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NATIONAL REPORT ON VOLUNTARY WORK IN AUSTRIA

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[Voluntary web - main entrance of Austria for voluntary engagement](#)

1. Voluntary work in Austria – Overview 2009

1.1. *Introduction*

Austria is a parliamentary representative democracy, comprising nine federal states, is one of six European countries that have declared permanent neutrality, and one of the few countries that includes the concept of everlasting neutrality in its constitution. Austria has been a member of the United Nations since 1955, joined the European Union in 1995, and is a founder of the OECD.

Austria is one of the 10 richest countries in the world in terms of GDP (Gross domestic product) per capita, has a well-developed social market economy, and a high standard of living. Until the 1980s, many of Austria's largest industry firms were nationalised; in recent years, however, privatisation has reduced state holdings to a level comparable to other European economies. Labour movements are particularly strong in Austria and have large influence on labour politics. Next to a highly-developed industry, international tourism is the most important part of the national economy.

Austria has around 8,3 million inhabitants. The unemployment rate in february 2009 was 8.3% (national definition) or 4.5% (Eurostat- EU definition.)

1.2. *Definition of voluntary work*

Voluntary work is an freely chosen, external activity without payment. It has to be freely chosen by a person (volunteer) without any personal duty or legal boundry. Civil service, bare membership in an NPO (without achievements), working in own household and family work is excluded from the concept of voluntary work.

"Voluntarily", i.e. without legal obligation, is therefore of other unpaid, but legally binding activities - such as military/civil service - should be distinguished.

"Unpaid", i.e. without monetary compensation, free of charge. Effort, compensation for expenses, incurred costs (such as telephone, transportation) is not considered payment. The work could theoretically also be done by other persons and it could also be paid work ("Third - People - Criterion").

"External", i.e. in own household's unpaid household and family work is not included in the definition of voluntary work. Volunteers engage themselves in activities that are beneficial to society as whole, or to certain parts of it.

Two kind of voluntary work: formal and informal

“Formal voluntary work“ are those activities, which take place in an organised context and without obligation or pay for the benefit of others and society.

Mostly done in institutions, associations, NPO’s and NGO’s. This “free-will commitment by time” requires special regulations.

„Informal voluntary work“ often also as neihgbourly help or assistance mentioned, comes on private/individual/personal initiative without any institutional context. In general it is not controlled.

1.3. Summary / Figures

Areas of formal voluntary work

- Emergency service and rescue services. Blue light organisations (e.g., voluntary fire brigade, mountain rescue and water rescue, Red Cross): short “emergency service”
- Art, culture, entertainment and spare time (e.g., band, amateur theater): short “culture”
- Environment, nature and animal protection (e.g., WWF, Greenpeace) : short “environment”
- Ecclesiastical, religious area (e.g., church choir, parish council): short “church”
- Social area and health area (aid organisations for the support of other people, pensioner's association, management of self-help groups) : short “social”
- Political work and interest representation (e.g., political party, professional organisation): short “politics”
- Civil activities and community (e.g., local development association, Citizen's initiatives) : short “community”
- Education (e.g., parental association, learning aid centre) : short “education”
- Sport and physical activity (e.g., sports association, exercise group) : short “sport”

Areas of informal voluntary work

- Neighbourhood assistance/help: e.g. household work, child-care, garden care etc.

Volunteer workers: participation in formal and/or informal volunteer work

The voluntary sector, or third sector, with around 3 million workers, has a big value in Austria.

43.8% of the Austrian population starting from 15 years carry our voluntary work in any form. The percentage for men is 47.1% and among women 40.7%.

From the 6,9 million people over 15 years old 27,9% do formal (in organisations) and 27,1% informal voluntary work („neighbourhood assistance)

Informal voluntary work is slightly more frequently provided by women (27.3%) than men (26,9%). Men are proportionately much more common in organisations, women are more engaged in neighborhood assistance.

Especially active are the 40 - to 59-year-old, which engage themselves for other persons to nearly 50%. Also, the 20 - to 24-year-old and the 30 - to 39-year-old population have high values in this participation (47%). The rate of people aged over 70 years is (not too surprising) significantly below average.

Young people aged 15 to 19 years and elderly people from 60 to 69 years are voluntarily active to 43%. Even almost 20% of the over 80-year-olds are still voluntarily active.

Formal voluntary work

More men than women (33% to 23,2%) do formal voluntary work. 30% of the population aged 40 to 59 years are engaged in formal voluntary work and also 30% at the 15 to 24 years olds, the same rate also applies to pupils, military/civil servives (alternative to military service), employed and people with *other income*. Women who are responsible for family care and household are volunteering at 27%.

(“other income”:means not any of the groups: employed,retired, unemployed, pupil, student, military/civil service, peternal leave, household)

Significant below average is the participation of persons in parental leave (14%) and pensioners (19%). People with higher education work more voluntary (37 – 45%) than people with compulsory school (19%).

Areas with lower poulation density have more volunteers than urban regions (34% to 18%).

Informal voluntary work

Women do insignificant more (27,3%) voluntary work tha men (26,9%). Also other characteristics show up fewer differences as noted in the formal voluntary work.

Only the eldest are more active in neighbourhood assistance than in formal voluntary work. Informal aid is done by married, divorced and single people equally. Women with compulsoy school have a very low participation level (21%).

Informal voluntary work in Vienna is significantly higher than formal voluntary work. But over all nearly no difference is seen in participation level concerning the population density.

Formal and informal voluntary work

People who are doing formal and informal voluntary work are mainly 15 to 19 year old (30%) or the 50- to 59 years old. Pupils do it as well as students and persons with other income. The higher the population density, the lower the participation level of volunteers.

Education

Education plays a relevant role in the engagement in the volunteer's work. About 33% of the people with compulsory education are active voluntarily.

Exceptionally active are higher educated men (vocational, higher school) and women (comprehensive school).

For people with academic education, the rate of voluntary workers increases to around 54%. Above all, approximately 60% of graduates of university-related colleges are active voluntarily. 50% of pupils and students are involved in voluntary work.

Kind of Income

50% of employed, but only 36% of the unemployed people are active in voluntary work, persons in parental leave only by around 25% (working in own household, also taking care of children or relatives is not included in voluntary work).

From the group of unemployed women 42% do voluntary work, but only 30% of the unemployed men.

Urban or Rural Area

Generally the commitment for volunteer work is higher in rural regions than within urban areas. The degree of urbanisation, in terms of population density, plays a role in the participation in volunteer work. The higher the population density of a region where a person lives, the lower the activity in the volunteer work. In regions with low population density, around 48% of people are active in voluntary work, whereas in regions with high population density only about 37% are volunteers.

Distribution by age

22% of the volunteers are between 40 and 49 years old.

19% are from 30 to 39, and 16% are from 50 to 59 years old.

More people between 60 and 69 are interested in the social sector.

The highest range of volunteers are between 30 and 59 years old.

13,6% of the 60 – 69 year old and 16,1% of the 70 to 79 year old are engaged in the social and health field, which is more than twice as high as in all other age groups (6% of the 15 to 19-year-old, 7.4% of the 40 to 49-year-old and 5.5% of the 50 to 59-year-old).

Men from 15 to 19-years old are more active in the area "education".

Nearly 50% of women, engaged in "emergency services" at the age of 25 to 29 years.

Distribution by activities

62 % of volunteers work in the informal sector, mainly in neighborhood assistance. This is followed by „art, culture, entertainment and leisure“ (short „culture“) with 17,1%,

"sport and physical activity" (short "sport") with 15.7%,

"ecclesiastical and religious area " (short "church") with 14.2% and

"emergency aid and rescue services " (short "emergency service ") with 13.7%.

4.8% are active in the field of "civil activities and community" (short "community")

and 5.8% depending on "the environment, nature and animal protection" (short "environment") and "education".

For the youngest ones "culture" is on the second place, followed by " emergency service ". Among young adults "sport" gets more importance.

From 50 yearson the participation rises in the area "church". For the elderly, particularly for women "social - and health" (short "social") gets increasingly important.

Men are committed in neighbourhood assistance (57%). "sport" and "emergency service" with each 22% and in "culture" 16%. Participation level for "politcs" is 11% and all others are below 10%. Only 4% are active in "education":

67% of women working voluntarily provide benefits in the informal sector, followed by "church" with 20% and "culture" with 16%. The ratio for "sport" is less than 10%, and only 4% are volunteering in the areas of "community" and "environment".

Men are more active in different areas of voluntary work than women. "art" and "church" are the most interesting areas for all women. Younger women are also involved in "emergency service" and "sport". For elderly women "social" gets more important besides "church".

Men are more committed in "sport" and "emergency service" but also in "culture" and above 40 years they get stronger involved in "politics".

Pupils, students and in general the working polulation are very active in different voluntary fields. Male pensioners and people with other income are also very committed.

Distribution by Gender/Sex

Men do proportionately more voluntary work than women (47 to 41%). Men are engaged mainly in neighborhood assistance (57%) and in the areas of "sport" and " emergency service ", each with 22%, "culture" with 18% and "political work and lobbying (short: politics)" with 11%. In all other areas the shares are below 10%, bottom is "education" with only 4% of participation. 54% of young men from 20 to 24 years are very active in voluntary work. Men who are retired or over 70 years or living in rural areas or have a higher qualification are spending more time than women in the voluntary field.

67% of women working voluntarily provide benefits in the informal area (neighborhood assistance), followed by "church" with 20% and "culture" with 16%. Less than 10% is the ratio for "sport", and only 4% are active in the areas "community" and "environment".

Women from 60 to 69 years and unemployed women spend more time than men in the voluntary field. In urban areas both, women and men, participate more or less to the same extent.

Married couples and singles are both active with 46%. Widowed people, mostly older, are not very active.

In the field of "emergency service" 80% of the participants are men. In "politics" and "sport" their percentage is slightly above 70%. 48% of neighborhood assistance are also done by men. Women are to 69% involved in the field of "church" and to 65% in "education".

Motivation for formal and informal voluntary work

Motive forces for voluntary work are:

"It gives pleasure to me" - 64% fully agree and 29% rather agree

"I like to help others" - 58% fully agree and 35% rather agree

"Meet people and win friends" - 49% fully agree, 34% rather agree

"I can use my skills and knowledge" - 41% fully agree - 40% rather agree

"It helps me to remain active" - 43% fully agree and 33% rather agree

Nearly 80% of the volunteers don't hope "that this activity helps me to find a paid job" and 15% agree more or less. This ranking is in general the same for men and women.

About 70% of those people who do not volunteer work indicate they have to fulfil family duties. Other reasons were the (in-)compatibility with the profession or statements like "I'm never asked or been asked" or "I have never thought of it" (58% to 46%).

Especially women (73%) have hardly time for voluntary work because of family reasons and men because time resources outside their professional life are low.

Time - dimension of voluntary work

Approximately 3 million people (44% of all Austrians over 15 years) work around 14,7 million hours per week voluntarily.

1.9 million people are active in the informal voluntary work, like neighbourhood assistance and help (e.g. household work, care of children, friends, relatives; garden care; etc.). In general, working in the own household and family work is not included in voluntary work.

Also 1.9 million people contribute to voluntarism in non profit organisations in the formal voluntary work. 800.000 volunteers are working as well in the formal as well in the informal sector.

The voluntary work is 11% of the volume of self-employed workers and 13% of employed workers.

On an average, voluntary active people use 4.9 hours per week for volunteer's work (partially in several areas).

In the informal area the time use is about 3.6 hours per week. At the formal volunteer's work in "culture" the average hourly number is about 3.4 hours, in the "sport" area about 3.0 hours and in the field of "church" about 2.4 hours and in "emergency service" 3.8 hours per week.

1.4. Report on the situation of volunteering commitment in Austria

For a sustainable future of a voluntary engagement in Austria, people of all ages should be motivated to participate in this kind of work.

Today especially young people have different demands and want to cooperate in concrete projects without committing themselves to a lifelong association membership.

Older people, after retiring from the professional life, find self-fulfilment by voluntary engagement.

The legal situation for a voluntary year (FSJ)

Up to now there is no law for the voluntary work for (young) people like in other European countries. Yet the ministry for social affairs supports the occupational orientation of young people (from 17 to 26 years) with a special guideline for a "voluntary social year" ("Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr" or "FSJ").

This voluntary social year is a special year, in which a person voluntarily works in an appropriate non profit institution, mostly within the general social services, outside vocational training and bound to non-profit conditions of the institutions.

The voluntary social year should be an occupational orientation and a good entrance to professional life, especially to the social and care professions, where there is expected to be a big demand in the long-term

From the financial aspect the mid-term objective here is a compensation in form of family subsidy for young people working as a volunteer as well as insurance for unemployment and recognition for rental insurance.

Austrian Council for Volunteers

The "Austrian Council for Voluntary Work" is seen as a representative of the volunteers and is heard as a counsellor to the ministry of social affairs concerning the voluntary policy.

There are plans to invite the members of the Austrian Council for Voluntary Work to support the implementation of a model project concerning the voluntary social year.

1.5. European Voluntary Service - EVS

General Information:

The European Voluntary Service enables young people to carry out voluntary service for up to 12 months in a country other than their country of residence. It fosters solidarity among young people and is a true 'learning service'. Beyond benefiting local communities, volunteers learn new skills and languages and discover other cultures.

An EVS project has three phases:

- planning and preparation
- implementation of the Activity
- evaluation (including reflection on a possible follow-up).

Non-formal learning principles and practice are reflected throughout the project. An EVS project can focus on a variety of themes and areas of intervention, such as culture, youth, sports, social care, cultural heritage, arts, civil protection, environment, development cooperation, etc. High-risk interventions in immediate post-crisis situations (e.g. humanitarian aid, immediate disaster relief, etc.) are excluded.

EVS Activity

An EVS Activity has three essential components:

1. The Service:

the volunteer is hosted by a promoter in a country other than her/his country of residence and carries out voluntary service for the benefit of the local community. The service is unpaid, non profit-making and full-time.

2. EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle:

the promoters involved in the EVS Activity must ensure that each volunteer participates in:

- _ pre-departure training
- _ on-arrival training
- _ mid-term evaluation (for a Service lasting more than 4 months)
- _ evaluation of the Activity.

All training courses must comply with the Guidelines and minimum quality standards set by the Commission;

3. Ongoing volunteer support:

the promoters must provide personal, task-related, linguistic and administrative support to each volunteer involved in the Activity.

An EVS Activity involving young people with fewer opportunities includes specific elements to ensure that adequate support is provided to the volunteers.

According to the number of promoters and volunteers involved, an EVS Activity can be defined as an Individual or Group EVS Activity:

- Individual EVS Activity: 1 volunteer sent by one Sending Organisation to one Host Organisation
- Group EVS Activity: between 2 and 100 volunteers sent by one or several Sending Organisations to one or several Host Organisations. The distinguishing feature of the Group EVS Activity is that volunteers carry out their Service in the same time frame and the tasks they carry out are linked to a common thematic.

A Group EVS Activity can also be linked to a specific event; in this case the Activity requires a solid partnership with the organising body of the event and the volunteers' tasks must all relate to the event.

Austria:

In 2008 approximately 90 volunteers have finished their EVS in Austria. Currently 89 organisations are accredited as host organisations (this number fluctuates, because constantly new organisations come in addition, or organisations suspend their participation in the EVS again) – several volunteers can be taken up in a host organisation.

Generally about 4500 youngsters have profited from the Youth in Action Programm/EVS. **About 140 participants came from Austria.**

Concerning EVS in Austria there are the following infos: **96 applications were made, 89 projects have been realized.**

Areas of application		Examples
Youth	37	Youth Centers, Assisted Living, Jobcoaching
Children	21	Children Group, Kindergarden
Office	12	Diverse, mainly in the field of Youth and Children, but without any direct contact to the target group
People with disabilities	9	Assisted Living, including assisted jobs
Art/culture/media	4	Radio, House for literature
Environment	4	Organic farm, Greenpeace
Refugees	2	Asylum for refugees
Senioren	1	Home for the aged
Short time action	6	Different areas, mainly technical

The National Agency is in charge of quality control and monitors, if the accredited host organisations fulfil the EVS Charter:

European Voluntary Service Charter

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) Charter is part of the Youth in Action Programme Guide and highlights the roles of EVS Sending, Host and Coordinating Organisations and the main principles and quality standards of EVS. Each EVS Project promoter adheres to the provisions set out in this Charter.

EVS partnership

A solid partnership between EVS Sending, Host, Coordinating Organisations and the volunteer is the basis of every EVS Activity. Adequate matching between the volunteer profile and the tasks has to be in place. An Activity Agreement is signed by all the partners before the beginning of the Activity.

- The Sending Organisation is in charge of the preparation and support of the volunteers before, during and after the EVS activities.
- The Host Organisation has to ensure safe and decent living and working conditions for the volunteer throughout the entire Activity period. It has to provide adequate personal, linguistic and task-related support, including the identification of a mentor for the volunteer.
- The Coordinating Organisation (applicant) has the role of facilitating the implementation of the project by offering administrative and quality support to all project partners and enabling their networking.

EVS principles to be ensured

- The non-formal learning and intercultural dimension, through a clear definition of a learning plan for the volunteer.
- The service dimension through a clear definition of the non-profit-making character of the project and the volunteer tasks. Full-time service and active role of the volunteer in implementing the activities have to be ensured. EVS volunteer activities must not replace any employment.
- The benefit to and the contact with the local community.
- EVS is free of charge for the volunteers.
- Accessibility and Inclusion: when recruiting EVS volunteers, the organisations maintain the overall accessibility of EVS for all young people, without prejudice related to ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc. If the project targets volunteers with fewer opportunities, facilities and capacity in providing tailor-made preparation, and support have to be in place.

EVS quality standards to be ensured

Support to the volunteer

- before, during and after the EVS activities, in particular in crisis prevention and management;
- for insurance, visa, residence permit, travel arrangements and all the EVS administrative procedures;
- by facilitating the volunteer's participation in the EVS training cycle (pre-departure training, on-arrival training, mid-term evaluation and evaluation of the Activity);
- by foreseeing proper evaluation measures.

Information

- All EVS partners have the right to receive complete information on the Activity and agree on all aspects.
- Visibility, dissemination and publicity measures have to be in place.

Recognition

- Each EVS volunteer is entitled to receive a Youthpass.

The National Agency is supported by 9 coordinating organisations (one in each Province) to coordinate the program and to observe the quality criteria for the accredited organisations. They also support the host organisations with counselling, mentor-trainings, Youthpass training, EVS beginner training.

These trainings are partly organised by the Austrian Agency, partly by the other national agencies abroad. The cost are taken over by the program Youth inAction, except 10 € participation fee.

Furthermore the volunteers are invited to two compulsory seminars, where they also can give feedback about their EVS experience and get support if they want.

Evaluation: the university of Innsbruck is part of the National Agency ARGE Youth in Action and organises the so-called scientific accompanying research. The feedback from all interviews (in all action-lines, with participants and responsible bodies) are the basis for improving the quality of the program.

Reference:

Youth in Action 2007-2013;

EUROPEAN COMMISSION Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC)

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2. Specific Austrian Research on Voluntarism

2.1. *Youth's Attitudes towards Volunteer Work in Austria*

Background:

The study Youth's Attitudes towards Volunteer Work in Austria was created by the "Österreichisches Institut für Jugendforschung" (Austrian Institute for Youth Research) by assignment of the "Bundesjugendvertretung" (National Youth Council).

It was based on an online survey, accomplished by the institution "Fessel" in 2004.

1.200 young people at the age of 12-24 years have been surveyed.

Area of commitment: young people dominating, political work is trailing

More than half of all young people surveyed considered the "children / young people" area as interesting work for a volunteer service. Only 13% are interested in "political work". Here the willingness for engagement is highest among the 18-19-year-olds with 22%. A distinction as to sex and age groups should not be ignored. For over two third of all girls, but just under half of all boys is the "children and young people" particularly interesting. This is especially true for younger respondents under the age of 17, later the interest is declining. Two thirds of the young people being in education/training would chose this area for a voluntary service, and 44% of those already being in professional activities. The area "environment / nature" also shows decreasing interest with increasing age. Female respondents generally seem to show more interest in this point but also lose it with increasing age.

Social services play an important role for 50% of 20-21-year-old as well as for the 16 to 17 year old. For the other age groups, this area is less relevant. "Political work" is relevant for one out of five of the 18-19-year-olds, at an average of 13% of all age groups.

Publicity: firemen before red cross, social year in third place with 40%

The awareness level for fire department is clear at the top with 98%, four out of five young people address the emergency services as a volunteer service.

A differentiation according to sex shows that about one third of male respondents and 45% of the female know the "Voluntary social year".

With increasing age, mainly 20 to 24 years, and the state of education (especially those young people who have either a College, an advanced technical college or a university, but also those who are in employment or are self-employed), the publicity of this voluntary service increases to approximately two thirds.

A further distinction by state indicates that approximately one third of the Vienna youth, but two-thirds of Upper Austria and Salzburg-born adolescents are aware of this voluntary service.

A further 32%, mainly boys, know about the abroad social services. The highest reputation lies in the age group of 18-19-year-olds. Only 9%, and mostly the female interviewees, are aware of the voluntary ecological year. In Vienna, about every seventh knows about this

voluntary service (14%). In contrast, in Lower Austria and Burgenland only half as many boys and girls (6%) do.

Image: Volunteer services contributes to personal development

42% of all respondents agree that voluntary services contribute to personal development. There are no significant differences between the sexes. However, with increasing age (over one third of the 14-15-year-olds, but already more than half of the 22-24-olds) this attitude strengthens. As a result, volunteer services provide an image of personal gain for 39% of boys and girls, with 43% of adolescents aged 16 to 19 years. For half of all employed respondents volunteer services also improve chances of inclusion in a training offer (9%). This is especially true for young people who have completed education. For 7% of respondents it provides a welcome break from studying. Only a small percentage (3%) does not see any meaning in such organisations and sees voluntary work only as lost time.

Reasons: experience, do something useful

Regarding the motivation for volunteer service training, the top answers were "new experience" (74%, equally important for all ages), and "to do something useful" (70%). Far fewer, but still about one third sees the motive to provide a service to society. This ambition can be found particularly among 20-24-year-olds and youngsters living in rural areas.

Slightly more than half of all male and female adolescents surveyed, especially in the age of 12 to 15 years, is interested in knowing new people, or try out something new, regardless of whether they are in urban or rural regions.

"Fun" is an important reason for 47% of young people, however, for the age group of 20-24-year-old it loses relevance.

Far fewer, but still a third, sees their engagement as a service to society.

This ambition is shown particularly among 20-24-year-olds and rural population.

The least motivated here are the 16 and 17-year-old.

At the end of the scale are "test your own limits" (32%) and the "individual orientation in transition periods" (22%). For about one third of graduates (34%), followed by AHS (high school) graduates, the reason to become active in a volunteer service is the wish for search of orientation.

Important conditions: social protection and financial compensation

In first place the young people address full social security (73%) as key condition. Furthermore, around 45% of people wish a fair settlement or a professional, educational and personal support.

The older the respondents were, the more often a pension, healthcare, unemployment or compensation insurance were mentioned as crucial conditions.

It should be mentioned that for young people from lower social class this condition is especially important. The criterion of social protection equally applies to all girls and boys to the age of 19 but for women between 20 to 24 years the importance increases.

Personal benefits: to have done something useful

When it comes to the question of personal benefits after completion of volunteer services, the majority of young people (77%) think, they have done something useful.

This is especially true for the 18-19-year-old. More girls (81%) than boys (73%) tend in this direction.

As an additional benefit more than half of boys and girls hope that their voluntary work is recognized as experience in their further education. This is to the same extent agreed by young people in training or education and employed young people (56%). Most recognized this by university graduates with two thirds.

Almost 50% expect to benefit by volunteering when looking for a job or to get appreciation and recognition by society. 40% expect a personal benefit from preferential inclusion in an appropriate training.

The gain of insurance years for the pension is motivation for more than a third of young people, which still is the lowest value. Such a benefit by volunteer services is expected primarily by self-employed (60%) and commonly observed in the young age of 22 to 24 years (44%). Looking at the age of 20 to 24 year old within the category of sex, it turns out that more boys than girls are motivated by the acquisition of insurance years for the pension (43% to 39%).

Duration of volunteer service: 3 months favored

In general, a third of young people can see themselves in voluntary service for up to three months. A distinction between girls and boys is showing only minor differences (32% - 30%).

Slightly fewer boys and girls (27%) are willing to be available for up to half a year of volunteering commitment, and the same number states to be available for ten to twelve months of voluntary service. More than a third of all young people that have completed AHS (high school) would volunteer a period of up to six months. This is also true for the group of 20-21-year old. More boys than girls, and especially young people between 14 and 15 years, followed by the oldest respondents, with 29%, can imagine themselves for ten months or a year of voluntary service. 7% can agree with a duration of seven to nine months, but the same number can not even imagine a volunteer service commitment at all. Those who answer the possibility of "not at all" are mostly young people from Vienna, Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

Starting Date: most likely in the event of unemployment

For nearly half of all young people surveyed the ideal point in time for a voluntary service is in case of unemployment.

Mainly boys and girls at the age of 12-13 and 22-24 share this point of view, as well as working youngsters and students.

About a quarter of the boys and girls think of the periods before or after training as appropriate.

Volunteering before or after a vocational training seems especially useful to 18 to 19 year old and to the 16-17-year-olds with 29%. Hardly any young people (2%) would apply to a volunteer's service during vocational training or interrupt their career. Only young people of 22 to 24 years (9%), who are in an employment, would consider a career break.

Organization of social services: voluntary basis instead of compulsory military service

51% of young people surveyed are open to the idea of a future service on a voluntary basis instead of compulsory military service. A quarter would like to see equality in terms of civil and military service. Twice as many men (33%) as women share this opinion, with mainly men between 20 and 24 years (47%). Women less agree to this issue (17%).

23% of respondents want to maintain the existing system of choice between military and civil service for men. More women than men agree with this (6% difference). The value of 23% is basically the same in all regions.

On the other hand service on a voluntary basis instead of military service is desirable for 57% of young people in Vienna, but only for the half of young people from the rest of Austria. Also for young people currently in education/training, having completed education or being self-employed, this restructuring of socially necessary services would be desirable (56%).

The expansion of volunteer services is favored by 80% of adolescents

Regarding general attitudes to voluntary services, a third of boys and Girls agree with the statement, that the state has the right to commit young people to socially important services. 80% consider that existing offers of volunteer services should be developed and promoted.

Two thirds of young people share the opinion, that every young person should have the right to interrupt work or training in order to have time for volunteering.

Three quarters of young people surveyed see a lack of recognition for volunteering in our society. Again, more women (74%) than men (70%) agree with this statement. Nevertheless, 59% can imagine participating in a volunteer service.

To 88% of all adolescents it is important that people in our society volunteer. Only one of the respondents denied it's relevance. Comparing this statements between men and women, slightly more than half of all male respondents but two-thirds of all women emphasize the importance of volunteering in our society.

Reference:

„Einstellungen von Burschen und Mädchen zu Freiwilligendiensten in Österreich“

Eine Studie im Auftrag der österreichischen Bundesjugendvertretung
Exklusiverhebung im Rahmen von Jugend-Online 04 von FESSEL/GfK

Durchführung:

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Wien, September 2004

2.2. Austria's qualification profit through volunteer work: enterprise survey, March 2006

This research is part of the study "Qualification benefit by volunteer work" by the Federal Ministry of Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection. While the main study has the aim of analyzing the gained skills through work by volunteers in Austria and to present the social added value, this survey shows the aspect of a business viewpoint manner. 400 Austrian companies, subdivided by the appropriate staff size and industry, were surveyed by telephone interviews at the end of September 2005. The focus was on the inclusion of volunteer work in enterprises and the acceptance of evidence of voluntary work for job applications.

Here are the results at a glance:

- Nearly 86 percent of business people consider it very or fairly important that people volunteer outside their profession. Primarily small businesses up to 20 people agree to this..
- This attitude does not only apply to volunteer activity in general - and thus for employees of other companies - but especially the voluntary commitment of the enterprise's own employees: Approximately 87 percent of business people are rather fond of their employees volunteering in their spare time. Especially entrepreneurs under 35 years old support this commitment.
- Also towards acquisition of skills of the volunteers there is a very positive attitude. Approximately 93 percent of respondents fully or partly agree that useful experience, abilities and skills for their profession may be acquired through volunteer work. With increasing number of co-workers of the company, this percentage rises.
- And: The introduction of written evidence of volunteer work should be especially good for job applicants. 42 percent of respondents indicate that a written proof of voluntary work, including the acquired special skills would improve their chance of employment.

These companies are rather partners than opponents of volunteers. Approximately 7 out of 10 of these companies support their volunteer staff primarily through the provision of material, and at least 4 out of 10 grant them educational leave or temporary exemption in order to do volunteer work outside their job.

Reference:

„Österreiches Qualifikationsgewinn durch Freiwilligenarbeit: Unternehmensbefragung“

15 March 2006

Institut für qualitative Sozialforschung

A-4040 Linz, Aubrunnerweg 1

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Email: public.opinion@aon.at

eine Untersuchung im Auftrag des

Bundesministeriums für Soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz

2.3. Results and Follow-up of the International Year of Volunteers 2001 in Austria

Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, 2003
Austrian National Committee

Background:

Based on the Ministers' Decision of 11th October 2000 an "Austrian National Committee for the IYV 2001" was set up, to which belong representatives of the Federal Ministries, the Provincial Governments, the Lower and the Upper House of the Austrian Parliament, of the state governments ("Landtage"), the Associations of the Cities and Towns and Local Authorities, representatives of "social partnership"-organisations, of the university field and research, the private economy, of the media as well as of all important non-governmental organisations of all societal resorts in Austria.

The National Committee was chaired by the Minister of Social Security and Generations and the Minister of Interior. The management was at the Centre for Population and Ageing Policies.

Activities-up of IYV in Austria

Expert Working Groups

10 Expert-Working-Groups had been established within the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations to discuss in six sessions all over the year the problems and common concerns of NPO's and volunteers and to develop recommendations concerning measures to be taken by the Federal Government, the provinces and the NPO's to strengthen voluntary commitment and increasingly acknowledge and facilitate voluntary work in practice.

The results of the Expert-Working-Groups were presented to the Austrian Parliament in a "Volunteers' Manifesto – 7 Demands for the Promotion of Volunteer Commitment in Austria".

Pupils and Youth Competition

A Pupil's and Youth Competition on the IYV under the slogan "Helping is worthwhile... I also do it" in the 2001/02 school year was carried out in co-operation with the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture to motivate pupils and young persons to develop and conduct voluntary projects themselves. After selection through a jury, exemplary projects were presented to the public and the respective pupils and youth groups were honoured and awarded valuable prizes.

Volunteers Award

Volunteers Award 2001

Broad public awareness building on voluntary work by a media campaign on the "Volunteers Award 2001". Prizes were awarded to persons who have contributed extraordinary services in the field of voluntary work. They might have been special one-off services or have been rendered on a very continuous basis. The prizes were awarded in 10 categories: Social Concerns and Neighbourhood, Senior Citizens, Children&Youth, Family, Women, Disaster Prevention, Environment, Sports, Culture, Education&Science in the framework of a two day event on 4th and 5th December 2001.

Volunteers Award 2002

This initiative is going on: The flood catastrophe of summer 2002 has shown the importance and essentiality of voluntary work. Therefore 2002 the Volunteers Award was dedicated to all voluntary helpers and active initiators of voluntary help for the victims of the enormous flood, destroying people's homes and circumstances.

Volunteers Award 2003-2005

On the occasion of the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003, the Volunteers Award was dedicated to the voluntary helpers who put their energy and commitment at the disposal of people with disabilities.

In 2004, on the occasion of the European Year of Education through Sport, volunteers for sports and fitness were honoured as part of the large volunteers' gala.

The Volunteers Award 2005 has as its motto "60 Years of the 2nd Republic - 50 Years State Treaty - 5 Years Volunteers Award. . VOLUNTARIA 2005".

Handbook of Voluntary Engagement

A "Handbook of Voluntary Engagement in Austria" was commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations to bring together interested persons and NPO's. This handbook of organisations is also available on www.freiwilligenweb.at under "Organisations"

Citizens' Centres for Young and Old

Foundation of 10 additional "Citizens' Centres for Young and Old", which act as turntable for voluntary commitment. These new institutions are to strengthen intergenerational solidarity and aim at enabling senior citizens to actively make use of their gifts, talents and knowledge as well as to remain active after their professional lives. 20 "Citizens' Centres for Young and Old" have already been established. As a contribution to the IYV the ministry granted start-up subsidies of for another 10 "Citizens' Centres" in 2001.

In a next step the "Citizens' Centres of the Young and Old" will be developed to regional "volunteers exchanges" to bring together interested volunteers and NPO's.

Inquiry among Volunteers

Publication and mailing of an information folder for volunteers of NPOs, which makes available information on the aims of the "International Year of Volunteers,, and their implementation in Austria, and at the same time invites volunteers themselves to formulate proposals on how to facilitate voluntary commitment in practice.

Cooperation with private enterprises

One of the most important challenges in Austria were possible cooperations of mutual benefit between private enterprises and NPO's as well as voluntarily engaged employees. Now the Austrian Economic Chamber is ready to establish an Award for exemplary models of cooperation between enterprises and the voluntary sector.

Research

There was a study presented by Univ. Prof. Dr. Christoph Badelt at the Economic University of Vienna, Department for Social Policy, on the "Volume of Voluntary Engagement in Austria".

The Ministry commissioned a study on "Fiscal Treatment of donations".

Results and follow-up of IYV in Austria

- Enquete in the Austrian Parliament, 5th of June 2002: "International Year of Volunteers 2001: Results and Follow-up"

The proposed measures of the 10 Expert-Working-Groups "Volunteers' Manifesto" was discussed with the Austrian Parliament for the implementation of strengthening voluntary commitment and increasingly acknowledge and facilitate voluntary work in practice.

- Establishment of an "Austrian Council of Volunteers" at the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations as a steering instrument for policies in the field of voluntary work in Austria and a representation of the interests of volunteers.

- A report on the situation of voluntary work in Austria to be published during each legislative period.

- Adoption of a Federal Decoration of Honour to acknowledge special services rendered for the benefit of the common good in the form of voluntary work with voluntary organisations and volunteers' initiatives by the Austrian Parliament

- Creation of a certificate on voluntary activities, qualifications and trainings

- Development of the "Citizens' Centres of the Young and Old" to regional "volunteers exchanges"

- Curriculum for basic and advanced training of volunteers

- Curriculum for volunteers-management in NPO's

- Follow-up of the “Volunteers Award of the Year” accompanied by the media
- Accident and liability insurance for volunteers

Reference:

“RESULTS AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF VOLUNTEERS 2001 IN AUSTRIA”, by Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, arch 2003

2.4. Volunteers' Manifesto

7 Demands for the Promotion of Volunteer Commitment in Austria

We, the non-profit organisations represented in the "Austrian National Committee for the International Year of Volunteers 2001", have come together to author a common Volunteers' Manifesto with the object of improving the framework conditions for volunteer commitment and protecting the interests of volunteers. We hereby call on the representatives of the National Council, the Federal Council and provincial parliaments, as well as on the social partners and the media to support this Volunteers' Manifesto in their respective areas and to promote its implementation to the best of their ability.

We have identified common concerns for the promotion of volunteer commitment in Austria on the basis of the results of the eight task forces set up by the "Austrian National Committee":

Overview

Volunteerism requires recognition

- Volunteerism requires training
- Volunteerism requires a legal basis
- Volunteerism requires cooperation
- Volunteerism requires platforms
- Volunteerism requires support
- Volunteerism requires publicity

Austria Needs Volunteerism

- Voluntary commitment is lived solidarity.
- Voluntary commitment is indispensable for our society, because it contributes to our care and our prosperity.
- Voluntary commitment is priceless, because no one could pay the market price for it.
- Voluntary commitment creates a sense of belonging and mutual trust.
- It lives on free will, but needs a framework to ensure further growth.

Volunteerism Requires Recognition

- Federal decoration of honor for exceptional services for the public good
- Nomination of the "Volunteer of the Year"
- Volunteers' Award to honor exemplary partnerships between NPOs and business enterprises
- Certificate on voluntary activities
- International exchange of volunteers

Volunteerism Requires Training

- Basic curriculum for basic and advanced training of volunteers
- Curriculum for volunteers-management in NGOs
- Standards and quality criteria for volunteer organisations and providers of volunteer training measures
- Establishment of an Austria-wide "Volunteers Academy"

Volunteerism Requires a Legal Basis

- Constitutional recognition of volunteerism

- Assignment of competency for general issues of volunteer commitment in the Federal Ministries Act
- Federal law for the support of volunteerism
- General accident and liability insurance for volunteers
- Inclusion of experts from volunteer organisations in the further development of the laws governing associations

Volunteerism Requires Cooperation

- Profitable partnerships with businesses and the public sector with the following benefits:
 - positive image transfer
 - PR effects
 - contributions to personnel development
 - effects on customer canvassing and loyalty
 -
- Cooperation with technical colleges, universities and schools
- Qualitative and quantitative research projects

Volunteerism Requires Platforms

- “Austrian Council of Volunteers” as national interest group
- Expansion of the “Citizens’ Offices for Young and Old” to volunteers exchanges
- Setup of volunteer agencies as independent coordination and consulting centers
- Information exchange and networking over the Internet
- Project directories for students and youths at the volunteers website www.freiwilligenweb.at

Volunteerism Requires Support

- Tax breaks for contributions
- Deductibility for the expenses of volunteers
- Expense compensation and allowances for volunteers
- Financial support
- Uncomplicated access to EU funding and support
- Consideration of voluntary engagement in posts and hiring in the public and private sectors
- Bonus system for volunteer commitment at a communal level

Volunteerism Requires Publicity

- Permanent public relations work for volunteers:
 - Article (series) on related topics in national and regional media
 - Establishment of fixed contact persons in the media
 - Volunteers’ speakers in the political parties
 - Presentation of “best practices” on the volunteers website [“www.freiwilligenweb.at”](http://www.freiwilligenweb.at)
- Conventions to trigger new projects
- Distribution and use of the volunteer’s handbook
- Gaining support of public leaders

Reference:

Volunteers’ Manifesto

05 March 2003 Volunteers’ Manifesto by Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations
7 Demands for the Promotion of Volunteer Commitment in Austria

2.5. Publications of the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs and Consumers

What's new 2009? – Activity Forecast Mentioning Voluntarism

Volunteering

Within the pilot project “GEMA – Gemeinsam Aktiv” (together active), funded by Social Department of the province of Upper Austria, measures for attaining a professional structure of the volunteer management for obtaining, counseling, mediation and support of volunteers are tested. 20 volunteer projects in towns and cities will be implemented over a project period of two years in towns and cities and promoted by the Independent Volunteer Center (Unabhängiges Landesfreiwilligenzentrum - ULF) in Linz. This model project will aim to develop a culture of solidarity, mutual support and a new culture of active aging for the best possible use of demographic change.

The 1st Report on situation of volunteering in Austria will be available spring 2009.

This will provide a comprehensive picture of the social, political and economic conditions of voluntary offers in Austria. The report serves as the scientific basis of political advice on matters related to the sustainable future of volunteering and provides orientation for volunteers and volunteer organisations in addressing the future challenges. The Austrian Volunteer Passport and the proof of voluntary work will be newly arranged in 2009, on the basis of evaluation findings. At the same time, measures for more recognition of skills and training acquired through volunteering should be taken. Accordant to the government program for the XXIVth legislative period, the validation of the voluntary social year, with the further aim of creating a specific legal framework, should be continued.

Reference:

„WAS IST NEU 2009“ , Bundesministerium für Soziales und Konsumentenschutz Wien, Dezember 2008
Freiwilliges Engagement

Social Report 2007 – 2008

Departmental activities and social policy analysis (BMSK)

Law on a voluntary social year

The Council of Ministers has decided on 13 July 2006 to recognised a report by BMSK on a framework for the completion of a voluntary social year and a special directive for the promotion of voluntary social year 2006/2007. This special directive allows young people at an age between 17 and 26 years a voluntary social year under certain conditions. In addition to the allowance granted by the respective institution, a monthly allowance of at least 168 EUR (after taxes) can be sponsored. As a result of the statutory provisions not allowing any family assistance payments, this financial promotion targets to compensate any financial disadvantages.

A voluntary social services year within the meaning of this directive is a year in which a person obligates oneself to an appropriate nonprofit charitable institution of welfare work and to fulfill voluntary service outside of a vocational training and non-profit-making intent. This can be compared in its magnitude with a full-time employment and shall be carried out at a suitable location other than the non-profit organisation (place of assignment). The activities in the field of voluntary social year offer a lot of career guidance and can help entry in the health and care profession. The validity of the special directive has now been extended until 2009. The medium term objective is to render the possibility of family assistance payments to young people in volunteer social commitments.

Reference:

Sozialbericht 2007 – 2008; Ressortaktivitäten und sozialpolitische Analysen

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WHITE PAPER ON YOUTH

"A New Impetus for European Youth" QUESTIONNAIRE "VOLUNTEER WORK"
AUSTRIA Final Report BMSGK

How does voluntary work contribute to employability of young people?

According to unanimous statements by personnel experts, restructuring of economic and employment requires a revised mix of skills of each employee: In addition to knowledge, the so-called social skills (especially team skills, communication skills, motivation, ability) and project-oriented work become more and more important. Personalists and companies complain that the educational system does not teach those skills sufficiently. Voluntary work will train social skills in practice. The flexible organisation of projects and working in small teams are also characteristics in many areas of volunteer work. Against this background, experience in volunteer work - especially in economically difficult times – can increase employment opportunities for young people.

Provided that the employer's selection of employees are not or only insufficiently able to evaluate social skills (e.g. through appropriate testing, assessment centers), candidates with experience in the volunteer work can not profit from their objective skills-plus. Consequently, the BMSG prepares the introduction of a volunteer pass. The volunteers work will be noted and described in terms of skills acquired and practiced. The Volunteer Pass aims to provide young people with experience in volunteer work with an objective advantage in the application procedure and thus increase their employment opportunities. A study by the Federal Ministry of Social Security on the relationship between volunteering and key skills is currently being carried out; the volunteer-Pass is already in a testing phase with NPOs. Based on the experience gained, an adaptation of the proof of activity for volunteers will be carried out before it will be made available to Austria's volunteer organisations and their volunteers. In this initiative the BMSG experience was also acquired from Switzerland, where there is already evidence of volunteer work system. The aim should be a Europe-wide recognised evidence of volunteer work, i.e. the international exchange of apprenticeship is the case (EuroPASS).

In the context of a model project that was funded by the Federal Ministry of Social Security, under an EU Leonardo II project, together with German and French institutions, a "curriculum for a vocational training program ,promoting and supporting volunteer work", which plans the appropriate training for full-time personnel in volunteer organisations.

The training course for volunteer mentors includes seven modules:

- Introduction to the volunteer commitment and legal bases
- Volunteer Management
- Effective planning of voluntary cooperation
- Enlisting of volunteers
- Co-operation of full-time personnel and volunteers
- Acknowledgment of volunteer work
- Enabling volunteers to competent participation - accompany volunteers

A first training course in Austria has already been started. The training was offered to volunteer coordinators from all volunteer organisations, thereby maximizing the networking effect. A basic training course is in preparation by the Federal Ministry of Social Security, conveying basic skills of the volunteer work to young people. The contents of the course should be developed under involvement of young people.

Reference:**WEISSBUCH JUGEND**

„NEUER SCHWUNG FÜR DIE JUGEND EUROPAS“

FRAGEBOGEN « FREIWILLIGENARBEIT » ÖSTERREICH ENDBERICHT

WIEN, NOVEMBER 2003

Federal ministry for Social Protection, generations and Consumers

Voluntary web - main entrance of Austria for voluntary engagement

The community of interests of volunteer's centres has put together some clues which serve the qualitative support of volunteer's work. These quality criteria for the work with volunteers are available for all organisations as a suggestion to the work of the volunteers to be even more attractively, more efficiently and to improve therefore also the quality of the organisation work.

Quality criteria for the work with volunteers

Volunteers give their time and their labour free off. This commitment is by no means self-evident, but for many organisations of inestimable importance. To a wide volunteering, to encourage new volunteers, to attract and keep employees to volunteer, an attractive and sensible design of the workplace is needed.

1. Areas of activities

The offers of voluntary work should meet the needs of volunteers. Volunteers should get the possibility to make new experiences, to take responsibility and to participate actively in the organisation. Also important are clear and attractive tasks, which also can be fun.

2. Detailed job description

An important requirement for a successful relationship with volunteers is the transparency of the organisational structures and the exact determination of the tasks including the definition of skills. It is useful to fixed working hours, which should not be exceeded. An exact job description protects both parties against misunderstandings and overwork and avoids confusion about their own roles.

3. Orientation and time of probation

A good introduction to the voluntary activity is supported by a training phase. The volunteers should have time to get to know the different tasks so that they can decide if they correspond with their conception and abilities. After this trial both sides decide if they want to work together or not.

4. Contact person and support

Volunteers need a constant contact person, who is familiar with all issues concerning voluntary work in the organisation. In addition to this monitoring regular meetings with other volunteers should be offered. In certain areas counselling and psychological support is necessary.

5. Responsibility and Participation

Discuss in the beginning what degree of responsibility the volunteers are able to carry and the extent to which they want or should make decisions by themselves. Furthermore, the possibilities of participation and the implementation of their own ideas should be regulated.

6. Reimbursement

The necessary costs (materials, travel and postage, etc.) to perform the work should be covered by the organisation.

7. Insurance

To protect your organisation and volunteers to protect, sufficient insurance should be ensured. An insurance organisation should also be responsible for all damage caused by volunteers during working hours. It is also advisable to have accident insurance for volunteers.

8. Further education

To keep qualitative standards of an organisation (even in comparison with others), improved training of staff is inevitable. This is obviously true for your volunteers as well! In addition, training of volunteers adds to the fact that they are taken seriously as employees and improves their identification with the organisation.

9. Opt out

A special feature of voluntary activity is that it can be terminated at any time. Nevertheless, you should arrange a "opt-out scheme" in the beginning to ensure a smooth and seamless exit.

10. Evidence

Volunteer activities may be of great benefit for future job applications. Therefore you should oblige your volunteers and provide them with evidence of the supplied working hours, type of activities and training participation.

11. Recognition

The free services of volunteers should be recognized in their daily work. For profiling/presentation, the work of the volunteers inside the volunteer organisation should be mentioned.

Reference:

<http://www.freiwilligenweb.at>; Eine Initiative des Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz ; Stubenring 1, 1010 Wien, www.bmask.gv.at;