draft Law, voluntary work is unpaid, non-binding or non-forced work for the common good, performed by a volunteer, as well as by an individual or a group, based on volunteerism and according to this Law.

However, civil society representatives still criticise the Draft Law. First, they think there is no need for the Law, as the Law on NGOs already regulates the area. Second, many of them do not agree with some clauses of the Draft Law, particularly, according to Article 17, clause 7.2 of the draft, the organisation, recruiting volunteers, which is acting as a non-trading organisation or institution, in order to perform its charter functions can recruit volunteers in a proportion of up to 5% of its employees. However, many NGOs have a low number of employees. According to mapping of youth NGOs, the majority of NGOs (68%) do not have paid employees, and 19% of them have 1-5 employees.<sup>9</sup> This means that according to the draft, they are not entitled to have volunteers.

Besides, many do not agree that volunteering activities are permitted to perform only in organizations working in certain areas.

Public discussion on the draft law is currently under way.

## 4. Recommendations

The mapping of the best practices of voluntary organizations in Armenia enabled us to identify a number of issues related to implementation of volunteer work in frames of organizations, which in essence can be united in **two main issues**:

1. Issues related to the gaps in laws and legal framework of volunteering.
2. Issues connected to the process of involvement of volunteers, administration of their daily work.

Recommendations mentioned by survey participants which can be useful in solving above mentioned issues and for further development of volunteering in Armenia are as follows.

1. **Best practice which could be used in volunteer management in frames of organization:**
  - 1.1. **Induction of volunteer**<sup>17</sup> with regard to organization,
  - 1.2. A written role description,
  - 1.3. A written volunteer agreement, which includes rights and responsibilities of volunteers,
  - 1.4. A named person to go for support, mentor, coordinator,
  - 1.5. Training to carry out their role,
  - 1.6. Copy of/ information about child protection policy,
  - 1.7. Support and/ or supervision meetings,
  - 1.8. Copy of/ information about health and safety regulations,
  - 1.9. Copy of/ information on equal opportunities policy.

---

<sup>17</sup> Induction of volunteer is the first step towards gaining volunteers' commitment, Induction is aimed at introducing the job and organization to the recruit and him or her to the organization. Induction involves orientation and training of the volunteer in the organizational culture, and showing how he or she is interconnected to (and interdependent on) everyone else in the organization.



2. In order to identify volunteers willingness, motives, skills and real needs respecting existing volunteering opportunities in organization **Volunteers Needs' Assessment** should be conducted. Evidence based approach should be used for correct orientation and addressing by organizations of volunteers.
3. Different approaches and mechanisms for **volunteers' encouragement** could be used in order to increase motivation of volunteers and support them: letter of thanks, recommendation, assistance in job placement, cover transport expences.
4. Conduct trainings and seminars in educational institutions with regard to volunteering.
5. Include voluntary works in the program of non-formal education for youth.
6. Develop mechanisms to involve adults in voluntary activities.
7. Encourage students to participate in voluntary works and improve their knowledge and proffessional skills, to have working experience.
8. Promote volunteering with help of movies, social advertizing.
9. There is a need to develop state policy for volunteering in Armenia.
10. Provide legal status of volunteering and volunteers in Armenia.
11. Develop unified system for registration of volunteer activity.
12. Establish an official sample for voluntary work regulation contract.
13. Improve voluntary compensation mechanisms.
14. Introduce social protecton system for volunteering.
15. Develop an online platform were volunteering organizations can share information with respect to volunteering opportunities and volunteers could have an opportunity to directly apply for existing job opportunities.

16. Provide exchange of experience between volunteering organizations.
17. Organize information days with respect to volunteering organizations, opportunities in Armenia and share success stories and best practices.
18. Organize meetings with famous persons who have experience in volunteering.
19. Develop mechanisms and strategy for personal development of volunteers.
20. Support people with disabilities to have equal opportunities for participating in volunteering activities.
21. Create opportunities for volunteers to participate in international trainings.

## Appendix 1. List of Organisations Participated in the Research

"Azhdahak" socio-ecological NGO
"Country and Culture" NGO
"Depi Hayk" NGO
"KASA" Swiss Humanitarian Foundation Armenia
"Nor Luys" NGO
"Tur indz jhpit" educational NGO
"World Vision" Armenia
"Youth Cooperation Center of Dilijan" NGO
"Armenian Caritas" Benevolent NGO
"Peace Corps" Armenia
"Armenian Progressive Youth" NGO
"Armenian Red Cross Society" NGO
"Armenian Tree Project" Non-Profit Programme
"Armenian Volunteers Bank" NGO
Armenian Volunteer Corps
"Children of Armenia" Fund
Compass Research, Training and Consultancy Center
Eurasia Partnership Foundation
International Center for Intercultural Research, Learning and Dialogue
Ministry of Emergency Situations of the RA
New Technology Education Fund
NGO Center
Partnership and Teaching NGO
Republican Headquarters Of Student Brigades - Voluntary Service Of Armenia (Huj)
Stepanavan Youth Center NGO
Student Union of AUA

United Nations Development Programme
Youth Center of Margahovit
"Gyumri Youth Initiative Center" NGO
"Federation of Youth Clubs of Armenia" NGO
Center for Educational Research and Consulting

## Appendix 2. Interview Guide

Interview Guide for the Interviews with the Representatives of the  
Organisations working with volunteers

***Note for the interviewer - to present undermentioned information orally.***

***Dear partner,*** *Armenian Caritas Benevolent NGO carries out mapping of voluntary organisations in order to find out what formats are applied in Armenia to work with volunteers.*

*To this end, we'd kindly ask you to take part in the interview by answering the following questions.*

*We'd like to inform you that your answers will be used only for analytical purposes.*

*Date of the interview* \_\_\_\_\_

- Please present the name of your organisation, since when it operates, in which spheres and with which geographical coverage.

---

---

- Do you have volunteers at present? If yes, please mention how many, how you have chosen them and for which purposes. Have you conducted needs and expectations assessment of the volunteers?

---

---

- In which activities are your volunteers involved?

---

---

- Do you have a special programme aiming at promoting volunteerism in Armenia? Please present it in detail.

---

---

- How is the work with the volunteers (responsible, mechanism and methodology) coordinated in your organisation? Please present in detail.

---

---

- What kind of obstacles (at the legislative or practical levels) exist impeding voluntary work in Armenia?

---

---

- According to you, do we need a separate law on voluntary work in Armenia? Please give a detailed answer.

---

- What would you add with regard to the development of voluntary work in Armenia?

---

- What kind of methodology, format or approach do you have that you can share? Please present in detail. **/Note for the interviewer; if there a form, to ask to provide. /**

---

- Please mention 5 other organisations that work with volunteers.

---

---

***Thank you for the interview and frank answers!***