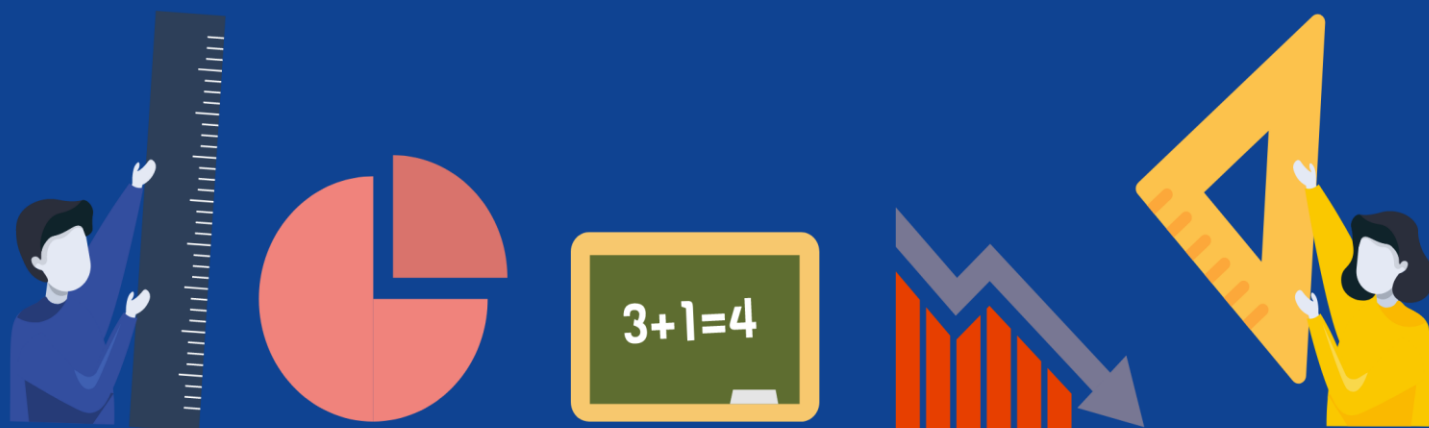


# MEASURING THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING

## Position paper



## About Volonteuropa

Volonteuropa is an international network promoting volunteering, active citizenship and social justice in Europe and beyond. Volonteuropa works at all levels, from the local to the international, and across the public, private and third sectors. We facilitate exchange, foster collaboration and carry out research and advocacy. Volonteuropa currently has over 60 members in more than 20 countries across Europe. Established in the Netherlands in 1981, Volonteuropa is registered as an ASBL in Belgium, while its Secretariat is hosted by Volunteering Matters, a charity leading UK volunteering in policy and practice.

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## Foreword



Oonagh Aitken,  
President of Volonteurope

Measuring the Impact of Volunteering is the culmination of three years' work by a group of Volonteurope members from all across Europe.

We are all very familiar evaluation and impact measurement in the voluntary sector and we regularly, at national and local level, measure the economic impact of volunteering. This can range from trying to calculate the value of volunteering to the national economy to working out the contribution of volunteering to employment opportunities. But what about the social impact of volunteering on a whole number of levels – on the beneficiaries, on a community, for society and of course on the volunteer her/himself?

Volunteering is one of the most visible expressions of active citizenship, promoting solidarity, facilitating social inclusion and building social capital. For all of us in volunteer-involving organisations, understanding and demonstrating impact is key to our relationship with funders and communities.

We know from anecdote that volunteering has a positive effect on people's health and well-being because they regularly tell us; but we need to become more systematic in our measurement of what improved well-being really is and use both quantitative and qualitative tools. The report highlights these aspects of measurement and sets them in a research context.

The report provides an overview of the importance of impact measurement and existing best practice related to the impact measurement of volunteering in several European countries. The report then provides a detailed explanation of the most effective techniques and tools used to implement the evaluation of volunteering. There is plenty of detail about the methodology used in the different countries and a number of case studies which bring the measurement of impact to life. The report is a great resource for any organisation interested in exploring different approaches and using a variety of tools that can be used to improve the way they highlight and acknowledge the important contribution made by their volunteers.

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do; we want to continue to improve the ways in which we can communicate with funders, commissioners, communities and beneficiaries about the amazing contribution volunteering makes to our society. This report is an interesting and informative read – I commend it to you and urge you to make practical use of its contents.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oonagh Aitken".

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## Executive summary

Volunteering is the most visible expression of promoting solidarity, facilitating social inclusion and building social capital. For these reasons Volonteurope, supported by a European working group on impact measurement, aims to promote the need for greater recognition of volunteering and explore ways to better capture its impact in systemic form through this policy paper.

In recent years the social and economic value of volunteering has become a central focus within European politics. For example in 2008 the European Parliament adopted a report on the 'Role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion' (2007/2149(INI)). The 2011 European Year of Volunteering also raised the profile of volunteering and highlighted its value, and the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 which aims to encourage active citizenship and improve opportunities for young people, also promotes greater recognition of volunteering.

Volunteering infrastructures and rules differ between European states. This paper highlights some of these differences, providing a summary of research carried out in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania, Serbia and the United Kingdom. For example in countries that were under a Communist regime, e.g. Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria, there is a less developed culture and infrastructure of volunteering, while countries in northern Europe, especially the Netherlands and the UK, have high rates of volunteering and enabling volunteering infrastructures.

The paper defines social impact and identifies case studies on how Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) measure their impact.

Volonteurope defines social impact as the non-economic impact to the status quo of a person or of the community. Well-being is closely associated with social impact, which can be summarised as the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. This is traditionally measured by the Human Development Index, but some favour the subjective well-being index that is a direct measurement of happiness to measure social progress.

Impact measurement is important as it showcases the value of volunteering, increases the accountability of CSOs and VIOs and increases the financial sustainability of projects. Impact can be measured by carrying out measurements before and after the volunteering activity, however due to a lack of resources most impact measurement is carried out during and after the volunteering has already started.

The state of impact measurement in each of the European countries studied is highly variable. In many countries measuring the economic value of volunteering is common practice (e.g. Bulgaria and the UK). However, our research shows that social impact measurement needs considerable development in Europe. For example, a major barrier in the Czech Republic is a lack of measurement tools and resources.

An overview of the main tools available to assist the learning process and facilitate social and economic impact assessment is outlined. These tools are described in details and the strengths and limitations are highlighted. There are several categories of tools, including:

1. Self-assessment tools to understand how well an organisation is measuring impact;
2. Evidence planning tools used to plan a project evaluation;
3. Specialist tools designed specifically for social ventures involving volunteers;
4. Outcome assessment tools to track and measure outcomes in robust and reliable ways;  
and
5. Benchmarking tools that enable comparison against other organisations and similar data sets.

## Recommendations

Volonteuropa and its Impact Working Group make the following recommendations:

- Increase the provision of secure and stable funding for the volunteering infrastructure especially volunteer-involving organisations to create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering, and provide resources for development of impact management culture;
- Raise awareness amongst civil society staff, civil servants, policy makers and stakeholders on the importance of impact measurement to create sharing of practice and development of common standards;
- Develop a pan-European legal framework of volunteering clearly identifying rights and responsibilities for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations;
- Adopt a common understanding of the key principles and components of quality volunteering to improve the quality of volunteering;
- Develop homogeneous and comparable indicators to measure its economic and social impact of volunteering to ensure an effective and enabling policy;
- Ensure data collection including measurement of social impact from the beginning and apply lessons learned to future endeavours.

## Introduction

Volunteering is the most visible expression of promoting solidarity and facilitating social inclusion, building social capital and producing a transformative effect on society. It contributes to the development of a thriving civil society enabled to find innovative solutions to common challenges and issues. Furthermore, it is a source of economic growth, a pathway to integration and employment, a positive outcome in itself and a mechanism for improving cohesion. Volunteering also contributes to reducing economic, social and environmental inequalities. Hence, an investment in volunteering is an investment in society's social cohesion. For these reasons, the value of volunteering needs full recognition as creating a sense of European identity and active citizenship, contribution to public good, human and social capital.

With the benefits of volunteering plentiful and far-reaching, it is important that volunteering services are able to capture this impact in a systemic form. It is necessary to measure not only the economic, but also the social value of volunteering. For example, the impact on the well-being of both participants and beneficiaries and society as a whole has to be measured.

The importance of impact measurement of volunteering is recognised at the European level. The 1983 European Parliament Resolution on Voluntary Work stresses that recognition of volunteering is crucial in order to encourage appropriate incentives for all stakeholders and so increase the quantity, quality and impact of volunteering. It requires the development of a culture of recognition across Europe with re-enforcing positive public awareness messages through the media, which show volunteering as a driving force that puts European values into practice.

In order to facilitate the discussion on the value of volunteering and the management and measurement of its impact, Volonteurope, with the support of a working group on impact measurement of volunteering, composed of experts and practitioners from across Europe (from now on referred to as the *Volonteurope Impact Group*), presents an analysis of the current situation on the matter in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia and the United Kingdom.

Firstly, the paper provides an overview of volunteering legislations and levels in the countries analysed. The second chapter sets the methodological basis for impact measurement and the measurement of social impact, while the third chapter shows what the common practices around

measurement of the countries analysed are and provides case studies of impact management conducted by different organisations. The analysis of the countries is followed by a chapter that provides an overview of tools available to assist the learning process. The tools are split into the following different categories:

1. Self-assessment tools to understand how well an organisation is measuring impact;
2. Evidence planning tools used to plan a project evaluation;
3. Specialist tools designed specifically for social ventures involving volunteers;
4. Outcome assessment tools to track and measure outcomes in robust and reliable ways; and
5. Benchmarking tools that enable comparison against other organisations and similar data sets.

The final chapter provides conclusions and a set of recommendations. Volonteuropa aims to raise awareness on impact measurement and use this paper as a multiplier of impact measurement practices.

This policy paper wants to encourage quality impact analysis through the dissemination of information and exchange best practice between practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

It aims at building evidence for advocating for the development of a European framework of volunteering that includes the development of homogeneous and comparable indicators to measure its economic and social impact.



## 1. Volunteering

In order to be able to measure a phenomenon, it is first necessary to define it. This is especially challenging in the case of volunteering for several reasons. Firstly the term “volunteer” or “volunteering” is not commonly understood in all parts of the world, including within the European Union, and it can even have a variety of negative connotations, as in some societies people were forced to undertake activities referred to as “volunteering”. Secondly, in some societies, helping others is part of the culture and this is not seen as a distinct activity, but as normal activity in the community. Moreover, although volunteering is an unpaid activity, sometimes volunteers receive a stipend as a form of reimbursement for their expenses, so it is important to make the distinction between subsistence and remuneration (ILO, 2011).

Across the EU Member States there is no common definition for volunteering. Some countries define volunteering by specific legislation, while in others volunteering is regulated through a looser legal framework.

The *Volonteuropa Impact Group* has adopted the definition of volunteering set in the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (P.A.V.E.) published as one of the key outputs of the European Year of Volunteering 2011:

*“[Volunteering constitutes] all forms of voluntary activity in any location, whether formal or informal, full-time or part-time, occurring regularly or sporadically.”*

Volunteering can be full-time or part-time, occurring regularly, sporadically or also just once. The key criterion is the fact that volunteering is a choice made by each individual and is undertaken on the basis of their own free will and is an unpaid activity. Volunteering can include formal activities undertaken through public, not for profit and voluntary organisations, as well as informal community participation and social action. *Volonteuropa* and the *Volonteuropa Impact Group* advocates for an inclusive approach to volunteering as reflected in key United Nations, Council of Europe and European Union documents and instruments on volunteering.

Many differences exist between volunteering sectors in Europe due to differences in history, politics and community culture. In some countries, particularly in Western, Southern and Northern Europe, there is a long-standing tradition in volunteering, and as a consequence the volunteering sector is well developed (e.g. Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK). In others, for example in Central and Eastern Europe the phenomenon is still emerging and is still affected by the negative connotations during years of oppressive regimes (e.g. Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania).

In the European Year of Volunteering in 2011 it was estimated that around 92 to 94 million people over the age of 15 were involved in a volunteering activity; this equates to between 22% and 23% of the European Union population. According to the Special Eurobarometer 273 (2015) nearly 80% of European citizens feel that voluntary activities are an important part of democratic life in Europe. According to a Eurobarometer survey published in 2015 the most common types of volunteering in the EU include charity, humanitarian and development aid (44%); education, training or sport (40%); and culture or art (15%). The majority of people volunteer within their local community (66%) and many also engage in volunteering within their country of residence. In contrast, cross-border volunteering remains modest with only 7% of activities taking place in another EU country and 11% outside the EU (European Commission, 2018).

### Context of Volunteering

There have been a number of political developments in the area of volunteering since 1997 when the Intergovernmental Conference adopted the '*Declaration 38 on volunteering*', which was attached to the Treaty of Amsterdam, and recognised the contribution made by voluntary activities to developing social cohesion.

In more recent years, the social and economic value of volunteering has become a central focus. In March 2008, the European Parliament adopted a report on the '*Role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion*' (2007/2149(INI)). Following this report, other EU actors, such as the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee, provided their opinions on the important role of volunteering and its contribution to economic and social cohesion.

The year 2011 was the European Year of Volunteering, designed to encourage regional and local authorities to improve and promote volunteering within Member States. The year acted as a catalyst for change at a national and European level. CEV's and Volonteurope's initiative and facilitating role was a crucial element in the civil society campaign achieving the European Year of Volunteering 2011 together with all partner networks active in volunteering at the European level. These networks formed the 'EYV 2011 Alliance' and CEV was mandated to host the Secretariat for the implementation of the civil society strand of the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

The objectives of the EYV 2011 Alliance included the development of a Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe (P.A.V.E.), which provides recommendations for a more efficient and

effective European policy framework to support and promote volunteers, volunteering, volunteer-involving organisations and their partners.

The EU Youth Strategy, which sets out a framework for cooperation on youth policy between all the Member States between 2010-2018 addresses volunteering as a way to promote non-formal learning for young people and achieve its two main goals:

1. to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market;
2. to encourage young people to actively participate in society (European Commission, 2018a).

The EU Youth Strategy promotes greater recognition of the value of volunteering, improved working conditions of young volunteers, cross-border volunteering and intergenerational solidarity (European Commission, 2018a).

There are several EU programmes and tools in place to support Member States in improving the quality and increasing the number of volunteering opportunities. These include a volunteering database which has been set up to promote the exchange of volunteer experiences young people across Europe, and a European Youth Portal through which young people can find information about volunteering opportunities. The European Voluntary Service (EVS), which began in 1996, is now part of the current Erasmus+ Programme, and gives young people aged between 17-30 the opportunity to volunteer abroad within and outside the European Union (European Commission, 2018a).

New initiatives, such as the EU Aid Volunteers programme and the European Solidarity Corps have been set up to make opportunities for cross border volunteering available to a greater number of European Citizens.

EU Aid Volunteers, set up in 2014, works with volunteers and organisations from different countries, providing practical support to humanitarian aid projects (European Commission, 2017a) and involves an extensive training programme that leaves volunteers well equipped for their volunteer position. In 2016 the European Solidarity Corps was launched. It is largely funded by Erasmus+ and aims to create opportunities for young people to work or volunteer in their own country or abroad. It therefore differs from EVS in that participants can volunteer or work in their own country, and the program facilitates paid apprenticeships and traineeships as well as volunteering opportunities (European Youth Portal, 2017).

## 2. Volunteering in Europe

There are differences in the level of volunteering between States in Europe. Certain Member States have well developed voluntary sectors and longstanding traditions in volunteering, while in others the voluntary sector is still emerging or poorly developed and, as a consequence, fewer people engage in it. According to the European Parliamentary Research Service (2016), while Slovenia, Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands have the highest rates of volunteering, only one sixth of Polish, Greek and Hungarian people report having volunteered.

P.A.V.E. (2011) has identified that the current state of volunteering infrastructure across the EU is fragmentary both at the European Commission level, where the key competences on volunteering fall under several Directorates-General, and at Member State level, where the competences are assigned to different Ministries from state to state or are not assigned at all. The volunteering infrastructure landscape across Europe shows that such infrastructure reflects and depends on the diversity of the cultural, historical, and social traditions of the local communities, regions, and Member States.

In the following paragraph we will provide a summary of the legal framework of volunteering in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia and the United Kingdom.

Belgium
<p><b>Rate of volunteering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12.5% of the population of Belgium over 15 volunteers.</li> <li>• Types of volunteering include sport (17.2%), social action (17.1%), professional associations (10.7%), education and training (10%), arts and culture (9.1%), leisure activities (8.2%)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Legal framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While volunteering is mainly governed at the federal level, the German, French and Flemish community each have their own good practice on volunteering which they have established through decrees.</li> <li>• The Law on the Rights of the Volunteer which came into force in 2006 regulates a variety of issues including reimbursement of volunteer expenses and insurance obligations. The federal government is responsible for the implementation of the Volunteer Law. Specific provisions including the universal right to volunteer and the economic and social recognition of volunteering, are required to strengthen the volunteering framework (European Voluntary Centre, 2012).</li> </ul>

### Volunteering infrastructure

- The High Council of Volunteers consisting of Belgian NGO representatives acts as an advisory board at the federal level, providing advice, research and reviews of the volunteer sector. Aside from the High Council of Volunteers there is no national volunteer or resource centre in Belgium. There are regional and sector specific volunteer centres and large VIOs which support volunteering.
- In line with the national administrative structure there is a volunteering platform in French speaking Wallonia and in the Flanders/Dutch speaking community which act as umbrella organisations for VIOs. Within the Ministry of Culture a German speaking staff member has been given a key role in the support of volunteering.

## Bulgaria

### Rate of volunteering

- Volunteering was an integral part of societal life during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century until after 1944.
- The Communist regime outlawed community initiatives and introduce forced labour as “volunteering”.
- Since the fall of Communism in the early 90s volunteering rates have increased but it is still not widely practiced.
- Volunteering is becoming more popular in 15-36 year olds.
- 34% of people state they have helped others and 5% volunteer regularly.
- 92% of CSOs state that they use volunteers in the implementation of their activities.
- Volunteering is not regulated so there are no official statistics on volunteering.
- Bulgaria is at the bottom of the CAF World Giving Index 2017.

### Legal framework

- Law on Legal Entities with Non-profit Purpose (2001) that has been recently amended (2017) regulates how NGOs function.
- It defines non-profit organisations as “associations and foundations which self-define themselves as organisations pursuing activities for public or private benefit”.
- The law does not specify volunteering organisations or volunteering in particular.
- A new draft law on volunteering was presented to the National Parliament in December 2017. A few civil organisations have been actively involved with this draft including Tulip Foundation, the National Alliance for Voluntary Action, the Bulgarian Centre for Non-profit Law and some others.

### Volunteering infrastructure

- While volunteering is not regulated with a law and there is no public body responsible for volunteering from a regulatory or institutional perspective, there are many local and national organisations active in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. Corporate volunteering has become more popular in recent years.
- In the late 90s a National Alliance for Voluntary Action was initiated and supported by Open

Society Foundations as a nationwide platform and network of organisations working with volunteers across the country. It promotes, recruits and trains volunteers in various activities. NAVA runs an annual campaign Donate an Hour in late November for more than 15 years.

- Since 2005 Tulip Foundation has acted as a strong support to voluntary organisations in Bulgaria by promoting volunteering and providing funding, training and networking opportunities for both local groups in small settlements in remote areas and well-established organisations working with volunteers. It has funded hundreds of projects based on and promoting volunteering in the country (Tulip Foundation, 2016).
- The annual awards Volunteer Initiative of the Year are announced at a public ceremony by Tulip Foundation and NAVA on the International Day of Volunteering since 2011.
- For the last few years the Time Heroes Association has developed an online platform <https://timeheroes.org> with the purpose of enabling civil organisations to promote their cause and recruit volunteers and also enable people to find and select a cause to support. It is becoming popular mostly among young people.

## Czech Republic

### Rate of volunteering

- There is a lack of widely available and recent data on the rate of volunteering. However the HESTIA - National Volunteer Centre produced a survey measuring Project Patterns and Values of Volunteering in Czech and Norwegian societies in 2010 and produced the following findings.
- 30% of citizens are engaged in formal volunteering.
- 38% of citizens are engaged in informal, individual volunteering (in particular helping neighbours).
- Organised volunteers work 11 hours a month on average. Almost 60% of volunteers volunteer with the same organization for more than 3 years and 75% of volunteers helped at least once a month.
- Volunteers are mainly people attending high school (35%) and university education (40%). Only 24% of people with basic education are volunteers (Hestia, 2011).

### Legal framework

- The Czech Law on Voluntary Service (2003) was not conceived as a framework law for volunteering, as it only directed the state towards transmitting institutions so only protected accredited volunteers of the transmitting organisations (European Volunteer Centre, 2011).
- The law was amended in 2011 and came into force in 2014 as a general law supporting and defining volunteering and also introducing evaluation certificates for volunteers serving as official attestation of professional training (European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law, 2014).

### Volunteering infrastructure

- The Minister of the Interior and the Crime Prevention Department regulates the Law on Voluntary Service. This department is responsible for the accreditation and financial support and monitoring of “sending” NGOs.
- State institutions and local authorities provide and promote some volunteering activities.

- The national volunteer centre HESTIA, carries out volunteering research, training and education to promote and support volunteering.
- There is no systematically developed infrastructure for voluntary organisations. There are some regional volunteer centres in the country, many of which are independently managed by different local organisations. Nevertheless, the majority of regional volunteer centres are members of the Alliance for Development in Volunteering, and some work in cooperation with HESTIA. Some basic quality standards for these volunteer centres were established during the European Year of Volunteering 2011, but many are still to be implemented.

## Italy

### Rate of volunteering

- According to the National Institute of Statistics and CSVnet in 2013, 12.6% of adults volunteer.
- In the North 16% of the population volunteer while in the South the rate is 8.6%.
- More men volunteer, and volunteers are on average 55.64 years of age. Volunteering activities positively correlate with the level of education and socio-economic status.

### Legal framework

- The 10 July 2014 decree introduced the universal civil service accessible to every citizen between 18 and 28 living in Italy. This new civil service replaced military service and between 2001 and 2015, 377,568 places have been made available.
- In 2016 a new law reforming the third sector in Italy reformed the law on volunteering. This law created a public registry for all CSOs and organisations that receive public funds, European funds and private funds gathered through donations.

### Volunteering infrastructure

- Policy around volunteering follows under the portfolio of the Ministry for Work and Social policy.
- The Ministry of Work and Social Policy promotes and supports volunteering through: the promotion of research on volunteering and the third sector, the promotion of volunteering activities through partnership with public authorities, private organisations, NGOs and social enterprises, collaboration with regions for providing services. Volunteering centres (CSV) can be administrated by third sector organisations and are aimed at offering support and information to strengthen and promote volunteering.

## The Netherlands

### Rate of volunteering

- The results from the Central Bureau for Statistics survey 'Social cohesion and Well-being' 2012 –2016 show that 49% of the population over 15 volunteers at least once a year.
- Volunteers engage with sports associations (15%), schools (11%), care and nursing (9%), churches and philosophical organisations (8%) and youth organisations (8%).
- On average, people spend 4.2 hours per week on their volunteer work, 36% spend less than an hour a week volunteering and 25% volunteer from 1 to 3 hours a week and from 3 to 8 hours a week.
- 60% of highly educated people volunteer at least once a year compared to 35% of the lowest-skilled people (CSB Statline, 2017).

### Legal framework

- There is no national charter on volunteering. The Dutch Association for Volunteer Effort (NOV) is lobbying for a single charter on volunteering.
- Many regulations that apply to paid staff also apply to volunteers.
- The absence of a single law on volunteering in the Netherlands creates difficulties for volunteers as they have to navigate through various different laws and regulations that apply to them (European Volunteer Centre, 2012).

### Volunteering infrastructure

- With the Social Support Act (2007), the national government decentralised to the municipal level both its funding and its policy involvement in the voluntary effort. The act sets out a national framework responsible for giving direction to local municipalities, supporting them to develop their own policy, and helping them to reduce their administrative work. The Social Support Act (2015) transfers further responsibility to the local municipalities. For example, healthcare has become more decentralised. In the Netherlands all government departments are responsible for volunteering within their own sector.
- There are two national institutions responsible for the support of volunteering: the Association of Dutch Voluntary Effort Organisations (NOV), an organisation with 350 member volunteer-involving organisations which works to strengthen volunteering, and the Netherlands Centre for Social Development, which is a national knowledge consultancy centre for volunteering.
- There are also around 300 local volunteer centres across the country (European Volunteer Centre, 2012).

## Romania

### Rate of volunteering

- From 2010 to 2016, the rate of volunteering has increased from 19% of the adult population in 2010 to 28% in 2016.
- However many people have never volunteered and out of those who have, only 7% volunteered with the support of CSOs.
- The majority of people that volunteer for CSOs come from urban areas and are younger than



30 years old.

#### Legal framework

- During the Communist regime, "volunteering" was a form of enforced "patriotic work". The revolution in 1989 brought a movement towards genuine volunteering, but perceptions take time to change.
- The new legal framework (2001) for volunteering regulates the rights and responsibilities of organisations and volunteers, and it permits public institutions to engage volunteers.
- Due to inconsistencies related to the monitoring and reporting and support of volunteering, in 2014 a new volunteering law nr78/2014 was approved by the Parliament. This was a big success of Romanian civil society organisations that came together under the Volum Federation that lobbied for this law.
- The Law officially recognises the social capital of volunteering and regards volunteering as a professional work experience.

#### Volunteering infrastructure

- Public bodies in the voluntary sector fulfil different roles. For example, the different ministries have a regulatory role, whilst the Agency for Governmental Strategies has a predominantly consultative/cooperative role. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has become involved in an EU funded project aimed at strengthening the impact and role of volunteering in Romania.
- In the NGO field there are several prominent Volunteer-involving Organisations (VIOs), e.g. The National Resource Centre for Volunteering or Pro Vobis, which develop volunteering through training, consultancy, research and the facilitation of networking. Between 1999 and 2011 they helped set up 35 volunteer centres across the country, and in 2001 these local volunteer centres created the National Network of Local Volunteer Centres in Romania. The Federation of Organisations Supporting the Development of Volunteering in Romania (VOLUM Federation) also facilitates networking of VIOs.

### Serbia

#### Rate of volunteering

- During Serbia's transition from Socialism the need to define and regulate the field of volunteering as an individual practice became apparent. Dialogue on the importance of volunteering was initiated by CSOs, and there has been a particular focus on this since 2010.
- Unfortunately, there are still no official statistics on volunteer rates and there is no impact measurement research.

#### Legal framework

- A legal framework for volunteering was officially established in Serbia in 2010 when the Law on Volunteering came into force. The law defines volunteering, outlines the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders, offers the opportunity for organised voluntary work and recognises the value of volunteering.
- The law is still not functioning in practice and the legal status of volunteer work is

unresolved, which presents a barrier to volunteering.

Since 2011, there has been growing dissatisfaction with law among youth NGOs, with public calls for revision of the legislation (Potocnik and Williamson, 2011).

- Volunteering is under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs.

#### Volunteering infrastructure

- The infrastructure of volunteering is determined by the framework of youth policy and is treated as youth activism. The National Strategy for Youth and its Action Plan aim to support young people in Serbia.
- The national Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Law on Youth, which created an institutional framework for setting up youth policies and agents for engaging youth.
- Youth offices, the Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia, youth associations and their alliances are responsible for implementation of this and have engaged a third of all young people in their activities so far.
- The Serbian Ministry of Youth and Sports has launched the platform Mladi su zakon (Youth is the Law) to encourage young people to volunteer. The platform engages more than 40 associations and 1500 young people every year.
- According to the Ministry of youth and Sports there currently are 1228 youth organisations registered in Serbia.
- Recently Youth organisations formed an alliance National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS). KOMS is an advocacy platform that gathers 97 youth organisations, seeks to improve the situation of young people through capacity building and cross sectoral collaboration.
- There are also informal civic initiatives promoting volunteering e.g. the online platform <http://www.volonter.rs/> where any VIO can post a volunteer opportunity and people can sign up to that activity.

### United Kingdom

#### Rate of volunteering

In 2016-2017, 22% of adults volunteered formally and 63% volunteered formally or informally (over 32.000.000 people).

#### Legal framework

No single law on volunteering; however there are several acts such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 that apply to volunteers as members of the public.

#### Volunteering infrastructure

- The Office for Civil Society carries out cross-government work in support of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. It develops policies related to volunteering as do other key governmental departments.
- Volunteer policy is devolved with England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Instead of a law on volunteering, there are a series of non-legally binding local compacts for each region setting out the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders as well as volunteer strategies designed to address the barriers to volunteering.

- NCVO, Volunteer Development Scotland, Wales Council for Voluntary Action, and Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency are government funded national voluntary organisations that support local and regional volunteering organisations.
- In England there are several other infrastructure bodies including NAVCA which represents local councils for voluntary service, and NCVO which is lead infrastructure body for the voluntary sector as a whole.

### 3. Measuring the Social Impact

If the third sector provides activities or services, which contribute to the improvement of the beneficiaries' health status, the well-being of these individuals is directly influenced. This is a fundamental societal impact on the meta-level. (Simsa et.al., 2014)

The first condition for identifying the specific impacts of the third sector and specifically of volunteering is to clarify the meaning of the term “impact” and how to understand it in relation to the voluntary sector.

The European funded Third Sector Impact project used a two components approach to define impact (Sivesind, 2015). Firstly, impact is defined as:

*“the direct or indirect, medium to long-term consequences of the activity of volunteers or of the third sector organisations on individuals or on the community, ranging from neighbourhoods to society in general”* (Sivesind, 2015).

This part of the definition implies that impact can occur at different levels, from the individual level to society level, that short-term and long-term impact can be measured, and that impact may follow directly or indirectly from the volunteering/third sector organisation.

The second part of the definition states that:

*“Impact goes beyond and above the outcome that would have happened without the third sector activity”* (Sivesind, 2015).

This means that the impact of volunteering is to be seen as something more than its outcome. A visualisation distinguishing impact from outcome can be seen in Figure 1 presented by Simsa et al. (2014) in their paper *Methodological Guideline for Impact Assessment*.

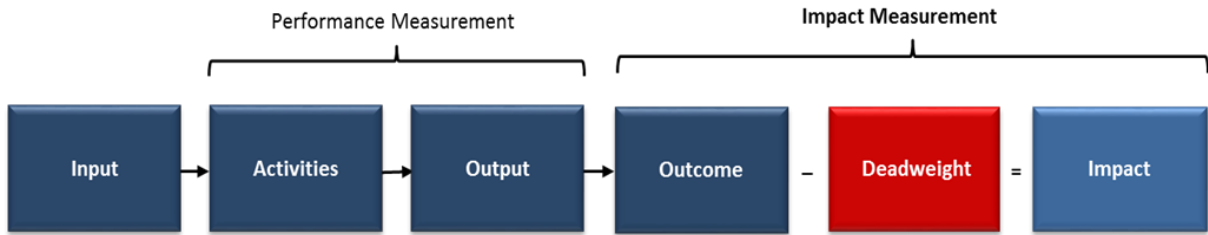


Figure 1. Impact Value Chain/Logic Model (Source: Simsa et al., 2014)

Starting from the beginning: *Input* as human and financial resources is invested in the voluntary activities/actions/tasks which may result in an *output*. It is possible to measure output directly as products and services. *Activities* and *output* are understood as the performances, but not the impact.

To identify the *impact*, the *outcome* has to be considered as the starting point. *Outcome* implies specific changes in attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and skills etc. that result from voluntary activities. However, *outcome* may also be facilitated by other activities and external factors rather than solely by volunteering or the third sector organisation’s work, for example, family influence. The extent to which these outcomes would have happened anyway is called *deadweight*. The *deadweight* is to be taken into account before it is possible to identify the effects that can be attributed exclusively to volunteering and the actions of civil society organisations.

Moreover, and as already stated, *impact* may be categorised along different dimensions as illustrated in Figure 2.

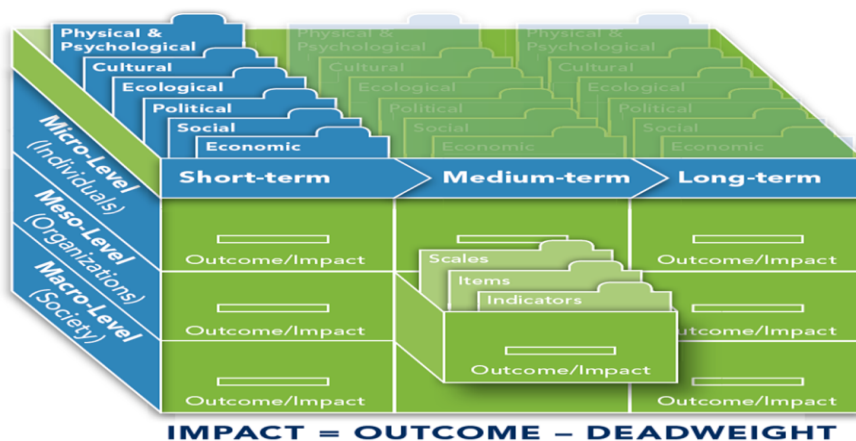


Figure 2. Impact Box (Source: Schober and Rauscher, 2014/ Simsa et al., 2014)

As shown in figure 2, Schober and Rauscher (2014) underline that *impact* may be:

- at different levels of structure (individuals, organisations, society);
- short-termed, medium-termed or long-termed;
- categorised within different fields: as for instance economic impact, social impact, political democratic impact and health impact, etc.

To measure the real life impacts, one must furthermore identify indicators, items and scales. Finally, impact can be valued in monetary or non-monetary terms (i.e. quality adjusted life years).

### What is social impact?

There is not one definition of social impact but there are as many definitions as the number of methodologies used to measure it. Looking at one definition we can define social impact as: the capacity of an organisation to contribute to change in a specific field of action modifying the status quo of a beneficiary or of the community (Perrini and Vurro, 2013). Another study defines social impact as the non-economic change generated by the activities of an organisation (Emerson et al., 2000; Epstein and Yuthas, 2014). So we define social impact as the non-economic impact to the status quo of a person or of the community.

### What is the social impact of volunteering?

Recent research has demonstrated that in addition to having economic benefits, voluntary activities have a variety of broader social impacts that deliver significant added benefits to volunteers, local communities, and society in general. Many of these impacts contribute directly to a number of key objectives set out in EU policies.

Contribution of volunteering to policies	
<b>Social inclusion and employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary activities and services promote social cohesion, social inclusion and integration both for the beneficiaries of the actions and the volunteers themselves.</li> <li>• Volunteering is a pathway to training and employment.</li> <li>• It enhances social solidarity, social capital, and quality of life.</li> <li>• It contributes to the promotion of 'decent work,' of work as a means of promoting human agency, dignity and satisfaction.</li> </ul>

<b>Education and training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and competencies gained through volunteering can be transferred into professional contexts.</li> <li>• Volunteering is a useful way for people, particularly for young people, to test out potential careers and therefore make an informed choice about their future.</li> </ul>
<b>Active citizenship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteering leads to the direct involvement of citizens in local development, and therefore plays an important role in fostering civil society and democracy in Europe.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers and VIOs provide community activities and services e.g. sports clubs health care services.</li> <li>• These have a significant impact on well-being of local people, and the local environment.</li> </ul>

### What is well-being?

To measure social impact it is necessary to explore the meaning of well-being. In recent years the definition of well-being has moved from the traditional approach that considered well-being as solely being in possession of means and income towards a more inclusive definition. The idea of well-being as a multidimensional concept has been widely advocated in the academic sphere by e.g. Sen (1985, 1993) Stewart (1985) and Nussbaum (2000). Recently, there has been more attention on the multiple meaning of well-being thanks to the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission report of 2008, the establishment of the OECD's Your Better Life Index (2013) and the initiatives of several governments to incorporate subjective well-being into their national accounts (e.g. the UK, Canada and Bhutan). For example, in the Annual Population Survey (APS) the Office for National Statistics of the UK has since 2011 included questions to develop personal well-being statistics to better understand how people feel about their lives.

Subjective well-being (SWB) is, simply put, how people understand their lives to be going. A number of initiatives (including Eurofound's Quality of Life Survey, the GallupHealthways Global Survey, Eurobarometer surveys and the EU's Statistics on Income and Living Conditions project) have sought to directly measure individual well-being through answers to questions about how people perceive their lives ('life satisfaction'), how they feel currently ('happiness'), and their sense of purpose and engagement in life.

Although there is no consensus around a single definition of well-being it can be summarised as the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy.

Researchers from different disciplines have examined different aspects of well-being that include the following:

- Physical well-being
- Economic well-being
- Social well-being
- Development and activity
- Emotional well-being
- Psychological well-being
- Life satisfaction
- Domain specific satisfaction
- Engaging activities and work

### How is well-being measured?

Among economists, the most known conceptualisation of multidimensional well-being is Sen's capability approach (Sen, 1985), according to which an individual's capabilities reflect the combinations of functioning that they can attain. Sen defines functioning as "the things that he or she manages to do or be in leading a life" (Sen, 1999, p. 31), and multidimensional well-being is measured in terms of an individual's capability to attain this valuable functioning.

The capability approach is generally associated with the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI), a composite index that combines indicators representing the level of the population's health, education and income. Using this kind of composite index has been criticised because it does not take into consideration individuals' experiences. So another approach to the measurement of subjective performances has been subjective well-being (SWB) to assess social performance (Diener, 1994; Helliwell, 2003; Layard, 2005; Conceição and Bandura, 2008; Diener et al., 2009; Graham, 2011; MacKerron, 2012). Scholars of SWB argue that direct measures of 'happiness' should be used as a barometer of social progress. The argument affirms that happiness is the ultimate goal that individuals and societies strive for, and such measures are therefore a representation for everything that multidimensional measures of well-being attempt to aggregate. In order to measure happiness and as a consequence well-being, these scholars have resorted to self-reported surveys that consider the individual as the best judge of their own well-being (Diener, 1994). However, there are criticisms concerning the use of self-reported measures, such as biases and contextual influences (Schimmack and Oishi, 2005; Graham, 2011). Over recent years studies in the psychology of well-



being have led to improved multi-item instruments, allowing higher reliability and validity than is possible with a single item (Diener et al., 2009).

### Why measure?

In recent years the focus on impact measurement has grown not only due to the need to report to funders and stakeholders, but also due to the necessity to be accountable for the work, and demonstrate the value for society of reaching a common goal. Moreover, in times where the availability of funding is shrinking, it is increasingly necessary to be able to demonstrate the impact on society.

The Volonteurope Impact Group believes that volunteering adds value at multiple levels and that, by valuing volunteering itself, we can strengthen individuals, communities, societies and economies.

We structure the notion of value into four dimensions:

- Value of volunteering to the individual;
- Value of volunteering to the community;
- Value of volunteering to society as a whole;
- The economic aspect of volunteering.

We have already outlined the important social and economic contribution that volunteering makes on an individual and societal level. As such, its value should be measured in terms of its economic and social impact. Measuring social impact will support the case of volunteering and the development of a pan-European volunteering framework in order to realise all its potential. Striving for a comprehensive measurement of volunteering, collecting accurate, comparable data on volunteering is the best way to ensure an effective policy that facilitates and promotes volunteering.

Measuring the social impact of volunteering is important as it:

- Showcases the value of volunteering through enhanced communication and reporting of community actions and involvement;
- Increases accountability of the action of civil society organisations through proper tracking of resources spent on community initiatives;
- Ensures the quality of volunteering is measured and improved through improved internal management and more effective benchmarking;

- It enables to analyse performance with a more critical approach, supporting the understanding of intended and unintended benefits, which might influence the strategy in allocation of future resources;
- Increases sustainability of projects as it will support the case with funders who are increasingly looking beyond the traditional annual report and including financial, social and environmental indicators as evidence of impact and sustainability; and
- It supports evidence based decision making for policy makers, funders and investors.

Finally, one of the aims of measuring the social impact of volunteering is to build the argument against considering volunteering as a product or as a quantifiable good to be sold and exchanged. Arjun Appadurai (2001) observed that is possible to build a different world addressing needs with cultural aspirations and not through economical or markets solutions.

### **Impact on individual volunteer, individual beneficiary and on society**

Volunteering can have an impact on a broad range of stakeholders: volunteers, service users, communities and society at large. Guidance notes compiled by the United Nations state that, when applied properly, volunteerism can contribute to key principles of development engagement, namely: national ownership, sustainability, a human rights-based approach, gender equality and capacity development. However, in practice benefits often vary considerably between countries, as well as between different volunteers (for example due to differences in gender, socioeconomic status etc.), local communities and amongst the direct beneficiaries of voluntary activities and services. Moreover, it is very difficult to measure certain individual impacts of volunteering including better health, increased well-being and happiness, and increased social trust (Bekkers, 2012). This is because people who already have better well-being, health and social trust are more likely to be involved in voluntary work, while disadvantaged groups and individuals are less likely to become involved. Therefore it is difficult to gauge to what extent the supposed impacts can be considered pre-conditions for volunteering.

There are different ways of expressing the various effects that volunteering can have, in terms of the impact made to particular groups of people and also the types of impact.

Paine and Ockenden (2007) have categorised the evidence of the effects on volunteers into five areas:

- safer and stronger communities;
- social inclusion;
- quality of life;
- development;
- lifelong learning.

Similarly, the effects on stakeholders can be grouped in five types of capital:

- **Physical capital**, which refers to the concrete product or output, for example number of trees planted or volume of material recycled;
- **Human capital**, which relates to the acquisition of skills and personal development.
- **Economic capital**, which describes the specifically financial and economic effects that result from volunteering, for example putting a market value on the work done by volunteers.
- **Social capital**, which moves beyond concrete outputs and individual development to capture social impacts. It refers to creating a more cohesive community through building relationships, networks and bonds of trust between people. It is not an easy concept to measure, but a number of indicators can capture its essential features; and,
- **Cultural capital**, which refers to assets such as a shared sense of cultural and religious identity; volunteering may reinforce people's sense of their cultural affiliation and enable them to express their faith or ethnic identity with security and confidence.

Moreover, numerous studies have identified a positive relationship between individuals' volunteering and self-reported health (Moen, Dempster-McCain and Williams, 1993; Musick, Herzog and House, 1999), perceived well-being, such as feeling happier and suffering less from depression (Musick and Wilson, 2003; Thoits and Hewitt, 2001; Wheeler, Gorey and Greenblatt, 1998) and increased political participation (Armingeon, 2007).

Most of the evidence of the positive contribution of volunteering is based on correlation between an individual's health, well-being or civic engagement, and this can leave unobserved variables to biased regression estimates of these relationships (Silvesind et al., 2015). As this study demonstrates, measuring impact supposes to address the question of *causality*.

### How is impact currently being measured?

There are several ways and process of measuring impact below we present some steps and methods that can support the measurement such as pre and post surveys, feedback forms but also interviews and focus groups etc.

### Before and after (sometimes referred to as 'pre and post-test')

This is a good approach to use if you are:

- Able to plan in advance to measure impact, before the group experiencing impacts have begun the activity – e.g. beneficiaries who have yet to engage with volunteers, volunteers who have not started;
- Needing objective and reliable evidence of impact;
- Unlikely to have a large 'drop out' rate amongst those experiencing impacts.

For example, if the aim is to measure the impact of volunteering on volunteers' self-esteem, a series of questions can be asked before the beginning of the volunteering project/activity and then the same questions can be asked again after the activity has finished, or after a period of time that they have been involved in the volunteering activities. The difference in their responses is then looked at to measure what change has happened. Relevant indicators that would show the level of self-esteem or well-being, etc., can be identified and measured to show the volunteers' subjective level of perception of change in their status. Several measurement tools are available, which provide useful lists of questions that can be used. It is necessary to consider the timing of the impact, as some impacts might be immediate, others mid- or long-term and as such the collection of data has to be performed accordingly. A way to strengthen the 'before and after' approach is to use a control/comparison group to which the same questions are asked, but it is not involved in the activities.

### Retrospective pre and post-test

The measurement of impact has to be planned before the beginning of the activities to make sure that there is a procedure for the collection of data in place. However, due to the lack of resources, or well-established methodologies in most cases, measurement exercises are conducted at the end of the volunteering projects or while the project has already started. In this case, participants are asked at the end of the activity whether they have experienced changes. While this approach is not

considered robust or reliable and it is often regarded as subjective, it is often the only option for measuring impact.

To ensure accuracy and effectiveness of both measurement methods it is important to:

- Have clear agreement and understanding in advance from all parties about what are the indicators of impact that will be used;
- Pay attention to identifying whether change happened as a result of the activity/project;
- Do not assume all impacts are positive;
- Analyse the barriers or enablers to experiencing impact.

Generally, the measurement of social impact is useful to understand the organisation logic structure, and analyse and redefine the activities and internal objectives. Measuring the social impact can therefore have two functions: one internal, for planning and identifying directions, strategic points and successful projects and practices; and one external, for supporting external communication and providing evidence for building a better narrative with stakeholders and funders.

## 4. Level of measurement in different countries

Levels of measurement vary across countries. Below we provide a summary of impact measurement practices in the third sector with a particular focus on the measurement of the social value of volunteering.

### Belgium

#### Tools for measuring the social value of volunteering

There have been numerous studies carried out to assess various aspects of volunteering. Studies measuring the economic impact (e.g. Durieux, 1994). Mertens and Lefèbvre (2004) used the replacement cost method of measurement to integrate the economic impact of volunteers into the production of Non-Profit Organisations. However methods to assess the social impact of volunteering require further development.

#### Case Study

The European Volunteer Centre (CEV) based in Brussels has expressed concerns over the monetisation of voluntary activities, as this can disregard the intrinsic value of volunteering and the social impact it can create. To address this, CEV, supported by the Royal King Baudouin Foundation, hosted a Seminar on Volunteer Measurement in Europe in 2015, which brought together volunteering stakeholders, including Statistical Agencies, volunteer centres and volunteer organisations from across Europe.

In autumn 2015 CEV began collaboration with the ESOMAR Foundation to assess the measurement methodologies and to evaluate the social impact of volunteering. Building upon a literature review of existing publications on the topic, CEV aims to develop new methodologies on the measurement of social impact.

### Bulgaria

#### Tools for measuring the social value of volunteering

In Bulgaria measuring economic impact is common practice. However, measuring the social impact of volunteers within organisations is a relatively new practice and is still in development. Nevertheless, in a short questionnaire produced by the Tulip Foundation (2016) to enquire CSOs about their activities to measure social impact of their volunteering activities, more than half of the organisations (60%) stated commitment to measuring social impact. Nearly equal numbers of organisations reported measuring the social impact regularly or sometimes. Most of them have developed their own indicators, however less than 4% apply a concrete method to their assessment.

However there is good understanding of the importance of social impact measurement as 85% of participating organisations stated that it is very important and the rest believe it is somewhat important. Two thirds of respondents share the belief that measuring the effect of volunteering has its significance for everyone – volunteers, their organisations, the community and the society.

Setting up tools for measuring the impact of volunteering is a slow process due to the lack of reliable information on the scope, the tendencies, the demographic profile of volunteers, and the distribution of volunteering in the country.

### Case Study

The Tulip Foundation, a not for profit organisation provides technical and financial assistance to civil society organisations to encourage social responsibility in Bulgarian society by enhancing the co-operation among civil society, the corporate sector, national and local authorities. It has been very active in highlighting the importance of measuring the social impact of volunteering. In 2014 the Tulip Foundation initiated the Bulgarian Social Impact Group, a pool of around 25 specialists and organisations committed to bringing social impact measurement to the agenda of civil organisations, social enterprises, agencies and other relevant bodies. Since then it has published and disseminated documents with information and advice for nongovernmental organisations and social enterprises on measuring social impact such as the Code of Good Impact Practices, developed by the Inspiring Impact Programme, the Seven Principles of Social Value of Social Value International, Funders' Principles and Drivers of Good Impact Practice in 2016 and the Principles of Good Impact Reporting and the Principles of EVPA and SVI and Social Impact navigator, published by Phineo in 2017.

The Tulip Foundation and the National Alliance for Voluntary Action are currently developing a document outlining good standards for volunteering, within which there is a section on measuring the social impact of volunteering. The Tulip Foundation is also developing a tool for measuring the social impact of volunteer actions and initiatives of civil organisations. The tool is based on three main areas – the impact of volunteer work on the volunteers themselves and the organisation, on the beneficiaries of the volunteer activities and the local community.

## Czech Republic

### Tools for measuring the social value of volunteering

In the Czech Republic, organisations are increasingly required to provide economic impact measurement criteria to be eligible for grant funding. Measuring the social impact of volunteering is a relatively new discipline in the country. HESTIA has carried out a survey on impact assessment amongst Czech non-governmental organisations with a total of 121 individual responses, which was partially focused on the social impact of the activities of NGOs. Several interesting findings were gathered from the survey. The most commonly used method of measurement is usually a questionnaire with feedback, monitoring the state before and after the action, and focus groups. There is no uniform system of measurement across the country as the type of measurement is strongly dependant on the type of organisation, and the target group, to whom the results are to be shown. Measurement is largely quantitative; however qualitative data is also frequently gathered.

There are many barriers to the effective measurement of the social impact of volunteering in the Czech Republic. A major barrier is a lack of measurement tools and resources. Furthermore, there is a lack of knowledge of measurement methods, which, coupled with a lack of financial capacity means that most organisations only partially measure impact, or not at all. Of the organisations that *do* measure impact, the majority would highly appreciate help with basic tools to measure impact within the “internal priorities of the organisation”.

### Case Study

The Impact Academy: Show the Change programme was launched in January 2018. It was inspired by Ashoka. The Impact Academy: Show the Change is an intensive transformational educative program primarily targeted at civil society organisations, social enterprises and donor representatives. The first round engaged nine organisations motivated to achieve better impact.

The program is part of the initiatives by Ashoka Czech Republic and funded by the European Social Fund project. During the Academy's first meeting the organisations learned about the tool impact chain, which helps define social problems that the organisations' work aims to tackle and to guide them towards a logical and strategic way of thinking about the impact of the activities and the concrete steps that needs to be taken to achieve them. This tool aims to put the measurement and the management of social impact at the centre of organisations' activities. The organisations involved also focus on data collection, deposition and interpretation.

For more information check: <https://impactacademy.cz/en/>

## Italy

### Tools for measuring the social value of volunteering

The third sector reform that defines the new characteristics of social enterprises and not for profit organisations made the reporting on some information on social impact compulsory for bigger organisations. This is leading to an increase of the attention to the measurement of the social impact also in the not for profit organisations adapting methods and techniques developed in other countries. This is driven by the necessity of accountability, and, because of lack of resources, the need to communicate to funders and stakeholders the added value.

A study from the Fondazione Sodalitas and IRS realised in 2014 highlighted that a third of not for profit organisations measure their impact with a focus on social impact. The low number of organisations that measure impact is caused by lack of resources, competences and funding, as well as the difficulty to identify what to measure.

### Case Study

AVIS is the biggest Italian association for blood donation, and in 2017 it presented a report on the economic and social impact of blood donation. The report estimates that for each Euro spent on the activities for promotion of blood donation, around eight Euros are given back to the community. The study was conducted using the Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology and calculated how AVIS with dissemination activities for sharing knowledge, social cohesion and participants health. For example around 13% of donors had access to an early diagnosis as a consequence of the test and doctor appointments preceding the donation, creating not only a benefit for the donor but also savings for the whole national health system.

Being a donor/volunteer has created behavioural changes, for example reduction of alcohol and tobacco consumption with a tendency to increase physical activity. The study shows that 30 % of the volunteers have found friends and social relations during the volunteering activity and 70% have a greater sense of satisfaction. Finally the study identified that 32% of the people interviewed for the study declared that as a consequence of donating blood they are more willing to volunteer with other organisations (Saturni et al. 2017)



## The Netherlands

### Tools for measuring the social value of volunteering

The economic value of volunteering has been the subject of academic research in the Netherlands. The Dutch National Volunteer Centre recruited national NGOs to assist British a project from 1998-1999 exploring the viability of VIVA as a tool to measure the economic impact of volunteering within large organisations. VIVA measures the economic value of volunteering in terms of replacement cost; it analyses and measures actual activities and matches them to paid work to create a 'volunteer wage bill'. The tool also quantifies the issue of cost-benefit and cost effectiveness by examining inputs to volunteer programmes (investment used to support volunteers) in relation to the 'outputs' (the value of volunteer time), producing a quantified return for every Pound Sterling that is invested in volunteers. The results of the study proved it to be a useful method of impact measurement, with room for improvement if adapted to specific national settings (Gaskin, 1999).

Similar studies have not been carried out on social impact in the Netherlands, and thus methods to measure the social impact of volunteering are less developed than those measuring economic impact. Nevertheless, the International Social Return on Investment (SROI) Network, which works to change the way society accounts for value, has accredited practitioners in the Netherlands who are able to carry out impact assessments of volunteering using the SROI technique and in this way measure the social impact of volunteering.

### Case Study

Humanitas is a Dutch non-profit association which aims to support people who, for a range of different reasons, temporarily cannot manage on their own. Within the organisation there has been a drive to improve the effectiveness of social impact evaluation. Until 2015, a three-year programme to develop a uniform monitoring system of social impact assessment across the organisation's 85 departments was initiated.

A uniform measurement instrument in the form of a questionnaire was created and piloted in 18 departments in one or more activities. The questionnaire consists of questions covering various life areas, each with its own subjective indicators. The life areas are education, relations, health, finance, daily activities, housing, and language. The pilot was successful and created support for social impact measurement for volunteers as well as management and practitioners within the organisation.

## Romania

### Tools for measuring the social value of volunteering

A Barometer of NGO leaders, a study released by FDSC, highlights that in 2015, 36% of the organisations involved in the studies used volunteering as a tool in their current activities. However, the majority of local and national NGOs do not appreciate the importance of measuring the social impact of volunteering. Organisations that do measure the social impact of volunteering, generally measure impact through direct observations and discussions rather than using more scientific and replicable techniques.

However certain organisations have led projects providing information and tools to promote and

improve the measurement of the impact of volunteering within the volunteer sector. The “Cartea de identitate a voluntariatului – Calitate, Impact si Valoare” or ‘*The Identity card of volunteering – Quality Impact and Value*’, is funded through EEA Grants and was conducted by the VOLUM federation between March 2015 and April 2016.

The project contributed to the creation and implementation of working tools and working mechanisms undertaken by Romanian VIOs and local and national institutions in order to improve and raise the profile of volunteering. A system of quantification of the economic value of volunteering and the measurement of impact was introduced. Representatives of NGOs and experts from various fields and state authorities received training on this (Federation Volum, 2015).

In April 2016, Federatia Volum published, as part of a project funded by the SEE Grants, a document on the importance of measuring the impact of volunteering : *Importanța Demersului de Măsurare a Impactului Social și Economic al Voluntariatului în România (The importance of measuring the social and economic impact of volunteering in Romania)* (Federation Volum, 2014).

This policy paper highlighted the importance of volunteering activities as a value and came up with a set of tools and methods, links and recommendations that can be used by organisations interested in measuring the impact of their volunteering activities.

### Case Study

As part of an Erasmus+ project, the Romanian Ministry of Youth and Sports produced the research paper *Impactul voluntariatului și al mediului organizațional în procesul de formare a tânărului (The Impact of Volunteering and of the organizational settings on the development of youth)*.

The study provides us with a valuable research on the impact that volunteering has on young people from Romania, drawing some conclusions from the analysis and statistics behind this research paper. From the survey:

- 62% feel that volunteering has helped them to acquire new skills and abilities;
- 42% feel that volunteering has helped them acquire skills useful at the work place;
- more than half of students that volunteer find it satisfying;
- 75% of all respondents agreed with the following statement: Volunteering makes people become more sociable;
- 69% of the respondents agreed that ‘by doing volunteering, people become more responsible’;
- 59% of those involved in volunteering activities said that they encourage others to volunteer, even on an occasional basis.

## Serbia

### Tools for measuring the social value of volunteering

No significant research into the social impact of volunteering has been carried out in Serbia and as such there is no reliable, replicable methodology used for its measurement. There is a need for a nationally recognised methodology or toolkit to facilitate the measurement of the social impact of volunteering in Serbia. This would serve as a basis for improvements in several fields, including awareness and visibility of volunteer work, and attracting donors and investors.

### Case Study

The Association of Citizens Initiative for Development and Cooperation Serbia (IDC) is a non-profit organisation which promotes the social and economic inclusion of vulnerable sectors of society and the protection of fundamental human rights. The organisation has assessed the social impact of its volunteers through questionnaires geared to both volunteers and volunteer employers, which gauge the level of satisfaction with the volunteers experience and performance.

The results showed that 92% of volunteers experienced some form of personal development (increase in self-confidence and work related skills such as networking) and all employees highlighted the positive impact of volunteers on staff development and work satisfaction. These basic facts gathered through a short assessment highlight the importance of volunteering opportunities and the significant social impact that volunteering can have. Tools to facilitate further research would help organisations such as IDC further develop their ability to assess the impact of their volunteering to showcase its social value.

### United Kingdom

#### Tools for measuring the social value of volunteering

There are a range of tools used by UK VIOs and charities to facilitate the robust reliable evaluation of their activities.

The Theory of Change Model is a commonly used evidence planning tool to identify and develop an impact measurement plan which may involve use of diverse evaluation tools. It involves the identification of desired outcomes, and uses a backward planning approach to map the intermediate outcomes and activities, or interventions, required to deliver these long term changes. The New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) recommends that all social purpose organisations use this approach as the foundation for the development an effective impact measurement (Harries et al., 2014).

The Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit developed in 2004 by the Institute of Volunteering Research (IVR) takes a simple approach to self-assessment within VIOs by identifying how key stakeholders are affected by volunteering. The toolkit focuses on the impact of volunteering on the volunteers, the organisation, the beneficiaries and the wider community and the benefits to these groups are described in terms of physical, human, economic, social and cultural capital (Smith et al., 2015).

There is also considerable interest surrounding SROI, an outcome-based measurement tool that helps organisations understand and quantify the social, environmental and economic value of their outputs. Developed from traditional cost-benefit analysis and social accounting, SROI analysis captures in monetised form the value of a wide range of outcomes, whether these already have a financial value or not, through dividing the value given to the outcomes by the cost of delivering them. The value perspectives of stakeholders and beneficiaries are derived through a process of engagement to ensure that an accurate evaluation is produced. The approach has been further developed, using the eight indicators of sustainability produced by the government in 2003/2004, to allow outcomes to be compared on more than just monetary value (Wood and Leighton, 2010). The WEMWBS is used widely in evaluations of UK health programmes and other VIOs in order to measure changes in mental well-being. Developed in 2006 in response to a need for a validated scale

that reflected current concepts of mental well-being, the scale consists of 14 positively worded items, with five response categories, for assessing a population's mental well-being (Befriending Networks, 2015).

### Case Study 1

The Centre for Health Promotion Research at Leeds Beckett University uses research methods that facilitate the understanding of the social impact of volunteering within a social model of health. These methods include survey research, and qualitative research. Examples of these methods in practice include the production of a Volunteers' Views questionnaire as part of an evaluation of the Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund, and a qualitative study on the health impacts of event volunteering in the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

### Case Study 2

NHS England is involved in several strands of work that involve measuring the value of volunteering. For example, NHSE has commissioned the project 'Realising the Value' as part of the Five Year Forward View Programme which sets out how the health service needs to change, with an improved relationship between patients and communities. Realising the Value involves assessing the impact potential for person and community centred approaches to healthcare. The People and Communities Board's working group on 'Volunteering and social action as a key enabler' has published six principles for engaging people and communities for the Five Year Forward View Programme along with indicators that local areas can use to assess their work.

### Case Study 3

Volunteering Matters, a charity that develops and delivers high impact volunteer-led solutions across the UK, has carried out extensive evaluative work to measure its impact, using a combination of desk based research, field visits and interviews with staff and volunteers to measure both soft and hard outcomes of volunteering in a robust and reliable way. The National Network of Volunteer Involving Agencies (NNVIA) for which Volunteering Matters hosts the Secretariat, has carried out survey work with health and care commissioners and the voluntary sector in the UK to explore approaches to impact assessment.

NNVIA's Data and Impact group has designed a process for testing tools. This involves creating a 'dummy project' to test the effectiveness of different evaluative tools and establish a criteria to measure them against.

## 5. Tools for measuring the impact of volunteering

There are a number of tools that help to measure the impact of volunteering. Some are designed to assist in the planning stage, while others measure ‘*distance travelled*,’ and therefore require baseline assessments and systems for follow-up.

It is important to carefully consider in advance the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation questions, and the type of data that will best validate an argument or generate new ideas, as this will profoundly influence the most appropriate tool for the job. Similarly, it is important to recognise the merits of different approaches because some tools may be more suitable in different contexts.

This chapter sets out some of the tools available to assist in the learning process. The chapter is split into several sections that help at different stages of impact management.

These are:

1. Self-assessment tools to understand how well an organisation is measuring impact;
2. Evidence planning tools used to plan a project evaluation;
3. Specialist tools designed specifically for social ventures involving volunteers;
4. Outcome assessment tools to track and measure outcomes in robust and reliable ways; and
5. Benchmarking tools that enable comparison against other organisations and similar data sets.

### 1. Self-assessment tools

#### *Measuring Up!*

*Measuring Up!* is a step-by-step self-assessment tool that helps to review and improve an organisation’s impact practice from planning, through to evidencing, communicating and learning. The approach is centred on the cycle for good impact practice: plan, do, assess and review (Inspiring Impact, 2013), and has been designed specifically for charitable organisations and social enterprises, regardless of size, sector or budget, and a version is also available for voluntary sector funders.

#### How does it work?

An organisation using *Measuring Up!* ranks itself against several areas each withholding key criterion referred to as indicators. Each indicator comes with guidance detailing what practice should look like in order to achieve the indicator in full. It produces a report detailing strengths in each area, but

more importantly, highlights where there is room for improvement and where practice could be developed further.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows organisations to highlight good practice and areas requiring improvement.</li> <li>• Evaluates performance across several areas of impact management</li> <li>• Links to other resources to help develop practice further</li> <li>• Updating the tool enables a cycle of continued improvement</li> <li>• Working through the tool highlights variations in practice in the organisation</li> <li>• It is a free tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A self-assessment is subjective in nature and may therefore be vulnerable to bias</li> <li>• Measuring Up! is only the starting point and is not enough on its own</li> </ul>

### Social Value Assessment Tool

Developed by Social Value UK, the online self-assessment tool enables users to judge how well evaluation practices adhere to good standards pertaining to social value. It also provides guidance to improve the ways in which an organisation measures social value.

#### How does it work?

The tool is comprised of a seven-stage questionnaire, showing results as a spider chart illustrating areas of strength and weakness. After completing the 19 questions, the assessment will calculate a score reflecting how well the principles are applied within a programme or organisation, and make suggestions for development to improve the score. High scores across all stages enable organisations to apply for a well-recognised certification.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rooted in the principles of social return on investment (SROI)</li> <li>• Allows organisations to identify strengths and weakness in measuring social value and makes suggestions for improvement</li> <li>• High scores across all areas can be used to apply for accreditation and assurance</li> <li>• Free to use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A self-assessment is subjective in nature and may therefore be vulnerable to bias</li> <li>• The assessment tool is only the starting point and is not enough on its own</li> </ul>

Further information can be found <http://www.socialvalueuk.org/what-is-social-value/sroi-self-assessment-tool/>

### See also...

#### ***Evaluation Capacity Diagnostic Tool***

Developed by Informing Change, the Evaluation Capacity Diagnostic Tool helps organisations assess their readiness to engage in evaluation activities. It captures information pertaining to organisation size and resource, as well as the competencies and skills of staff. It helps to pinpoint areas for improvement. The tool can also be used when commissioning external evaluations. Further information can be found at <http://informingchange.com/cat-resources/evaluation-capacity-diagnostic-tool>

#### ***Innovation Flowchart***

The Innovation Flowchart gives a detailed overview of the various stages in an innovation process, listing the activities, requirements and goals of each stage. These include an overview of the different people, skills, activities and finances that a project or an organisation might need in order to succeed. The structured overview that this tool offers helps to review and organise next steps. Further information can be found at <http://diytoolkit.org/tools/innovation-flowchart-2/>

## 2. Evidence planning tools

### ***Theory of change***

A theory of change is a logical model connecting goals to activities, and describes what outcomes a project seeks to achieve and the steps involved in making it happen. It has many different purposes and can be used to design and evaluate projects. It can be depicted in various ways but is usually presented in a visual diagram format. It is different from other planning tools because it helps to articulate assumptions and the key ingredients underpinning the intervention and facilitating change.

### **How does it work?**

A good theory of change should involve stakeholders working at all levels including the volunteer, the beneficiary, staff, trustees and funders. There are five critical steps involved in developing a theory of change. These steps are usually as follows:

(1) start at the end to identify the long term or ultimate goal; (2) identify intermediate outcomes to understand what changes need to happen in order to reach the final goal; (3) identify the activities that deliver the outcomes; (4) link the stages together and show causal links; (5) articulate assumptions that underpin the causal links.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps to understand the evidence base</li> <li>• Articulate the conditions that must hold in order for the intervention to be successful</li> <li>• A useful communication tool that brings people on a journey</li> <li>• A useful framework for measurement</li> <li>• Identifies the casual links (the outcome chain of events)</li> <li>• Forces you to be critical and ask what you are here to do and what you are not</li> <li>• Identifies areas where the intervention could be improved perhaps through collaboration</li> <li>• Can be used by any organisation regardless of expertise, resource, size etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A theory of change is just the starting point and is not enough on its own</li> <li>• Often different stakeholders have different views about the ultimate goal of the organisation or project</li> <li>• Assumptions are just that – assumptions</li> </ul>

Further information can be found at <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>

### *CES Planning Triangle*

The CES Planning Triangle is a useful starting point for planning a project evaluation. It is a basic version of theory of change and helps to identify connections between ultimate aims and objectives, as well as the outcomes achieved and activities delivered in order to get there.

#### **How does it work?**

There are three critical steps to complete the Triangle template: (1) articulate the ultimate project goal; (2) articulate the intended outcomes required to reach the ultimate goal; (3) describe the activities you deliver (the main services delivered).

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful evidence planning tool that can be completed prior to developing a theory of change or with it</li> <li>• Useful when developing a new project</li> <li>• Succinctly communicates the change</li> <li>• Relatively simple to use</li> <li>• Free to use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Planning Triangle is just the starting point – don't forget to use it to collect data and communicate it</li> <li>• Fails to articulate the assumptions and critical conditions underpinning the intervention.</li> </ul>

Further information can be found at [https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/copy\\_of\\_how-to-create-a-planning-triangle](https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/copy_of_how-to-create-a-planning-triangle)



**See also...*****Evidence Planning***

By considering the impact on all stakeholders including target beneficiaries and wider society, this tool offers a way to articulate and improve a project. It helps to develop an evaluation plan and measure what is important. Further information can be found at <http://diytoolkit.org/tools/evidence-planning-2/>

***Learning Loop***

The Learning Loop is an iterative and innovative tool that plans a project based on what has been done before. Further information can be found at <http://diytoolkit.org/tools/learning-loop/>

***Proving and Improving***

Developed by NEF Consulting, the site provides a range of tools, most of which can be used to measure the impact of volunteering. It also provides guidance to assist at different stages of impact management. Further information can be found at <https://www.nefconsulting.com/our-services/evaluation-impact-assessment/prove-and-improve-toolkits/>

***Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework template***

Available as a free resource at [www.toolsfordev.org](http://www.toolsfordev.org), the monitoring and evaluation framework template provides international development organisations with a tool that builds an evaluation plan and framework using outcome indicators. Further information can be found at <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/me-framework-template/>

**3. Specialist tools*****Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (VIAT)***

VIAT is a practical step-by-step guide for assessing the difference volunteering makes to the lives of people and the wider community. Now in its third edition it explores the following impacts of impacts realised through volunteering:

- Human capital (knowledge, skills and health)
- Economic capital (benefits and costs with financial value)
- Social capital (relationships, networks and trust), and
- Cultural capital (sense of one's understanding of identity and the identity of others).

Under these impacts there are a set of outcomes aimed at different stakeholder groups including the volunteer, the beneficiary, the organisation and the wider community.

***How does it work?***

The toolkit guides programme managers from stages of setting up an evaluation plan through to analysis and reporting. It is supported by an online platform that provides example questionnaires,

interview guides and volunteer diaries (which can be adapted to suit the requirements of the organisation). It also provides case studies and practical examples for illustration purposes.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a basic assessment of outcomes across different stakeholder groups</li> <li>• Notion of capital is a useful theoretical framework underpinning the potential benefits of volunteering</li> <li>• Relatively simple and easy to use</li> <li>• Guides organisations from planning through to analysis and reporting</li> <li>• Data collection templates available (which can be adapted to suit the requirements of the organisation)</li> <li>• Illustrative case studies showing how other organisations have used the tool</li> <li>• Suitable for all types of organisations involving volunteers irrespective of size, resource and expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrospective data collection rather than prospective, meaning it is less objective and more subject to bias</li> <li>• Produces a relatively low level of evidence</li> <li>• Good for first time evaluators – once the process is understood, the toolkit may be used less subsequently</li> <li>• Cost</li> </ul>

Further information can be found at <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering-management/1-publications/P78-volunteering-impact-assessment-toolkit>.

### **Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA)**

VIVA offers a simple way to assess and quantify the economic impact of volunteering activities. It does this by calculating the resources that go into a volunteering programme (inputs) and the economic savings achieved through people giving up their time unpaid (outputs). The end result is a ratio that demonstrates economic value. The tool is only designed to assess isolated economic aspects and does not capture the full range of benefits commonly associated with volunteering. This approach therefore risks underestimating the true value of volunteering.

#### **How does it work?**

Start by recording volunteering activity (such as the number of hours gifted through volunteering). Once data has been recorded for a period of one year, simply enter the costs of the volunteer investment (inputs) into the spreadsheet provided.

The next step involves entering what the volunteers do (activities) and for how much time. VIVA then matches it to an equivalent paid post and applies a market average wage as a replacement cost

or equivalent value. This produces a national volunteer wage bill which can be used to build a compelling economic case.

The ratio is calculated by dividing the total value by the total volunteer investment. For example, a total value of £50,000 and investment of £10,000 yields a ratio of 5. The ratio has a simple meaning ‘for every £1 organisation spends on volunteers, they get back £5 in the value of work they do’. If the ratio produces a minus (-) figure then it would indicate that the investment is greater than the value gained.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a basic assessment of economic value through understanding the costs associated with running an a volunteering programme (inputs) and the return through the value of volunteering time (outputs) yielding a ratio to indicate if the return was greater or less than the investment</li> <li>• Relatively simple and straightforward to use</li> <li>• Ratio can be compared with other organisations who have used the tool</li> <li>• Free to use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only designed to measure limited aspects of economic value and does not consider impact in other areas such as physical, human, social and cultural</li> <li>• Finding replacement costs and equivalent paid staff costs can be complex</li> <li>• Using equivalent paid staff as a replacement cost for volunteer time may not be in line with organisation intentions and ethos – furthermore it may risk devaluing the true value of volunteering</li> </ul>

Further information can be found at <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/supporting-organisations/volunteer-impact-assessment-toolkit/volunteer-investment-to-value-audit>

**See also...**

***Relative Impact – Volunteer Management ROI Model (Better Impact)***

Originally set up in the US, Better Impact has developed a suite of impact measurement tools that assess the return on investment of a volunteer programme. It outlines an approach to measurement using ‘Mission Points ROI’, which goes beyond wage replacement value to quantify the value of volunteer involvement towards mission goals. The methodology and formula itself is deeply entrenched in common economic modelling and standards. Further information can be found at <http://www.betterimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ROI-Presentation-Handout-10-2014.pdf>

***The VODG/NCF Volunteer Management Toolkit 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition***

Commissioned by the Department of Health in the UK, VODG (Voluntary Organisations Disability Group) and NCF (National Care Forum) developed a volunteer management toolkit to support charities working in the health and care sectors. The toolkit provides information on making the

business case for investment, creating volunteer roles and the recruitment and retention of volunteers. In addition, it includes a section on measuring the impact of volunteering for both volunteers and beneficiaries. It also includes a set of questionnaire and interview templates, which can be tailored by organisations. Further information can be found at <https://www.vodg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016-VODG-NCF-Volunteer-Management-Toolkit-Second-Edition.pdf>

#### 4. Outcome assessment tools

##### *Outcome Star*

The Outcome Star is a set of widely recognised tools developed by Triangle Consulting in the UK. Designed to support and measure change when working with people, it offers a way to demonstrate impact, but also a way to improve an intervention. The basic premise is to track progress across two time points in several areas considered critical in helping people to reach their ultimate goals.

The Stars are rigorously tested and developed with experts in the field. There is also a steadily growing evidence base supporting the validity, reliability and effectiveness of the Stars. Finally, the Stars are available in many different languages and have been tested in various settings including the international context.

##### How does it work?

Deliver the assessment at the beginning of the intervention and then at a second time point to measure direction of travel. Scores can be compared with other organisations that have used the specific tool.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A visual and accessible tool rated highly by service users</li> <li>• Ties in with the actual intervention as it can be used as a screening tool</li> <li>• Results can be compared to a benchmark – other organisations who use the specific tool</li> <li>• Various tools available for different users, contexts and areas of intervention</li> <li>• Provides an online platform that does the number crunching for you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can create a false bias where volunteers or service users perceive change when no change has actually occurred</li> <li>• While data can be compared to other organisations who use the same tool, it is not possible to understand the context of these interventions</li> <li>• License fee and costs</li> </ul>

Further information can be found <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/>

### Outcome Matrix Tool

Developed by Big Society Capital in the UK, the Outcome Matrix Tool is designed to help organisations plan and measure their social impact in nine outcome areas and fifteen beneficiary groups. It provides a useful starting point for organisations to consider the social impact they are trying to achieve and ways to measure it.

#### How does it work?

Browse and select relevant outcomes and measures to create a unique outcomes matrix. You can also select which beneficiary groups are served to highlight specific outcomes and measures that relate to that group. Your selected outcomes are then exported into an Excel file customised to your organisation's needs.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be tailored to the requirements of the organisation</li> <li>• Provides 'off the shelf' resources such as the Excel sheet which can be exported to support data collection requirements</li> <li>• Enables you to match beneficiary groups to intended outcomes</li> <li>• Free tool to help plan social impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescriptive to the nine outcomes areas and 15 beneficiary groups outlined above</li> </ul>

For more information, please go to <http://www.goodfinance.org.uk/impact-matrix>

#### See also...

##### ***SOUL Record (Soft Outcomes Universal Learning)***

SOUL Record is an online and flexible tool which provides an effective way of measuring progression in soft outcomes. The platform provides a set of questionnaires and worksheets which enable you to collect data to evidence progression in soft outcomes areas such as confidence and self-esteem. Further information can be found at <http://soulrecord.org/>

##### ***Prove it! Toolkit – New Economics Foundation***

The Prove it! tool follows three steps: deciding what to measure with a Storyboard, collecting information with a Survey and looking back on what actually happened with a Project Reflection workshop. Each step features worksheets and instructions for a range of participative evaluation exercises. In sum, it aims to support the management, measurement and reporting of activities throughout the project cycle. Further information can be found at <https://www.nefconsulting.com/our-services/evaluation-impact-assessment/prove-and-improve-toolkits/prove-it/>

**PerformWell**

PerformWell provides measurement tools and practical knowledge that professionals can use to manage interventions and day-to-day performance. By providing information and tools to measure quality and outcomes, PerformWell helps practitioners deliver more effective social programs. Further information can be found <http://www.performwell.org/>

**5. Benchmarking tools****Volunteers Count**

Volunteers Count by Agenda Consulting is a sector wide (UK only) benchmarking tool which enables organisations to record and compare performance with similar organisations who involve volunteers. The study runs every two years with the last report delivered in 2015.

It is particularly helpful in understanding organisational performance in line with the principles of volunteer management, as organisations are compared against a range of criteria from volunteer recruitment and selection, to the profile of the volunteers. These metrics can be used to help to identify areas of improvement, make the case for funding or track progress.

**How does it work?**

The process works by completing a straightforward questionnaire that is then uploaded to an online platform. Organisations select between 5-20 organisations that operate in similar sectors for comparison purposes. Once completed, an organisation scorecard is produced, detailing results from previous submissions, similar organisations and the volunteer-involving sector as a whole.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables comparison with results from similar organisations allowing you to contextualise findings</li> <li>• Helps to understand how your organisation is performing in line with the principles of volunteer management</li> <li>• Agenda Consulting complete some of the number crunching so you don't have to</li> <li>• It produces a well-designed report in a format that is accessible</li> <li>• A relatively easy way for organisations to understand scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some data is not the precise answer and is estimated based on proxies and indicators</li> <li>• Some questions and response categories may not correspond with your data making it difficult to make comparisons</li> <li>• You may not hold data (at present) for particular metrics because it is not captured in routine ways</li> <li>• Requires a significant amount of data to be readily available – the data</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to inform decision making and identifies additional data collection requirements</li> </ul>	<p>collection and questionnaire itself can be time consuming and resource intensive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost and fees</li> </ul>
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Further information can be found at <http://www.agendaconsulting.co.uk/product/volunteers-count/>

### LBG Measurement Framework

LGB is a global standard for measuring corporate community investment programmes. In the UK these programmes are often packaged as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) where organisations work to address specific needs in the local community where they do their business. This extends to volunteering and time contributions made by employees.

The LGB measurement framework adopts a simple input (resources committed), output (the results achieved from the contributions made) and outcome/impact (the changes that come about as a result of the contributions, both short and long term) model to understand the impact of corporate community investment to both business and society. Over 300 companies around the world have applied the framework.

### How does it work?

The first step involves assessing the value of the voluntary or charitable contributions made by collecting data in relation to inputs and resources contributed, including the type of contribution made. Inputs are then valued to shed light on the total investment made. The next step involves collecting data on outputs (what happened as a result of the inputs and resources contributed). This extends to key questions such as the activities delivered, the numbers involved and the numbers reached. Measuring outputs requires good data recording systems and is considered the first basic step in measuring your achievements. The final step requires you to collect data at the outcome and impact level to understand what changed as a result. This extends to changes at the individual, organisational and community level, and it can be changes both short and long term. The final step involves adding it all up in order to glean insight into a possible return. This enables an organisation to say that it contributed X and returned Y to the community and Z to the business.

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good for demonstrating a return on investment in line with sector standards</li> <li>Suitable to assess corporate investment programmes or employee volunteering schemes where companies make</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valuations must truly reflect the costs of staff giving up their time – at times valuations are based on assumptions</li> </ul> <p>The process of valuing inputs, outputs and outcomes requires a degree of</p>

contributions working to tackle needs in the local community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection across the logic model (inputs, outputs and outcome/impact)</li> <li>• Measures impact at different levels – social, business, environmental etc.</li> <li>• Provides online tools and resources</li> </ul>	technical competency
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Further information can be found at <http://www.lbg-online.net/>

#### See also....

##### *Global Value Exchange*

The Global Value Exchange is a crowd sourced database of Values, Outcomes, Indicators and Stakeholders. It provides a free platform for information to be shared enabling greater consistency and transparency in measuring social and environmental values. The site can be used for benchmarking purposes allowing organisations to compare results with other data sets. Further information can be found at <http://www.globalvaluexchange.org/>

### Understanding measurement and limitations

It is clear there are a number of important considerations when deciding which tool is suitable for a project or organisation. This extends to the type of intervention, the timing of the evaluation, the skills of the assessor, the resources available, the audience and the relative importance of the programme and assessment. In spite of all of the tools available, evidence planning tools are by far the most important since agreeing the difference made and how to measure it will underpin everything at each stage of the project and evaluation cycle, including which tool(s), if any, to use. Equally important is the statement of purpose and determining the reasons for data collection, because it is likely to influence decisions taken further down the line.

With all that being said, evidence planning tools are not enough on their own and must be used to inform data collection and communicate findings. Tools are only part of the solution and only as good as the people implementing them.

Although the tools covered in this chapter are divided into different sections, it is important to note that there is considerable overlap between them. For example, a self-assessment tool is likely to improve the way in which an organisation assesses outcomes. It may therefore be suitable to adopt a combination of tools that help at different stages of the impact cycle.



One important insight for future direction is that the choice of tool should only be determined by the intervention and desired impact, and not vice versa. In other words, measurement in isolation should not guide the decision on which tool to use.

Often combining statistics with case studies and stories is an effective way of highlighting the impact of volunteering. However, it is important to think about who your audience is when deciding which method to use. Moreover, the tools used are not universal and the right tool needs to be identified for the organisation, based on the needs and capacity of that organisation.

It is difficult to measure the impact of informal volunteering. It is often simply not possible to measure all the impact that we seek to evaluate. Furthermore, not all types of informal volunteering may need to be captured and clear decisions should be made on this before beginning the evaluation process.

When measuring impact we must be mindful that impact can vary based on a number of different factors and this must be considered when carrying out impact assessment. There will always be an element of subjectivity in impact evaluation and therefore results can only be considered as best estimate.

Different factors include:

- Impact may be different in different countries/context;
- Perception of impact;
- Diversity of volunteers and beneficiaries;
- Short-term, long-term volunteering.

## Conclusions

With the benefits of volunteering plentiful and far-reaching, it is important that volunteering services can capture this impact in a systemic form. It is necessary to measure not only the economic, but also the social value of volunteering. Given the importance of volunteering Volonteurope and the Impact Measurement Group developed this collection of good practices and methods to measure impact, and particularly social impact, with the following aims:

- To raise awareness of value of impact/ measurement of volunteering and awareness of methodologic challenges related to impact measurement;
- To encourage more measurement;
- To identify opportunities to support more measurement of social impact of volunteering policy, practice or research;
- To support information exchange between practitioners on 'how to', case studies, tools, good practice/issues and encourage network development and support for each other.

We believe that by outlining different aspects of impact measurement and its importance to the voluntary and community sector, reviewing the current state of volunteering and impact measurement in several European states and providing a robust overview of the best current tools in impact measurement, this paper can contribute to realising these aims. Furthermore, exploring different practices aims at increasing the value and improving the understanding of impact measurement.

This paper offered an outline of volunteering and its impact measurement and management practices in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia and the United Kingdom. The paper has highlighted that levels of measurement vary across countries but increasingly the focus is shifting towards the necessity of measuring impact due to shrinking resources and the need to build a successful narrative to demonstrate the value of civil society organisations' work and volunteering.

The data and evidence gathered can be then used in several ways: monitoring progress, informing policy design and policy appraisal, to further develop projects, and for making the case for further investment and developing income generation activities. Impact measurement can transform the ways in which beneficiaries, practitioners, employees and investors engage in an organisation. It also

moves the focus towards measuring outcomes over outputs and using evaluation data to continuously improve a volunteering program.

Through making a robust case for the value of volunteering, we can foster a culture and environment in which everyone can access volunteering opportunities.

Having considered all the information and research gathered in this paper, Volonteurope and the Volonteurope Impact Group have identified the following recommendations.

## Recommendations

Volonteurope and its Impact Working Group make the following recommendations:

- Increase the provision of secure and stable funding for the volunteering infrastructure especially volunteer-involving organisations to create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering, and provide resources for development of impact management culture;
- Raise awareness amongst civil society staff, civil servants, policy makers and stakeholders on the importance of impact measurement to create sharing of practice and development of common standards;
- Develop a pan-European legal framework of volunteering clearly identifying rights and responsibilities for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations;
- Adopt a common understanding of the key principles and components of quality volunteering to improve the quality of volunteering;
- Develop homogeneous and comparable indicators to measure its economic and social impact of volunteering to ensure an effective and enabling policy;
- Ensure data collection including measurement of social impact from the beginning and apply lessons learned to future endeavours.

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