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**Master's degree in
Human Rights and Multi-level Governance**



INTEGRATING VOLUNTEERING AND
VOLUNTEERING FOR INTEGRATION:
VOLUNTEER WORK FOR INCLUSION OF
MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES
IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT.

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Acronyms

AMIF – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CoE – Council of Europe

CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CSO – Civil Society Organization

EC – European Commission

ECHR – European Convention on Human Rights

ECtHR – European Court of Human Rights

ECRI – European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

EESC – European Economic and Social Committee

EFTA – European Free Trade Association

EU – European Union

EMN – European Migration Network

EWSI – European Web Site on Integration

FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICERD – International Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination

ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IHRL – International Human Right Law

ILO – International Labour Organization

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

SWVR – State of the World’s Volunteerism Report

TCN – Third Country National

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN – United Nations

UNGA – United Nations General Assembly

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNV – United Nations Volunteers

Introduction

Since volunteer groups were explicitly mentioned as stakeholders in their own right in the "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"¹ resolution, volunteering has acquired more attention and credibility as a potential tool for transparency, participation, and inclusion. Aiming to achieve a universal rights-based approach to development, the 2030 Agenda couples sustainability with inclusion and recognizes that sustainable development cannot be achieved through institutional action only. The ensuing UNGA Resolution on Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages Governments, in partnership with the United Nations, the private sector organizations, civil society, and others to integrate volunteerism into national development strategies. Volunteerism appears to be an important component of "any strategy aimed at, inter alia, such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination"². The same resolution highlights the importance of "participation and integration of all people, including youth, older persons, women, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities, minorities and other marginalized groups, into volunteer-involving programmes and projects"³.

Thus, while it is recommended that volunteerism to be integrated into various strategies to increase social participation, vice versa, it appears to be an effective tool for the integration of people from marginalized and vulnerable groups. Due to its social nature and infusion with values such as solidarity, mutual trust, and belonging, volunteerism promotes civic participation, community engagement, and social cohesion, allowing anyone to utilize "knowledge, skills and social networks, for the benefit of themselves, their families and their communities".⁴ This is especially important in enabling people to play a more full and satisfying role in their societies and enhance their personal well-

¹ United Nations General Assembly. (2015, October 21). Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [A/RES/70/1]. § 45.

² United Nations General Assembly. (2019, January 8). Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [A/RES/73/140].

³ Idem.

⁴ United Nations Volunteers (2012). Volunteerism and social inclusion. An extract from the 2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report.

being. According to the European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers nearly 80% of European citizens feel that voluntary activities are an important part of democratic life in Europe.⁵ Therefore, participation in such activities can play a crucial role in the integration and inclusion of newcomers, refugees and migrants, who often remain excluded from social life in their receiving communities and societies.

Changing significantly over time, at present, the concept of integration lacks a common definition. The Council of Europe, for example, states that social integration is anchored “in the protection of individuals’ human dignity, non-discrimination, and participation in the host societies”⁶, and the EU adds that integration is a “dynamic” and “two-ways” process aimed at “mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of EU Member States”.⁷ Non-discrimination is an essential ground for integration and inclusion, without which individuals cannot enjoy any other rights. However, the prohibition of discrimination and right to equal treatment enshrined in ECHR, ICCPR, ICESCR and other international human rights law instruments, as well as in the European legislation, does not mean that refugees, migrants, and persons with migrant background do not often experience discrimination, stigmatization, and social exclusion when settling in a new society. In its turn, this has a negative impact on the integration process as a whole and does not lead to any real inclusion, affecting badly all the stakeholders – notably the migrants themselves and their host societies. Additionally, a comparative assessment of integration policies in several European states has also shown that the majority of integration strategies are majorly based on the language course and civic training, not providing any proper follow-up approach. This brings new challenges in the light of human rights standards.

This paper discusses the role of volunteering activities in integration and inclusion. The research question focuses on whether migrant volunteering is an effective and necessary practice for the European integration policies. The study argues that with certain conditions volunteering can become a successful complementary part of the integration

⁵ European Youth Forum (2012). European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers.

⁶ Carrera S., Vankova Z. (2019). Human rights aspects of immigrant and refugee integration policies. A comparative assessment in selected Council of Europe member state. Issue Paper, Council of Europe.

⁷ Commission of the European Communities (2005, September 1). A Common Agenda for Integration Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union. [COM(2005) 389 final]. Action 1, section 2

programs, bringing benefits to both migrants and refugees volunteers and to the local communities, facilitating the resettlement process and creating grounds for socio-economic inclusion. Volunteer action is specifically important for the long-term integration of third country nationals in European society, so it can fill in the missing follow-up in integration practices, and for this reason the major focus will be made on the volunteer action among migrants and refugees. In the scope of this study the differences in areas of voluntary work are not addressed as they are of no relevance as long as correspond with the interests, skills and aspirations of volunteers.

The theoretical part of the study consists of two major parts. Firstly, the definition of volunteering will be provided and phenomenon of volunteerism will be analyzed from the socio-economic, political, and cultural aspects. This includes examination of volunteering and its benefits from the perspectives of human and social capital, cultural values, civic engagement and intercultural dialogue. The conceptual framework of this part is primarily based on the theory of social capital introduced by R. Putnam, profound studies of volunteerism conducted by Wilson J. and Musick M., and the 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report prepared by the United Nations Volunteers. The volunteer action also plays an important role in the inclusion of vulnerable groups, so its role in the Agenda 2030 which introduces “no one left behind” approach will also be studied.

Secondly, the European integration policies in the light of human rights standards will be analyzed, with particular attention to existing obstacles and the grounds on which refugee and migrant groups often find themselves in a vulnerable position. In order to investigate that, vulnerability and principle of non-discrimination have to be examined within the European legal framework, with the specific focus on the use of Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Afterwards, the brief overview of integration programmes in several European countries will be given, based on the data provided by 2019 Issue Paper on Human Rights Aspects of Immigrant and Refugee Integration Policies.⁸

⁸ Carrera S., Vankova Z. (2019). Human rights aspects of immigrant and refugee integration policies. A comparative assessment in selected Council of Europe member state. Issue Paper, Council of Europe.

The Chapter III will discuss integration and inclusion strategies that implement voluntary activities, assessing benefits and obstacles of migrant volunteering as a complementary integration measure. Additionally, it will address the significance of voluntary action for more vulnerable groups of persons within migrant communities, as women and young people. The part of this chapter is dedicated to the independent empirical research, which collects and evaluates existing good practices on migrant volunteering around Europe, drawing some conclusions and recommendations for future initiatives.

CHAPTER I — Volunteering as an investment in social development

1. Introduction

Since the United Nations picked 2001 to be the International Year of Volunteering, many more public discussion, media coverage and policy initiatives on voluntary action have appeared, trying to promote, increase and facilitate volunteerism, implementing it in the relevant agendas for social development. In its 2001 Resolution on recommendations on support for volunteering, the UN General Assembly identified it as “an important component of any strategy aimed at, inter alia, such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination”.⁹ These last three areas outline the importance of volunteering for social inclusion, which is one of the central components of the developmental agenda.

The concept of social inclusion was first widely adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, which recognized social integration as a central goal of social development, calling for a “society for all where every individual has rights, responsibilities and an active role to play”.¹⁰ Volunteerism can serve as a tool for social integration and inclusion in several ways. The most important one is that volunteer action allows all people to participate and play a more satisfying role in the lives of their communities and societies, allows people to connect with others and cooperate. It is not a “gift type relationship”, whereby one side gives and the other just receives, but a reciprocal relationship in which both sides benefit.¹¹

This chapter will focus on the definitions of volunteer action and the potential of volunteering activities for less-privileged members of communities as migrants and refugees. The main goals are two. The first one is to conceptualize the phenomenon of volunteering by defining it from different perspectives and examining the benefits that

⁹ United Nations General Assembly. (2002, January 10). Recommendations on Support for Volunteering [A/RES/56/38].

¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly. (2000, December 15). Further initiatives for social development [A/RES/S-24/2].

¹¹ United Nations Volunteers (2012). Volunteerism and social inclusion. An extract from the 2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report. Pp. 3-4.

are brought to communities and individuals through volunteer work. Benefits of volunteer work are closely tied with the motives of actors, however in the framework of the given study drive they are less important than the outcome of volunteer activities, so the focus will be primarily given to the former, individual and social assets that result in volunteer labour. The second is to study how volunteer activities are connected to the integration and social inclusion of vulnerable groups. It will create the framework for Chapter III, where the applicability and advantages of volunteering for the integration of refugees and migrants will be analyzed.

2. Defining volunteerism: volunteer work and its benefits

It appears to be challenging to find a common definition to the terms “volunteer” or “volunteering”, mostly because volunteerism is a complex social phenomenon that is approached in various ways in different cultures and different parts of the world. However, when speaking about the general definitions given by international organizations and institutions, the majority of them empathize that volunteering is a service or an activity which is undertaken by individuals without being paid “for the benefit of the community, the environment, and persons other than close relatives or those within the household”¹². European Charter on Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers defines it as follows: “A volunteer is a person who carries out activities benefiting society, by free will. These activities are undertaken for a nonprofit cause, benefiting the personal development of the volunteer, who commits their time and energy for the general good without financial reward”.¹³ Thus, understanding of volunteerism includes several key features: volunteering is work; it is unpaid work; it is work undertaken by people willingly, without being compulsory; and, in the first place, it is work performed for the benefit of third parties, like volunteers’ communities or society as a whole.

Volunteer labour occurs in two major forms as either formal or informal action. By the former organization or association-based work is meant, while the latter stands for the direct engagement between persons. However, in practice and especially on a community level the distinction between these two appears to be less evident: In some societies, “helping” itself is an expectation of the culture and the basis of community living, so people do not recognize their acts as something special or distinctive called “volunteering”.¹⁴ Likewise, unpaid helping provided directly to one’s immediate family members cannot be considered formal or informal volunteer work. Nonetheless, the definition of what constitutes one’s family or household also varies among countries and cultures, making the differentiation difficult.¹⁵

¹² International Labour Organization (2011). Manual on the measurement of volunteer work. International Labour Office, Geneva, p.11.

¹³ European Youth Forum (2012). European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers.

¹⁴ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 29.

¹⁵ International Labour Organization (2011). Manual on the measurement of volunteer work. International Labour Office, Geneva, p.11.

It is important to mention that at the present moment volunteering neither has an internationally recognized legal standard, so the legal definition of “volunteerism” and “a volunteer” depends on the national law. For that reason, national standards, regulations, and practices on volunteering will be considered as necessary in Chapter III. And to understand the essence of volunteering and the significance of its outcomes for social development, the phenomenon can be addressed from three main aspects that are interconnected: socio-economic, political, and value ones.

2.1. Socio-economic aspect

One of the definitions of volunteer work states it as a productive, unpaid and freely undertaken labour, “that adds use value to goods and services”¹⁶. Although it is unpaid labour, volunteering is still sizable and has considerable economic value. According to the data which was gathered in 37 countries for the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project in 2004, around 140 million people in these states were engaged in the volunteer action each year, being equivalent to 20.8 millions of full-time paid workers¹⁷; by 2018 researchers have estimated global volunteer workforce already at 109 million full-time equivalent workers.¹⁸ Hence, volunteering is a great renewable resource for social problem-solving and a meaningful activity that is beneficial for both, economic and social objectives.

To study the socio-economic aspect of volunteerism, measures of human and social capitals can be used. Human capital stands for the market-valued assets of education and skills, which can be gained during volunteer activities, while social capital is a set of resources that emerges from the relationships between individuals and their social ties. Volunteer work is a collective action, which is fostered in communities with strong social

¹⁶ Wilson, J. and Musick, M. (1997). Who cares? Toward an integrated theory of volunteer work. *American Sociological Review*, 62, p. 694.

¹⁷ International Labour Organization (2011). *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work*. International Labour Office, Geneva, p. 3.

¹⁸ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). *The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR)*, p. 11.

bonds and reciprocal trust.¹⁹ As following, people in communities with higher social and human capital are involved more in “giving activities” like charity and volunteerism, and vice versa, helping others contributes to the growth of both types of capital and the overall social development.

2.1.1. Human capital

The concept of human capital, which has been widely spread in economics and other science-related spheres since the theories proposed by G. Bekker, J. Mincer and T. Schultz in the 1960s, is based on the familiar notion that all knowledge, skills and abilities derived from education, vocational training, etc. appear to be an extremely valuable resource as they provide individual with better position on labour market, higher earnings and employment rates. Although most definitions stress particularly economic returns of human capital investment, there are a lot of non-economic or non-monetary benefits delivered by it as well. They include better health status and higher life expectancy, job quality and job satisfaction, higher productivity, lower crime rates, stronger civic awareness and social inclusion.

A number of studies confirmed the interrelation between the level of education and interest in volunteering activities. It can be explained by the influence of education on awareness about various social issues, increased empathy and self-confidence effects. Moreover, in some cases, well-educated people are more likely to be asked to volunteer, as they have broader social networks, civic skills and organizational abilities, that make a person look more attractive to the agencies searching for volunteer labour.²⁰ As the researches showed, even though a high level of human capital means better job position and higher earnings (i.e. high-qualified specialists have their time costs more), there is a positive relationship between income and volunteering.²¹ Higher income is often associated with stability, and wealthy individuals are more likely to be asked to volunteer.

¹⁹ Wilson, J. and Musick, M. (1997). Who cares? Toward an integrated theory of volunteer work. *American Sociological Review*, 62, p. 698.

²⁰ *Idem.* P. 698.

²¹ Smith D.H. (1994). Determinants of Voluntary Association Participation and Volunteering: A Literature Review. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 23, p. 248.

The connection between human capital and health status should also be remembered: the ability to provide volunteer services and to help those in need of assistance directly depends on one's physical capability and mental health.

At the same moment, volunteering is not only boosted by education, but volunteer work itself provides many assets to individual. As an investment in human capital, it offers several ways of improving the position in the labour market and raising future earnings. It gives an opportunity to gain new skills as 'soft' skills or apply received knowledge that otherwise could not be practiced. In case human capital devalues because of illness, maternity leave, etc., voluntary services enable to rebuild or maintain employment skills; some women use it as a re-entry strategy after giving birth and raising children.²² Volunteering experience could be a valuable asset for the personal curriculum vitae and it is required for certain positions or even university applications as it shows the social activity and leadership skills of the candidate. Higher-status workers may also volunteer because their job demands that from them: many companies expect their employees to be involved in community affairs and use volunteering to build social capital for their practice.²³

2.1.2. Social capital

In general, the idea of social capital is less familiar and is very fluid, being primarily constituted by the relations between different actors. "If physical capital is wholly tangible, being embodied in observable material form, and human capital is less tangible, being embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual, social capital is less tangible yet, for it exists in the relations among persons"²⁴, remarked one of the main theorists of social capital, J.S. Coleman. Being defined variously by different scholars, the general explanation of social capital includes such factors as social relationships,

²² Meier S. and Stutzer A. (2008). Is Volunteering Rewarding in Itself? *Economica*, New Series, Vol. 75, No. 297, pp. 41-42.

²³ Wilson, J. and Musick, M. (1997). Work and Volunteering: The Long Arm of the Job. *Social Forces* 76, p. 253.

²⁴ Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, pp. 100-101.

shared norms and values, cooperation, reciprocity, that enable individuals and groups to trust each other more and so work together.

The first conceptualization of the phenomenon of social capital was introduced by P. Bourdieu, which is closely connected to his theory of class. Bourdieu considers the totality of social relations as the distribution of various types of resources, or forms of capital that are four: economic, cultural, social and the meditative one, symbolic. Social capital stands for “the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition <...> which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital...”²⁵, or in other words, actual or potential individual assets that are available to group members through the possession of a network. These assets of membership and acquired social relations can be used in efforts to improve one’s social position, advance their interests, help people in social struggles.

The concept of social capital was developed by other authors and has received a broader understanding. For example, R. Putnam’s theory on social capital implements a more political and collective approach to the accumulated benefits through the networks. According to him, social capital is a set of resources that are embedded in social relations and that refer to “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”.²⁶ Hence, social capital is directly related to social norms, trust and civic engagement. The decline in the participation in civic life and community activities with an increase in the solo activities instead (“bowling alone”), is likely to lead to the increases in alienation, crime, avoiding one’s duties and other social problems due to the lack of social connectedness, trust and reciprocity.²⁷ For Putnam, voluntary associations play a significant role in modern social development as a type of “horizontal network of civic engagement”, which “increase the potential costs to a defector in any individual transaction”, “foster robust norms of

²⁵ Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241–258). London: Greenwood Press.

²⁶ Putnam, R. D. (1995). *Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital*. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1).

²⁷ Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster, New York.

reciprocity”, and “facilitate communication and improve the flow of information about the trustworthiness of individuals”.²⁸

Thereby, volunteer activities can be coined as the bridging and bonding social capital: it helps to build new connections, to make friends and widen the personal social network. Thanks to engagement in activities of voluntary organizations contacts for business, career and further employment can be found; participation in voluntary associations offers citizens venues in which they can improve their social skills, pro-social norms and values, required for civic engagement and democratic participation in political life.²⁹ It generates trust and encourages people to return favours, enhancing cooperation and founding strong social bonds. Volunteering is associated with social approval, pro-social and active behaviour, a feeling of stable position in the community and personal responsibility for common issues.

2.2. Political aspect

Being an important resource for the socio-economic development of individuals and their communities, volunteerism is also considered an effective tool for governing practices, in the sense that it facilitates civic and intercultural dialogues and increases social engagement as was mentioned earlier. It can be regarded as an investment in future growth and assist in the implementation of governing policies on different levels: first of all, because modern democracies are dependent on active and vibrant civil society and a healthy stock of social capital.³⁰ And in the view that “giving” activities, like volunteerism and charity, are associated with a high level of civic participation, engagement in volunteering becomes one of the significant indicators of social and political development.

²⁸ Putnam, R.D. (1994). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press, pp. 173-174.

²⁹ Maloney W. A., Van Deth J.W. (2010) *Civil Society and Activism in Europe: Contextualizing engagement and political orientations*. Routledge, p. 171

³⁰ Maloney W. A., Van Deth J.W. (2008). *Civil Society and Governance in Europe: From National to International Linkages*. Edward Elgar Publishing, p. 6.

2.2.1. Civil and social dialogues

Volunteer action is an active expression of civic position which strengthens common values, social solidarity and even helps to create a civil identity. According to the European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers, nearly 80% of European citizens feel that voluntary activities are an important part of democratic life in Europe.³¹ And as a social practice and a means of participation, it is not just an individual activity: it is a result of community life, that does not always appear spontaneously, but in many cases, it is consciously organized and managed by the efforts of different stakeholders and social actors.

In order to establish and support good democratic governance, there should exist a regular systematic dialogue between different authorities of different levels and civil society. They have to cooperate and carry on a real civil dialogue to avoid the ‘democratic deficit’; participation of civil society and citizens themselves is essential for any decision-making process. And as several studies showed, participatory citizenship is more likely to appear when citizens are involved in voluntary associations – they become better democrats.³² This means that involved and active citizens are more likely to display a higher level of trust, reciprocity and tolerance; they act in a politically-oriented way by voting, contacting authorities and elected representatives, they sign petitions and take part in demonstrations, etc. In such engaged communities, the problem of free-rider is easier to overcome as well: the individual decision to contribute to the good of society is affected by other people. Moreover, community members “directly punish ‘anti-social’ actions of others”.³³ Thus, volunteerism becomes a form of civic and social activism in itself, also boosting other participatory mechanisms.

Nevertheless, here it is important to notice, that such engaged citizenship and truly democratic participation cannot be reached in hierarchical state systems with only top-

³¹ European Youth Forum (2012). European charter on the rights and Responsibilities of volunteers.

³² Maloney W. A., Van Deth J.W. (2010). Civil Society and Activism in Europe: Contextualizing engagement and political orientations. Routledge, p. 17

³³ Bowles S., Gintis H. (2002). Social Capital and Community Governance. The Economic Journal, 112,; 483, p. F424

down policies. In other words, forcing people to participate in voluntary associations and make them donate time and energy without any inner reasons and presuppositions, being, first of all, paradoxical to the nature of volunteering, will not bring the same results as if citizens choose to give voluntary service because they feel the necessity by their own. Governance is a “process of coordinating actors, social groups and institutions to reach collectively discussed objectives”; democratically legitimate governance refers not only to any form of this coordination but the one that involves “reflexive self-organization of interdependent actors”.³⁴ Social cohesion and harmony appear in societies where the promotion of engagement, empowerment of local governments and the individual interest in policy-making exist.

The 2018 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report (SWVR) emphasizes the significance of volunteer activities for local communities and recognizes local volunteerism as a fundamental resilience strategy.³⁵ To reach true engagement and collaboration of local actors, it is not enough just to shift down activities to the local level. Volunteers are drivers of action in their communities, and communities are not passive or homogenous structures. That is why “valuing and recognizing volunteer contributions can help bring less represented voices into debates and decisions, enhancing grassroots decision-making, accountability and ownership”.³⁶ Hence, successful civic which helps to strengthen communities takes place when actors realize their responsibility of common spaces and all social matters, feel that they share common reasons, common values and common goals with others. Additionally, voluntary service develops active citizenship from the perspective of intercultural dialogue and non-formal learning.

³⁴ Eizaguirre, S., Pradel, M., Terrones, A., Martínez-Celorio, X., & García, M. (2012). Multilevel governance and social cohesion: Bringing back conflict in citizenship practices. *Urban Studies*, 49(9), p. 2001.

³⁵ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 98.

³⁶ Idem. P. 90.

2.2.2. Intercultural dialogue

The importance of the intercultural dialogue for governing policies could be explained in terms of modern social challenges: one of the main features of modern society in the era of globalization is cultural diversity. Diversity provokes new social and political issues that should be tackled with the implementation of respective managing systems. The idea of ‘intercultural dialogue’ as a method for governing diversity on the European level had appeared yet in the begging of 2000’s, and as the result by 2008 the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue was introduced, published by the Council of Europe. This defines intercultural dialogue as “a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect”.³⁷ In this notion it is important to highlight that intercultural dialogue includes “open and respectful exchange” with sharing universal values and aimed at the promotion of the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

In a harmonious democratic society individuals recognize themselves and each other as persons with equal dignity, rights and obligations, they treat other cultures with respect and express willingness to live together, contributing to the common development. Cultural diversity itself is not a problem that needs to be solved – it is an added value, that enriches the common environment and helps to “shift from multicultural co-existence to intercultural dialogue <...> providing the base of a true living together, where borders are less important than meeting places and spaces”.³⁸ For this reason, civil society could and should play a major role in the implementation of successful policies on cultural diversity: engagement of people in sharing and exchanging, working together for common good with true bottom-up response create the link between citizens and decision-makers.³⁹

³⁷ Council of Europe (2008). White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. Living Together as Equals in Dignity.

³⁸ Bekemans L. (2014). Intercultural Dialogue and Human rights/ A Crucial Link for Building Intercultural Competences. From words to Action. UNESCO Publications, p. 4.

³⁹ Maloney W. A., Van Deth J.W. (2010). Civil Society and Governance in Europe: From National to International Linkages. p. 5

In this context volunteering, and especially volunteer action that includes various social groups or people from different cultural backgrounds, provide great space for successful policies of intercultural dialogue. Voluntary service is based on the idea that working together on a concrete task is one of the most effective ways to create friendship and build mutual understanding. Such projects serve as a basis for mutual dialogue, an opportunity to work according to each person's ability and to practice learning-by-doing, living together for periods of several days up to one year. Moreover, voluntary service can link local and global communities through international exchange, allowing to establish a dialogue between local actors, majority and minority cultures living within the same community or between different cultures around the globe. Nevertheless, to do so intercultural dialogue has to avoid the risks of being politically instrumentalized. In this case, it can put all the attention on positive presentation of diversity and superficial interpretation of cultural richness, just strengthening stereotypical thinking and alienation between different social groups, while silencing the actual conflicts on the basis of inequality. In order to serve for the good and do not turn volunteering efforts behind useless, it has to go beyond the acknowledgment of the difference and call for common goals and initiatives, being "accompanied by policies of equal opportunity and by an analysis of underlying power dynamics".⁴⁰

2.3. Value aspect

Volunteer work is one of the most pro-social behaviours. People willingly choose to help others, not because of material gain or financial profit (although economic benefits can be expected in the long-term run), but because they feel their own responsibility for life in their society. They are aimed at achieving the individual and community well-being "through self-realization, shared values and common purpose".⁴¹ Thereby, one specific feature that makes the greatest distinction between it and other types of labour is that

⁴⁰ Ratzmann, N. (2019). Intercultural dialogue: a review of conceptual and empirical issues relating to social transformation. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, pp. 52-53.

⁴¹ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 75.

volunteerism has ethical nature, existing in strong linkage with human values and moral norms.

As J. Wilson and M. Musick point out in their research, when asked why they volunteer, people always tend to reply in terms of ethics, starting to speak about the importance of helping others, the cause which is greater than individual benefit, compassion, etc.⁴² Instead of invoking ethical values to understand why people consider volunteering to be a good thing, the scholars offer to conceptualize ethical values as usable resources, or as a cultural capital. Cultural capital is another term, which was originally introduced by P. Bourdieu. However, Bourdieu has never included any moral components in his understanding of cultural capital which he defines solely as a “form of educational qualifications”⁴³, while Wilson and Musick conceptualize it using moral references. According to them, volunteer work can be a way to show that “one is a good and decent person”, who has “taste for volunteering” or other charitable activities as it is possible to have taste for good wine.⁴⁴ And this culture of benevolence is acquired by individuals from different sources.

One of the most popular sources for giving activities is religion. Historically, the culture of benevolence was closely affiliated with churches, so religious reasons often become causes for volunteer motivations.⁴⁵ Other than deriving from religious tradition and religious obligations, volunteerism can be rooted in the culture and social norms. This is reflected in the general tradition to help community members or the necessity to socialize inside one’s culture and uptake a particular social role, get along with other members whom individual considers important and respects. In many cases, volunteers give their time because they were asked to help, or because friends or colleagues do so.⁴⁶

⁴² Wilson, J. and Musick, M. (1997). Who cares? Toward an integrated theory of volunteer work. *American Sociological Review*, 62, p. 695.

⁴³ Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241–258). London: Greenwood Press, p. 243

⁴⁴ Wilson, J. and Musick, M. (1997). Who cares? Toward an integrated theory of volunteer work. *American Sociological Review*, 62, p.696.

⁴⁵ *Idem*, p. 697.

⁴⁶ Handy, F., Hustinx, L., Kang, C., Cnaan, R. A., Brudney, J. L., Haski-Leventhal, D., Holmes, K., Meijs, L.C.P.M., Pessi, A. B., Ranade, B., Yamauchi, N., Zrinscak, S. (2010). A cross-cultural examination of student volunteering: Is it all about résumé building? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 39 (3).

Important attributes of religion and culture are values. Volunteers give their time and energy not only because of utilitarian motives of earning more human capital by gaining vocational skills and job experience, broadening social networks with useful contacts or just following individual passions, but also because of their value-based motives and belief systems. These values and beliefs include altruism and altruistic concerns, solidarity, love of society, desire to make the world a better place or help people in need, religious beliefs and political interests.⁴⁷ By means of volunteering individuals always believe to do a good thing, even though sometimes it may simply flatter one's ego by allowing them to feel needed. The feeling of doing good, in turn, brings volunteer a set of psychological benefits. Volunteer labour gives people a sense of personal satisfaction, fulfilment, wellbeing and involvement in society.⁴⁸ Researches have also found that volunteers tend to have better physical health, both self-reported and expert-assessed, better mental health, and perform better on cognitive tasks.⁴⁹ In addition, by helping others, people also build reciprocity in their societies and get a sense of security, as they start to expect that once they will need help in the future, they will receive it from the other group members, also as a return for their actions.⁵⁰

Therefore, volunteer work cannot be measured just by the financial ruler, but by the value volunteers implement in their work. One's decision to give time to volunteer is dictated by many different factors and creates a number of benefits on both, individual and communal levels, strengthening social solidarity, trust and resilience. Furthermore, the moral values underlying volunteerism are tightly linked to the core values of human rights, such as human dignity, non-discrimination and equality, as well as respect, understanding, participation, freedom of thought and expression, etc. When people take action to help others in need, build solidarity or "make world a better place", they can

⁴⁷ *Idem.*

⁴⁸ International Labour Organization (2011). *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work.* International Labour Office, Geneva, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Bekkers R., Konrath S., Smith D. (2016) *Physiological Correlates of Volunteering.* In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Volunteering, Civic Participation, and Nonprofit Associations.* Palgrave Macmillan, London, p. 541.

⁵⁰ Dekker P., Halman L. (2003) *Volunteering and Values.* In: Dekker P., Halman L. (eds) *The Values of Volunteering. Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies (An International Multidisciplinary Series).* Springer, Boston, MA, p. 6.

learn more about the human rights agenda and become agents of change, promoting and defending human rights.

3. Volunteering for social inclusion

3.1. Voluntary action and sustainable development

Volunteer action has been recognized as a powerful instrument for peace and development, and the 2030 Agenda explicitly mentions volunteer groups as stakeholders in their own right.⁵¹ The promotion of active engagement of volunteers for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is connected to the idea that global goals cannot be reached via institutional action only and traditional mechanisms have to be complemented by other means. The capacity of volunteering to provide space for engagement of different social groups and connect community-level action to the institutional level that was described earlier, thereby, makes it a “powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation” for the SDGs.⁵²

According to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), volunteerism can contribute to the delivery of seventeen SDGs in all the thematic areas.⁵³ As an actor of implementation, volunteer groups are explicitly mentioned in SDG Goal 17: Means of Implementation: Partnerships. As with other goals, volunteer action responds to them simultaneously, addressing more than one goal at once. Taking the example introduced by M. Haddock and P. Devereux in their study, the voluntary activity of providing training to school teachers will address not only Goal 4: Education, but also the goals concerning the elimination of poverty and reduction of inequality (Goal 1 and Goal 10), if teachers are female -- women empowerment (Goal 5), promotion of decent work (Goal 8) with new employability prospects, and potentially the development or strengthening the partnerships with other stakeholders (Goal 17).⁵⁴ Overall, volunteers deliver technical support in various fields, develop skills and build capacities, raise awareness, mobilize people, model attitudes and enhance behavioural changes, thus being linked to all the

⁵¹ United Nations General Assembly. (2015, October 21). Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [A/RES/70/1]. §45

⁵² United Nations. (2014). The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet. Synthesis [Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda].

⁵³ United Nations Volunteers. (2016, 20 April). Volunteering as Essential in Achieving Sustainable Development: UNV Responding to the 2030 Agenda [Discussion Paper].

⁵⁴ Haddock, M. and Devereux, P. (2016). Measuring the Contribution of Volunteering to the Sustainable Development Goals: Challenges and Opportunities. *Voluntaris: Journal of Volunteer Services*, 4 (1), p.81.

thematic areas of SDGs. Nevertheless, among the proposed indicators for measuring the SDGs, there is a notable lack of clear reference to the involvement of volunteers or volunteerism.⁵⁵ In order to regularly measure economic, social and developmental impact of volunteerism, ILO and UNV continue to develop tools and guidance for national statistics agencies. The UNGA Plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda also encourages Governments and their development partners to “scale up the use of the common measurement indicators and methodologies” that were provided in the 2011 ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work.⁵⁶

To truly strengthen the community’s resilience, enhance social cohesion, and contribute to the development goals, volunteerism itself has to be sustainable and be fostered via sustainable policies, investments, support. Otherwise, volunteer action will only intensify or reinforce social division and inequality. For instance, when volunteering is treated as free labour and volunteers are used to substitute paid employees or to fill the gaps in services that governments and other formal organizations are responsible for providing, those in vulnerable positions will be affected even more. The SWVR 2018 outlines three ways in which governments, United Nations actors and other peace and development stakeholders can ensure that volunteers are not perceived as cheap labour but are cultivated as a core attribute of resilient communities: supporting the self-organization of communities, widening access to empowering opportunities for vulnerable groups, and nurturing the human connections in volunteerism.⁵⁷

Self-organization of communities is a key strategy for resilient volunteering which puts people at the centre of the development processes. It is based on the fundamental rights and freedoms of expression, assembly and association, and allows people to directly participate in informing public policy, enhancing the effectivity of social action through volunteering.⁵⁸ For that open civic spaces have to exist, where different groups of people

⁵⁵ United Nations Development Group (2003). The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies.

⁵⁶ United Nations General Assembly. (2018, July 25). Plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: report of the Secretary-General [report A/73/254]. §63

⁵⁷ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 78.

⁵⁸ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 81,

could connect and develop actions toward common goals so that they to act on their own priorities. Otherwise, communities will get segmented and consist of isolated groups. To self-organize, volunteers also have to have access to information to collect data and design their responses. Last but not least, the important feature of the support is public acknowledgement, which motivates people to donate their time for volunteering, work together for the public good and gain trust and respect from other community members.⁵⁹

Nurturing human connections by strengthening networks of trust and social cohesion is particularly important for communities at risk. It starts with a recognition that local voluntary action sometimes excludes certain groups, so stakeholders have to contribute to trust-building and social cohesion by creating more opportunities and incentives for inclusive forms of volunteering. Volunteer organizations and movements cannot be forced into being inclusive, but public authorities can contribute to the sustainability and resilience of communities by collaborating with local community mediators, creating new standards that clearly state commitments to mutual respect and inclusive practices, enforcing new connections inside communities by providing spaces, as was mentioned before, and establish systems that will manage volunteering in case of spontaneous crises.⁶⁰

As for creating empowering opportunities for vulnerable groups, all people have to have access to the benefits of voluntary action. When all the community members are empowered and actively participate in the life of their society, it becomes more resilient, can respond to crises and continue development in a long term. The SWVR makes an emphasis primarily on two groups that often stay excluded from decision-making, leadership and active participation in communities: young people and women.⁶¹ However, groups of those who are often “left behind” include, but are not limited to these two.

⁵⁹ Winterich, K. P., Mittal, V., & Aquino, K. (2013). When Does Recognition Increase Charitable Behavior? Toward a Moral Identity-Based Model. *Journal of Marketing*, 77.

⁶⁰ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 82.

⁶¹ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 84.

3.2. Social inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups

A commitment “that no one will be left behind” is one of the key features of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has to be reached by adopting an equality-focused and rights-based approach at all levels, seeking “to realize the human rights of all”.⁶² This means that the only way to reduce poverty, social inequality and exclusion are to promote community engagement and social cohesion among those social groups often left behind, making them active participants and agents of the change. That includes economic and social inclusion of persons with disabilities; active citizenship among new immigrants; women’s empowerment and leadership; engaging vulnerable children and youth, older people and other vulnerable groups.

It might be difficult to define vulnerable groups because situations in which particular groups of people find themselves in a vulnerable position are not fixed and can change under different circumstances. For example, in the migrant context children are always readily considered as vulnerable and in need of special protection, support and care, while for other people situation of vulnerability will be assessed according to their individual circumstances and context.⁶³ In this study, we will define vulnerable groups according to the report “The European Social Fund and Social Inclusion” elaborated by the European Commission in 2010, which indicates that people who belong to such groups “experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population”, are mostly representatives of “ethnic minorities, migrants, disabled people, the homeless, those struggling with substance abuse, isolated elderly people and children” and “often face difficulties that can lead to further social exclusion, such as low levels of education and unemployment or underemployment”.⁶⁴ An additional factor that increases risks of becoming vulnerable is gender, as women often experience discrimination, including violence, get deprived of educational opportunities or vocational training because of the existing gender roles, cultural traditions, norms, etc.

⁶² United Nations General Assembly. (2015, October 21). Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [A/RES/70/1].

⁶³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Detention Coalition. (2016) Vulnerability Screening Tool - Identifying and addressing vulnerability: a tool for asylum and migration systems, p. 2.

⁶⁴ European Union (2010). The European Social Fund and Social Inclusion, p. 5.

Volunteering is important for vulnerable groups for many reasons. First of all, due to its collective nature, volunteer work can help them to overcome a sense of personal isolation and belonging and contributing to the common good. Secondly, it broadens networks and allows to gain necessary vocational and social skills, empowering people. By this, it allows people to enhance social and human capital. Thirdly, it provides a basis for social inclusion, enhancing trust and eliminating stigma among the community members, giving opportunities for people to improve their and their societies lives.

Social inclusion is aimed at eliminating social exclusion or marginalization related to different social and economic factors. The World Bank defines it as a “process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live”.⁶⁵ Hence, social inclusion processes aim at enhancing the integration of all people in society through promoting full economic, social and cultural participation. However, the specific challenges of the discriminated or disadvantaged group vary on their specificity. Groups that are often get excluded from making decisions or experience marginalization and discrimination are women, youth, older persons, people with disabilities and migrants. All these groups can also intersect, e.g. migrant women, young people with disabilities, etc.

The empowerment of women and girls is one of the key points of the post-2015 agenda. Besides more likely living in poverty than men and having limited access to healthcare and education,⁶⁶ women always stay excluded from decision-making or engagement in their community living. And even though sometimes volunteer labour may actually reinforce existing gender roles in the societies (especially in the case of local informal volunteering⁶⁷), in many cases it empowers women by challenging their traditional social role. Volunteerism provides access to social networks, allowing women to grow knowledge, share and gain skills they do not have access to otherwise; it builds social

⁶⁵ World Bank. (2007). Social exclusion and the EU’s social inclusion agenda [Paper prepared for the EU8 social inclusion study]. Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁶⁶ United Nations Volunteers (2012). Volunteerism and social inclusion. An extract from the 2011 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report, p. 6.

⁶⁷ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 46.

relations and trust between the community members so they stay mutually supported; it provides an opportunity for social activism and leadership, that might influence women-related policies.⁶⁸

The youth are another key group of the development agenda, being a force for progress and social change. However, young people are among the groups most vulnerable to social exclusion, characterized by unemployment, poverty, crime and drug use.⁶⁹ However, youth participation is crucial for effective social development. Their limited opportunities of participation and lack of capacity make volunteering indeed a powerful mechanism for civic engagement, social activism and source of information about world challenges. Voluntary action also enhances job-related skills, providing young people with more opportunities for future employment, allows meet new people and make friends, strengthening the bonds with their communities and create new educational opportunities, reducing the risk of vulnerability.

Mostly in developed countries, older persons are vulnerable to exclusion from participation in public life because of their age. However, it is crucial that they have an opportunity to continue contributing to the well-being of their communities. UNV report emphasizes that volunteer work, being “a universal channel for participation” is a significant asset in keeping older people active and engaged.⁷⁰

People with disabilities often face social exclusion based on prejudices that portray them only in terms of their disability, rather than on the basis of contribution they can make or skills they want to learn. Volunteering always leads to increased confidence, a sense of self-satisfaction, and new professional aspirations. Encouraged by these achievements, volunteers with disabilities help to break stereotypes and change perceptions of what people with disabilities are capable of doing.

⁶⁸ United Nations Volunteers (2012). Volunteerism and social inclusion. An extract from the 2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report, p. 6

⁶⁹ Johnston, L., MacDonald, R., Mason, P., Ridley, L., & Webster, C. (2000). Snakes & ladders: Young people, transitions and social exclusion. Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.

⁷⁰ United Nations Volunteers (2012). Volunteerism and social inclusion. An extract from the 2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report, p. 9.

Migrants and refugees experience social exclusion, stigmatization and discrimination based on many social, economic and cultural factors. For them volunteering in local communities can become a platform for learning language and local customs, get new social connections and contacts in the hosting society, restore lost social capital, gain new vocational skills that might help them to find a job and many others. The vulnerability of migrant groups and the potential of volunteer action for them will be discussed in more details in the course of this study. The element of vulnerability can have a big impact on the integration process, including whether newcomers will be sufficiently integrated into the economic, social, cultural, and political life of a receiving society.

The common point for all vulnerable and excluded groups is that they are often perceived as passive recipients of volunteer actions, rather than as active volunteers themselves. Nevertheless, social inclusion recognizes the diversity of individuals and enables everyone to fully participate regardless of their status. And voluntary action, enabling social inclusion and integration on one side, also has to stay inclusive, engaging volunteer under the principles of equality and non-discrimination, international and national human rights legislation. Only, in that case, volunteering as any other civic participation practice will actually have a positive impact on the individual and social well-being, empowering people to be actively engaged in designing their solutions to social issues and shaping the developmental policy.

4. Conclusions

Volunteering is not unpaid labour that is meant to fill in the gaps in the labour market or left as a substitution of traditional employment for less-privileged groups. And at the same moment volunteering is not a privilege of particular groups with higher income or some specific knowledge. Volunteering is a right of everyone and an activity that everyone has to have access to. It is productive collective freely undertaken labour that is beneficial to everyone as it gives a set of individual assets and helps to build a more resilient community that is based on principles of solidarity, engagement, reciprocity, and trust. It also helps those in a vulnerable position to participate in the life of their communities, feel self-worth and contribute to the common good with their skills and abilities, which helps to create a more resilient and sustainable society, where everyone matters.

Volunteer work requires individual human and social capital, at the same moment contributing to the growth of both. It invests in human capital by providing opportunities to practice knowledge for maintaining employment skills and to gain useful abilities like teamwork, leader and communication skills, which are particularly important in the context of changing labour market today. As an investment in social capital, voluntary service is a way to meet new people and broaden personal social networks, which contributes to the creation of macro-level social capital and raise the level of trust in society, also opening opportunities for effective civic and social dialogues.

However, utilitarian and social motivations are not the only ones that drive people to donate their time and energy. Neither is financial gain, as volunteering is unpaid labour, although sometimes volunteers can receive a small pay to cover only the related expenses. In the first place, volunteering is closely engaged with collective and individual values of altruism, empathy and solidarity, religious beliefs, cultural and social norms. It helps people to think better about themselves and their fellows, increasing personal satisfaction, trust and a sense of security. Hence, volunteer work has been valued for its distinctive contributions.

Studies have found that there is a direct correlation between the social and economic effects of 'helping activities' and the well-being of individuals and nations in general. However, people cannot be forced into taking volunteering opportunities due to the very

nature of volunteerism. Decision-makers can reinforce voluntary action by providing support, spaces, creating policies and standards, legislation and starting dialogues between authorities and civil society. Only, in that case, voluntary action will be beneficial for all the parties, contributing to sustainable peace and development, active citizenship, political participation and human rights agenda.

CHAPTER II – Integration of Immigrants and Refugees in European Countries

1. Introduction

The issue of integration has arisen as a particularly urgent topic in the public discourse since 2015 when more than one million migrants arrived in the EU territories only via the sea-routes.⁷¹ The numbers of arrivals remained high in the consequent years, with thousands of persons fleeing poverty and arm conflicts. These high numbers of migrant arrivals have created a feeling of insecurity and called for urgent measures.

However, migration flows to Europe is not a new phenomenon, and today is rather a matter of efficient and robust integration policies. Rising populism and xenophobia have created more barriers for the integration of migrant groups who have been already historically stigmatized and marginalized, so ensuring equal rights and opportunities is one of the first steps on the way to integration and inclusion. Moreover, the integration agenda should cover not only the short-term period after third-country nationals' arrival but rather invest in a long-term process of economic, cultural and social integration. Only in this case, European societies will become more cohesive, resilient and prosperous.

The previous chapter has already addressed the vulnerability of migrant groups and their higher risk of facing poverty and social exclusion due to various factors. It was stated that volunteering can be an effective instrument to empower vulnerable people, by allowing them to participate in the social, cultural and civic life of a new society and giving access to the resources. However, an important condition for such participation and, accordingly, further social inclusion is non-discrimination.

In this part of the study, the factors of migrant vulnerability and discrimination will be addressed from the legal perspective, under the International Human Rights Law in the European context, and in the context of the EU law. Non-discrimination is a cross-cutting right that allows individuals to enjoy all other rights and freedoms. Hence, it is an essential basis for social integration and inclusion, and non-discrimination provisions as Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights and other international human

⁷¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015, 30 December). Over one million sea arrivals reach Europe in 2015.

rights treaties are of high significance. After a brief overview of these instruments, the European approach to integration will be examined, with a particular focus on integration indicators and current policies in the European states. This will help to assess the need for additional integration practices in Europe, for example, such as volunteering activities.

2. Migration, discrimination and integration

2.1. Non-discrimination and vulnerable groups

Arriving in a new society and going through the integration process, migrants and refugees often find themselves in a vulnerable position: they become more exposed to the risks of social disadvantages and economic exclusion, discrimination and marginalization, having their human rights protected insufficiently or being at risk of abuse. That means that although migration can be a positive, beneficial, and empowering experience that change the life for better, at the same time it can negatively affect people, putting them in the position of vulnerability (or a larger vulnerability) caused by various factors.

The notion of vulnerability is used across different disciplines, usually described as a confusing, complex, vague, or ambiguous concept.⁷² Nevertheless, vulnerability always reflects the exposure danger and sufferings of the subject, exposure or risk of exposure to the harm of different kinds. Hence, vulnerable groups are groups of people that are more likely to become the victims of one or several forms of discrimination. When speaking about the protection of vulnerable groups under IHRL, Nifosi-Sutton outlines four main features that the definition of vulnerability and vulnerable groups have to cover:

- the extent lack of legal protection and deprivation of rights affecting certain groups;
- whether this lack of protection and denial of rights arises because of discrimination based on internationally prohibited grounds;
- what specific role the State must play to deal with the situation of those groups;
- if those groups' empowerment in terms of their participation in the preparation of laws and policies affecting their rights, and access to justice to seek redress where their rights have been violated.⁷³

⁷² Peroni L., Timmer A. (2013). Vulnerable groups: The promise of an emerging concept in European Human Rights Convention law. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, p 1058.

⁷³ Nifosi-Sutton I. (2017). *The Protection of Vulnerable Groups under International Human Rights Law*. Taylor & Francis, pp. 15-16.

Hence, here the concept of vulnerability loses the universal scope, becoming especially relevant to the specific situation of particular groups or members of these groups who are more exposed to the risks and harms.

2.1.1. Vulnerable groups under Article 14 ECHR

The concept of vulnerability and the vulnerable groups approach got more developed in the case law, under Article 14 of ECHR. The ECHR has a universal character, so the provisions of the Convention apply to everyone, while all the parties to Convention are obliged to secure enjoyment of rights and freedoms by everyone within their jurisdiction. The ECHR was signed and ratified by the 47 member States of the Council of Europe, and all the EU Member States are parties to the Convention. In its turn, the jurisdiction of the European Court on Human Rights (ECtHR), the CoE body which delivers binding judgements on the alleged violation of the ECHR, is compulsory for all Parties to the Convention.⁷⁴ As for the EU itself, unlike the Member States it is not a party to the Convention: its accession is still suspended, despite the legal requirement under the Lisbon Treaty which committed the Union to accede to the ECHR. However, all the EU institutions are bound under Article 6 (3) of the Treaty on European Union to respect human rights under the convention.

Article 14 ECHR sets enjoyment of the rights and freedoms of the Convention without discrimination on any ground “such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status”.⁷⁵ In that sense prohibition of discrimination is a cross-cutting right, that allows enjoying all other rights and freedom. It is also complemented by Article 1 of Protocol 12 which stipulates that “no one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on any ground” mentioned earlier. However, traditionally this article of ECHR has been perceived as a relatively weak provision with the open approach to

⁷⁴ Council of Europe (2010). Accession by the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights. [6337/19].

⁷⁵ Council of Europe. The European Convention on Human Rights. Strasbourg: Directorate of Information. Article 14.

discrimination grounds (with the reference to “other status”), which does not guarantee equality.⁷⁶ The recent development of the case-law of the ECtHR has started to change this situation, adding details to certain discrimination grounds and commenting on particular situations.

Originally the Strasbourg Court used the concept of vulnerable groups in relation to the Roma minority⁷⁷, outlining their ‘turbulent history’, which led to the appearance of the specific type of disadvantage and vulnerability.⁷⁸ Later on, The ECtHR has expanded the list admitting vulnerability of asylum-seekers in *M.S.S. v Belgium and Greece*⁷⁹, and in the judgement on *Kiyutin v. Russia* it has identified sex, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, mental faculties and disability to be discrimination grounds potentially related to vulnerable groups.⁸⁰ The Court’s definition of vulnerable groups in the judgment clearly refers to the historical prejudices “that have resulted in social exclusion and negative stereotypes for persons belonging to such groups”.⁸¹ Researches have noted that the introduction of the vulnerable groups approach in addition to the classical suspect grounds approach by the ECtHR (grounds of suspect as ethnic origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation; based on Art. 14 ECHR) may become an important step towards the more robust idea of equality. However, at the same time notion of vulnerability risks to sustain the exclusion and inequality that the Court seeks to rule out.⁸² This is due to the fact that such approach can lead to affiliating vulnerability as an and inseparable characteristic of a particular group, which, in its turn, builds more grounds for further prejudice, stigma, and stereotyping about this group as necessarily vulnerable.

According to the Court’s understanding of vulnerability, it is not an inherent characteristic of the individual, but rather a “relational” concept, which places an individual in the broader social context. When addressing the notion of vulnerability under the Article 14

⁷⁶ Arnardóttir, O.M. (2017). Vulnerability under Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. *Oslo Law Review*, 1, p. 15.

⁷⁷ *Chapman v. United Kingdom*, App. No. 27238/95 (ECtHR, 18 January 2001).

⁷⁸ Peroni L., Timmer A. (2013). Vulnerable groups: The promise of an emerging concept in European Human Rights Convention law. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, p. 1057.

⁷⁹ *M.S.S. v Belgium and Greece* App no 30696/09 (ECtHR, 21 January 2011).

⁸⁰ *Kiyutin v. Russia*, App. No. 2700/10 Judgement (ECtHR, 10 March 2011).

⁸¹ Arnardóttir, O.M. (2017). Vulnerability under Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. *Oslo Law Review*, 1, p.164.

⁸² Peroni L., Timmer A. (2013). Vulnerable groups: The promise of an emerging concept in European Human Rights Convention law. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, p. 1057.

case law, the Court has often complimented it by the references to histories, prejudices, stereotypes, or other disadvantageous social situations, thus marking the individual's membership in or belonging to the relevant group.⁸³ These disadvantages put individuals in different position within social structures, political, economic and institutional relationships, meaning that people experience vulnerability in different unequal ways. On the one hand, recognition of the vulnerability of particular groups and further emphasis on the discrimination grounds reflects an increased awareness of the reality behind it, meaning “an awareness of how some differences in status actually make a big difference in people's lives, while other differences do not”.⁸⁴ On the other hand, it can arise more inequality and injustice, being associated with a number of stigmatizing, essentializing and stereotyping risks, since only particular people are referred to as ‘vulnerable populations’.

In her analysis of the vulnerability approach, philosopher and legal theorist M. Fineman objects to the understanding of vulnerability as a specific group characteristic. She insists on its universal and constant nature, which is inherent as “the primal human condition”.⁸⁵ For Fineman, everyone is vulnerable, but vulnerability is not simply a negative feature that is essentially limited to suffering. Vulnerability expands beyond suffering, as at the same moment it is a source of empathy, intimacy, social institutions and social-connectedness, presenting “opportunities for innovation and growth, creativity, and fulfilment”.⁸⁶ In this light, the theory of vulnerability still recognizes the differences and inequality of the individuals and emphasizes the role of social institutions and relationships in which their social identity got formed while avoiding marginalization as when vulnerability is applied to specific groups only. According to Fineman, we have to reconceptualize vulnerability, including its positive aspect to get rid of the stigmatizing effects that are associated with the term, focusing more on the social context and institutional responsibility instead.

⁸³ Arnardóttir, O.M. (2017). Vulnerability under Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. *Oslo Law Review*, 1, p.165.

⁸⁴ *Idem*. P 152.

⁸⁵ Fineman, M. A. (2017), *Vulnerability and Inevitable Inequality*. *Oslo Law Review*, Vol. 4.

⁸⁶ Fineman, M.A. (2012) “Elderly” as Vulnerable: Rethinking the Nature of Individual and Societal Responsibility. *Elder Law Review*, 17, p. 48

2.1.2. Prohibition of discrimination in other European and IHRL instruments

Hence, the protection of vulnerable groups attributes to the protection from discrimination. However, the Article 14 of ECHR is not the only provision which prohibits discrimination on the suspect grounds. The principle of non-discrimination has the fundamental nature for the human rights law, as it allows individuals to enjoy all other human rights and freedoms. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, the prohibition of discrimination has been identified as one of the core elements in the various human rights instruments, getting developed and incorporated as on the international level, so as in the national laws in the majority of countries.

The EU Members States are parties to many IHRL instruments that appeal to the principle of non-discrimination and are relevant for the interpretation of EU law. Among them, there are such UN human rights instruments as the International Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The named Conventions and Covenants were signed and ratified by all the European Union countries, meaning that as States parties to the treaties they are obliged to protect and promote the rights and freedoms of individuals within their jurisdiction.

Taking the two Covenants, ICCPR and ICESCR, both of them are generally applied to everyone if not specified otherwise. However, while ICCPR applies only to citizens and lawfully residing aliens, the text of ICECSR does not make any distinction between the legal status or nationality.⁸⁷ Paragraph 2 of Art. 2 ICESCR prohibits discrimination on several internationally prohibited grounds as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth or other status. In its General

⁸⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2011). Fundamental rights of migrants in an irregular situation in the European Union, P. 21.

Comment No. 20⁸⁸ the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination regardless of legal status and documentation, making clear that nationality “is a prohibited discrimination ground implied in the ground “other status” expressly mentioned in paragraph 2 of Article 2.⁸⁹

In the EU legal context, there has been produced a number of documents and tools that strengthen the European anti-discrimination law. The Council of European Union defines the discrimination “as any differential treatment of a person or group of persons based on a prohibited ground, which has no objective and reasonable justification”⁹⁰, where grounds are defined by the international human rights law. This definition is taken from the recommendation of the EC against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)⁹¹, which is the CoE’s independent human rights body, which highlights again the interrelationship of anti-discrimination legislation at different levels. The Council of EU also outlines that the non-discrimination principle is normally described along with the principle of equality as complementing principles, as all persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and deserve equal treatment.⁹²

The prohibition of discrimination is a basic principle yet in the European Union’s founding treaties as Treaty of the European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.⁹³ Furthermore, the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43) and the Employment Equality Framework Directive (2000/78) in the common for both Article 3(2) state that “this Directive does not cover differences of treatment based on nationality”. Both instruments were agreed by the EU Member States in 2000, and each of the States was then required to incorporate the new laws into their national

⁸⁸ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2009, July 2). General Comment No. 20: Non-Discrimination in Economic, Social and Cultural Rights s (art. 2, para. 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). [E/C.12/GC/20].

⁸⁹ Nifosi-Sutton I. (2017). *The Protection of Vulnerable Groups under International Human Rights Law*. Taylor & Francis, p. 8.

⁹⁰ Council of the European Union (2019). *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Non-discrimination in External Action*, p. 5.

⁹¹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2018). *ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on National Legislation to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*. §1 b.

⁹² Council of the European Union (2019). *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Non-discrimination in External Action*, p. 11.

⁹³ *Idem*, 3.

legislation.⁹⁴ However, the abovementioned reservation does not imply that all differences in treatment on grounds of nationality are permissible.⁹⁵ As a result, such differences in treatment may result in indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin or religion.

2.1.3. Indirect and Structural Discrimination

Besides direct discrimination based on the suspect grounds recognized in the respective articles of the IHRL conventions, migrants and refugees often become victims of indirect discrimination in their host societies. As defined in the EU law, indirect discrimination occurs “where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary”.⁹⁶

General Comment No. 20 of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights underlines that if direct discrimination refers to the situations when “an individual is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation for a reason related to a prohibited ground”, indirect discrimination occurs because of “laws, policies or practices which appear neutral at face value, but have a disproportionate impact on the exercise of rights as distinguished by prohibited grounds of discrimination”.⁹⁷ Hence, although still being linked to the recognized grounds of discrimination, indirect discrimination is not obvious as the direct one and rather is an implicit practice. In both these cases, discrimination negatively affects the social and economic status, well-being and health of

⁹⁴ Chalmers D., Davies G., Monti G. (2011). *European Union Law*. UK: Cambridge University Press. 2nd ed, p. 534.

⁹⁵ De Schutter, O. (2016). *Links between migration and discrimination. A legal analysis of the situation in EU Member States*. European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, p.7.

⁹⁶ Art. 2(b) of Council Directive 2000/43/EC (Racial Equality Directive).

⁹⁷ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2009, July 2). *General Comment No. 20: Non-Discrimination in Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 2, para. 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)*. [E/C.12/GC/20].

individuals.⁹⁸ Consequently, both direct and indirect discrimination is prohibited under human rights instruments.

Indirect discrimination can be seen as a tool to make visible and challenge the very causes of discrimination, which often are structural in nature, being caused by particular prejudices and stereotypes based on the idea of the superiority of particular groups of people and their roles.⁹⁹ Recognizing this structural nature of the discriminative practices, some of the IHRL instruments as CRPD, CEDAW and ICERD oblige the State parties to engage so-called social engineering. It includes appropriate measures aimed at raising social awareness, combating stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices, modification of social and cultural practices.¹⁰⁰

Although ‘structural discrimination’, being a form of ‘institutional’ or ‘systemic’ discrimination, has neither international, nor EU law agreed definition, it is commonly used to describe exclusion and discrimination to which entire groups of persons sharing the same characteristics or grounds for discrimination are subjected.¹⁰¹ Therefore, it is an institutionally-embedded process, occurring when specific policies have a disproportionately negative impact on the capabilities of certain social groups.¹⁰² Elimination of all types of discrimination in the institutional policies is an important prerequisite and a required ground for successful social integration of the TCNs, including asylum-seekers, refugees and immigrants.

⁹⁸ Makkonen T. (2007). European Handbook on Equality Data. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit, p.19.

⁹⁹ Loenen T. (1999) *Indirect Discrimination: Oscillating Between Containment and Revolution*. The Hague/London/Boston: Kluwer Law International, p.199.

¹⁰⁰ European Commission. (2008). *Limits and potential of the Concept of Indirect Discrimination*. P. 15

¹⁰¹ Council of the European Union (2019). *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Non-discrimination in External Action*, p.9.

¹⁰² National Research Council. (2004). *Measuring Racial Discrimination*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, p. 63.

2.2. Discrimination as an obstacle to integration

The Council of European Union emphasizes that the EU is “deeply committed to fighting all forms of discrimination within its own borders as well as in the world at large” as the prohibition of discrimination is “a core principle on which the EU is built”.¹⁰³ However, despite the clarity of human rights instruments and various treaties that prohibit discrimination, millions of people continue to face discriminatory practices in their daily lives, which prevents them from full enjoyment of their human rights and from reaching the full potential as active and equal members of the society. Discrimination leads not only to social exclusion, conflicts and violence but also causes poverty and the loss of opportunities that affect not only individuals and their families but the entire societies.¹⁰⁴

Report on the migrants’ exclusion and discrimination in 27 EU Members States conducted by European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) outlines that minorities and those with a migrant background are per se vulnerable groups, who are vulnerable to social exclusion, marginalization and discrimination.¹⁰⁵ As a disadvantaged group, they are often exposed to the risks of negative health outcomes and low socio-economic status¹⁰⁶ including lower employment rates and lower incomes, higher scores in school drop-out rates, housing problems, financial exclusion and criminal propensity. Furthermore, these risks increase in the absence of social support.¹⁰⁷

However, here two notions should be made. The first one is that vulnerability within migrant groups is understood differently, with some categories to be more likely recognized as vulnerable (e.g., children, single women, and women travelling with children are more likely to be identified as such than men and older boys).¹⁰⁸ Secondly, as was indicated earlier, many scholars insist that migrants and refugees are not specifically and inherently vulnerable, but their vulnerability increases being majorly

¹⁰³ Council of the European Union (2019). EU Human Rights Guidelines on Non-discrimination in External Action, p. 3

¹⁰⁴ Idem, p. 3

¹⁰⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2010). Migrants, minorities and employment Exclusion and discrimination in the 27 Member States of the European Union. [Update 2003-2008], p.15

¹⁰⁶ Hainmueller, J., D. Hangartner, and D. Lawrence. 2016. “When Lives are Put on Hold: Lengthy Asylum Processes Decrease Employment among Refugees.” *Science Advances* 2 (8).

¹⁰⁷ Newman, A., I. Nielsen, R. Smyth, and G. Hirst. 2017. “Mediating Role of Psychological Capital in the Relationship Between Social Support and Wellbeing of Refugees.” *International Migration* 56 (2).

¹⁰⁸ Paasche, E., Skilbrei, M.-L. (2017). Gendered vulnerability and return migration. *TEMIDA*, 20(1).

constructed in the social, political, and institutional circumstances.¹⁰⁹ Social-contextual understanding of vulnerability is reflected in the judgements of the ECtHR, except for the application of the concept concerning children, whose vulnerability considered as an inherent or essential characteristic.¹¹⁰ Therefore, vulnerability affects people differently depending on their position in societal relationships. Specifying vulnerability as a ‘socially embedded’ process, Martha Fineman argues that it is the State that has to be strong and responsive to the realities of universal human vulnerability and act as an instrument of social justice, providing resources and assets to compensate for that vulnerability.¹¹¹

With the broad agreement on the need to move towards more inclusive and diverse societies for both social cohesion and economic reasons, the EU anti-discrimination law has had developed a lot in recent years. The prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of nationality was strengthened on the European level and under the domestic legislation of the EU Member States, including implementation of the Directives on Racial Equality and Employment Equality that prohibit nationality-based discrimination and support the adoption of new legal tools in relation the status of TCNs. The integration of immigrants can succeed when these individuals are not only adequately protected from discrimination, but also treated equally with the nationals of the state they reside in. Generally, the principle of equal treatment requires that comparable situations are not treated differently and different situations are not treated equally unless such treatment is objectively justified to achieve a legitimate goal.¹¹² The principle of the equality of treatment is a core component of the Union’s immigration policy, which was established at the 1999 Tampere European Council and announced by a 2000 Communication of the European Commission. Differences in the treatment of nationals of the EU Member States and TCNs are not always considered discriminative, however, they can affect the

¹⁰⁹ Peroni L., Timmer A. (2013). *Vulnerable groups : The promise of an emerging concept in European Human Rights Convention law*. Oxford University Press and New York University School of Law, p. 1063.

¹¹⁰ Arnardóttir, O.M. (2017). *Vulnerability under Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights*. *Oslo Law Review*, 1, p. 165.

¹¹¹ Fineman, M. A. (2017), *Vulnerability and Inevitable Inequality*. *Oslo Law Review*, Vol. 4, pp 133-149.

¹¹² De Schutter, O. (2016). *Links between migration and discrimination. A legal analysis of the situation in EU Member States*. European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, p. 60.

enjoyment of rights related to employment, education, housing, social security or healthcare, all of which are key for the integration of third-country nationals.¹¹³

Discriminative practices, prejudices and structural exclusion interrupt social integration, affecting migrants' access to education and work, preventing them from social participation and contributing to the prosperity and well-being of society.¹¹⁴ In its turn, social exclusion interferes with overall social development. Participation of all groups is an important condition for an open democratic society. A Common Agenda for Integration Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union outlines that “The participation of immigrants in the democratic process, particularly at the local level, enhances their role as residents and as participants in society. Providing for their participation and the exercise of active citizenship is needed, most importantly at the political level and especially at the local level”.¹¹⁵

In combating discrimination and changing the image of marginalized groups, local communities and civil society are no less important actors than State institutions. The role of civil society organizations in the integration of migrants and refugees was recently studied by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). In the 2020 report prepared by the EESC study group on Immigration and Integration, it is noted that despite existing negativity of the migratory discourse which is grounded in the assumption that “migrants are a threat to host countries' culture and social systems”, CSOs manage to carry out advocacy and awareness-raising activities.¹¹⁶ They provide help on two sides: firstly, by assisting migrants in accessing education facilities, training and employment; and secondly, by challenging discrimination in the education sector, labour market and society as a whole. With their action scope, organizations try to reach out to the local communities, raise social awareness on the relative issues and create platform for civic dialogue between different social groups. Civil society and NGOs play a positive role in

¹¹³ *Idem.* P. 81

¹¹⁴ *Idem.* P. 26.

¹¹⁵ Commission of the European Communities (2005, September 1). A Common Agenda for Integration Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union. [COM(2005) 389 final].

¹¹⁶ EESC Study Group on Immigration and Integration (2020). The role of civil society organisations in ensuring the integration of migrants and refugees. [Project Summary Report]. Par. 2.1

the promotion of non-discrimination and complimenting or even filling in the gaps in governmental work by providing guidance and support in the integration processes.

3. Integration models and European policies

According to Eurostat, by January 1st, 2019 21,8 million persons born in a third country were living in the EU-27 countries, representing almost 5% of the 446.8 million population.¹¹⁷ The integration of immigrants, which is enabling them to participate in the host society on the same level as the native-born citizens, is an active process that involves two parties, the host society and the immigrants, who work together for a cohesive society. In other words, integration involves not only immigrants, but the entire population living in the nation, where the nation is “a group which is typified by the sharing of certain common cultural features”.¹¹⁸

In the context of this study, out of all TCNs living in the EU Member states, the focus is made on migrants and refugees as the main target audience for the long-term process of integration. Migrant is a broader term for immigrant or emigrant, which refers to the situation in which a person leaves one country or region in order to settle down in another place, often searching for a better life. Although at the international level there is no universally accepted definition exists, the European Migration Network (EMN) provides the following definition of the migrant in the EU/EFTA context: “a person who either (i) establishes their usual residence in the territory of an EU/EFTA Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another EU/EFTA Member State or a third country; or (ii) having previously been usually resident in the territory of the EU/EFTA Member State, ceases to have their usual residence in the EU/EFTA Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months”.¹¹⁹ Meanwhile, refugee is “either a third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it”, and to whom the grounds of exclusion mentioned in the Art. 12

¹¹⁷ Eurostat. (2019, January). Migration and Migrant Population Statistics. [Web page].

¹¹⁸ Choquet S. (2017). Models of Integration in Europe. *European issues*, 449, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ European Migration Network. Glossary “Migrant”. [Web page].

of the Recast Qualification Directive.¹²⁰ Despite the differences in definitions (in legal terms, refugees are displaced persons who flee war or persecution across an international border, while migrants are not forced to flee but choose to do), both groups are addressed in the framework of integration policies in European countries, and there is no overall difference in terms of the availability of long-term measures for their integration.¹²¹

The EU Member States have placed integration high on the political agenda particularly since the middle of the 1990s, as the most relevant long-term solution for TCNs on their territories. The European integration policies are originated in 1999, when the European Council held a special meeting in Tampere and stated the necessity to find a common approach to integration with the Member States of TCNs who are lawfully resident in the Union, “granting them rights and obligations comparable to those of EU citizens”.¹²² The framework was strengthened by the introduction of the Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy in 2004, that followed by the Common Agenda for Integration which was presented by the Commission in 2005 and stayed in effect until 2010. Both documents emphasized the importance of a holistic approach to integration and contained a series of supportive instruments to assist the Member States in the formulation of the policies. The next milestone of the European Integration policies appeared in June 2016, when the Action Plan for the Integration of Third-country nationals was presented. The plan consisted of 50 measures to support the Member States and other actors in their efforts to promote the integration of migrants, and strongly emphasized the importance of education and training.

The EU continues to play an important role in assisting the Member States with their integration work, supporting, stimulating and coordinating countries actions and policies on integration. Just recently, in November 2020, the EC released a new Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027), which is built upon the previous document of 2016. The new Plan provides a more widened approach and sets out “inclusion for all” as the main principle. “The European way of life is an inclusive one. Integration and inclusion are key for people coming to Europe, for local communities, and the long-term

¹²⁰ Art. 2(d) of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive).

¹²¹ European Web Site on Integration (2020, March 31). What measures are in place to ensure the long-term integration of migrants and refugees in Europe.

¹²² Tampere European Council. (1999, October 15 And 16). Presidency Conclusions. Part III, Article 18

well-being of our societies and the stability of our economies. <...> everybody matters, that no one should be left behind, and that all should be able to effectively exercise their rights and have access to opportunities and security.”¹²³ Specific emphasis is made on the two pillars of integration which are early action and long-term investment. The Commission highlights the fact that integration does not stop after a certain period of time, so “mainstream policies are essential to supporting ongoing inclusion and meaningful participation” with the respective necessity for financial support in the areas of employment, education, social and health care, and housing.¹²⁴

Nonetheless, integration still stays controversial and not a clear-cut term, and experts notice that the overall concept lacks common understanding. In the CoE context, social integration “is anchored in the protection of individuals’ human dignity, non-discrimination and participation in the host societies”¹²⁵, while the EU emphasizes integration as a “dynamic” and “two-ways” process aimed at “mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of EU Member States”.¹²⁶ With all that, various requirements and conditions set out in national policies aimed at the integration of immigrants pose a number of challenges, especially in the light of human rights standards.

3.1. Integration models and key indicators

Becoming a key policy objective in the resettlement of migrants and refugees, integration has become one of the central topics of the public discussion. Since the 1980’s the idea of integration was associated with the existence of a particular model, which has to be followed when dealing with immigrants. And in many cases the very term ‘integration’ indicates a certain degree of acculturation, meaning that the State and the population expect migrants to integrate the culture of the majority, adopting their behaviour and

¹²³ European Commission. (2020, November 24). Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. [COM(2020) 758 final].

¹²⁴ *Idem*.

¹²⁵ Carrera S., Vankova Z. (2019). Human rights aspects of immigrant and refugee integration policies. A comparative assessment in selected Council of Europe member state [Issue Paper]. Council of Europe. p.7.

¹²⁶ Commission of the European Communities (2005, September 1). A Common Agenda for Integration Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union. [COM(2005) 389 final]. Action 1, section 2.

lifestyle to how the national majority lives and behaves.¹²⁷ Traditionally, the integration models have been divided into two main types: an “assimilation” model and a “multiculturalist” model.

The underlying principle of the assimilation model is the equal dignity of the citizens. This model is built on the universal policy of attributing the same rights to everyone with no regard to the differences, cultural or religious. On contrary, in the multiculturalist model, all citizens have to have access to a lifestyle in line with their culture and religion.¹²⁸ Hence, although the main goal of both models is to ensure that all citizens are equal, they differ on how they try to reach this goal: one is via rejection of all the differentiation, while another through promoting it. Both models have started to get implemented in the European countries in the late 1990s and since then the approach to integration has developed a lot. It is important that language and values are shared by the population, but at the same time principle of equality can achieve the goal only when there will be equality of opportunities, economic, social and cultural ones.

Today the idea of comprehensive integration policy is built not around one or another model, but rather on the idea of creating a common basis that consists of the key areas of activities or dimensions of integration with a number of respective indicators. The origins of these dimensions can be found in the 1951 Refugee Convention with its specification of social rights of refugees in terms of employment, education, housing and welfare.¹²⁹ Accordingly, the latest EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion identifies four main sectoral areas of integration: education and training, employment and skills, health and housing.¹³⁰

Education in all forms from childhood education to adult one, non-formal education and training provides migrants and refugees access to successful participation in the host society, provides them with skills and competences for future employment and serves as a powerful tool for building a more inclusive society. School environment gives migrant

¹²⁷ Choquet S. (2017). Models of Integration in Europe. *European issues*, 449, pp. 1-2.

¹²⁸ *Idem*, p.2

¹²⁹ United Nations. (1951, July 28). Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

¹³⁰ European Commission. (2020, November 24). Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. [COM(2020) 758 final].

children and children with a migrant background as well as their parents great support, by providing educational opportunities, enforcing communication with native children and their parents. Successful inclusive education prevents young people from violent behaviour and potentially helps to avoid discrimination and xenophobia, which always affect refugees and migrants.¹³¹ Education also helps to get to know the culture, values, and laws of the receiving society. No less important part of the educational dimension is learning the local language, which is one of the cornerstones of the integration process. Unlike some other aspects, the progress of language acquisition can be measured thanks to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which describes six levels of language proficiency (A1-C2).¹³² Language is the primary ground for participation in social life and labour market integration.

Employment has always been considered a core dimension of integration. Access to the labour market and the ability to get a job is crucial for immigrants to become an actual part of the host state's economic and social life, thus it is a crucial element in developing a sense of belonging to the host society.¹³³ Researches claim that successful resettlement and integration largely depend on the programmes that allow migrants and refugees to find a place in a new environment by transitioning their skills and competencies so that they can use them in a new situation.¹³⁴ Meanwhile, access to vocational training and apprenticeships can help newcomers to gain some missing skills and qualifications, and find social contacts useful for work.

Insufficient access to healthcare services and to housing prevent newcomers from the integration process, affecting all other parts of life. Both of them are closely related to the emotional and physical well-being of individuals: bad housing conditions enforce the division or segregation and can affect the mental health of people, while unequal access to health services pose even more risks. Migrants, and especially refugees, are in general exposed more to mental health risks due to past traumas, so an opportunity to get mental

¹³¹ Idem. P.9

¹³² McKinsey Global Institute. (2018). Europe's Refugees: Refocusing on Integration. [Briefing note].

¹³³ European Web Site on Integration (2020). What measures are in place to ensure the long-term integration of migrants and refugees in Europe?

¹³⁴ Ager A., Strang A. (2008). Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 21 (2), p. 171.

health help is crucial for them.¹³⁵ For these reasons, health and housing are core factors in integration and important resources for active engagement in a new society.

However, the overall integration framework is not limited just to this four core areas, that serve as the key means for integration, but can also include other domains of integration, as language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability, social links and bonds, rights and citizenship, etc.¹³⁶

3.2. Current approaches to integration in European states

The majority of refugees are coming to EU states with long-term plans. In a 2016 survey conducted by the Institute for Employment Research, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, and the German Socio-Economic Panel, 95 percent out of 4500 asylum-seekers said they planned to stay in Germany.¹³⁷ Hence, integration programs have to start as early as possible, providing support to migrants and facilitating their inclusion in a new environment in all ways. The EC supports the Member States across many policy areas, providing tools for coordination, funding and monitoring, but the national integration strategies vary inside the EU. So far, no Member State has met fully a range of refugees' and host communities' needs, and existing policies have to be developed more in order to overcome the challenges concerning employment, education, access to basic services and to social inclusion, making integration overall more efficient.

The analysis and summary of current integration policies in European countries with a focus on human rights is built upon the 2019 Issue Paper on Human Rights Aspects of Immigrant and Refugee Integration Policies.¹³⁸ The Issue Paper provides information on compliance of the field of integration with human rights standards of the Council of Europe and the legal standards of the EU. This study examines the integration policy

¹³⁵ European Commission. (2020, November 24). Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. [COM(2020) 758 final], p.1

¹³⁶ Ager A., Strang A. (2008). Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 21 (2), p. 170.

¹³⁷ McKinsey Global Institute. (2018). Europe's Refugees: Refocusing on Integration. [Briefing note].

¹³⁸ Carrera S., Vankova Z. (2019). Human rights aspects of immigrant and refugee integration policies. A comparative assessment in selected Council of Europe member state [Issue Paper]. Council of Europe.

examples from several countries as Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, Russia and the United Kingdom, by this providing a wide range of samples.

Regarding the national integration programmes that touch upon the above-mentioned areas of education and employment, the findings show that the majority of countries have introductory courses that facilitate integration for new-comers, but also impose integration requirements. To take as examples some EU states, Italy applies an agreement or so-called “integration pact” with foreigners who have received their first national residency permit, which stipulates certain commitments in reaching specific integration goals. Within two years they have to acquire Italian language proficiency at A2 level CEFR and show knowledge of Italian civic values (as the fundamental principles of the Constitution and civil life in Italy). The language courses are provided free of charge and a few free sessions about life in Italy and civic education are available under integration pacts. In case migrants do not meet the integration requirements, their residency permit can be revoked.

A similar system takes place in France, where TCNs enter into a contract of republican integration. The contract comprises language training which allows reaching A1 level, civic training and also some support in finding job opportunities (including vocational skills assessment system). If the requirements under contract are failed, there can be consequences for the multi-annual residence card.

Employment opportunities are also covered in Danish policy, where integration programmes include job training, while civic knowledge is integrated into language education. After signing the Integration Act, the courses are offered as a part of the migrant’s personal integration contract free of charge. However, since 2018 these language courses are not free if migrants are in Denmark to work, to study or as EU citizen. The introductory course is not mandatory, but foreigners have a nine-month deadline to pass the language test for A2 level. In case of failure, the residence card can be revoked.

Since 2005, the 600-hour compulsory German language course for non-German-speaking immigrants, including 30 hours of German law, history and culture, has become the

flagship of immigration policy in Germany.¹³⁹ Now the integration course includes language training and orientation course which is mandatory only for certain groups of migrants, depending on their country of origin and language proficiency level. However, the course is obligatory in case foreigners receive benefits, and in that case, non-attending the integration course can bring consequences for the extension of the residency permit. The language level to be reached is B1, and the course is free of fee only upon request on the financial grounds, otherwise, the cost is only partially covered by the state (around 50%).

In Sweden there exists an introduction program that consists of a free language course, civic education, and pre-employment training activities (e.g. work placements and internships). Employment service also prepares a personal integration plan, which is based on an individual's educational background and previous working experience. If TCNs fail to meet the requirements of the introductory plan, they may face a reduction in economic support.

As for Hungary, since 2016 when the new policy was introduced by the elected government, no mandatory or voluntary integration requirements on immigrants have been imposed. If before newly recognized refugees and beneficiaries of international protection had access to the integration contract system, currently no integration program is offered and no integration assistance provided to TCNs.

Therefore, an overview of integration courses shows that the main approaches in the majority of states limit programmes to the language training (introductory courses, mostly A1-A2 level on CEFR) and the civic training, and not all countries provide sufficient help in the field of employment. Despite the overall efforts and development of integration policies in the EU Member states, integration frameworks still stay one-dimensional, focusing only on one or two areas such as language acquisition or counselling. Besides, there is a lack of programs that assist migrants beyond short-term support following the arrival phase.¹⁴⁰ Not saying that only the State has responsibility for the whole process

¹³⁹ Greenspan I., Walk M., Handy F. (2018) Immigrant Integration Through Volunteering: The Importance of Contextual Factors. *Journal of Social Policy*, 47 (4).

¹⁴⁰ Wolffhardt A. (2019). Operationalizing a Comprehensive Approach to Migrant Integration. *ReSOMA [Discussion Policy Brief]*, p. 4.

of TCNs integration, it is important that while leading the integration policy, the government also attracts other actors from all sectors of society, enforcing multidimensional and multi-stakeholder approach to integration, with some follow-up measures.

CSOs and local authorities also provide voluntary practices for integration, while state obligatory integration processes and obligatory requirements, that becomes conditions for access to long-term residency and family reunification, pose some challenges in the light of human rights standards. National governments do not always provide sufficient support and do not take into account the specific needs and skills of those who may have different levels of literacy and education or those who may be in a position of vulnerability. In this dimension, the CoE insists on the necessity to take into account the specific circumstances of individuals and introduce an individualized and tailored approach which is crucial for ensuring effective and durable labour-market insertion by immigrants and refugees.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, the current integration policy should go beyond the assumption that most of these newly arrived asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants will eventually return to their countries of origin, and instead develop a reliable, long-term inclusive policy.¹⁴²

3.3. The need for complementary measures

In all of the states, the number of refugees has been increasing during the past years, and it is urgent to enhance the well-functioning aspects of integration, especially in the long-term aspect. Studies report that when migrants are not sufficiently integrated into their host communities, anti-immigration sentiment can arise in society, while the concerns about increased competition for jobs and housing can provoke defensive patterns or general social unrest among local residents.¹⁴³ It also becomes a great obstacle for

¹⁴¹ Carrera S., Vankova Z. (2019). Human rights aspects of immigrant and refugee integration policies. A comparative assessment in selected Council of Europe member state [Issue Paper]. Council of Europe, pp. 41-44.

¹⁴² Idem. P.47

¹⁴³ Greenspan I., Walk M., Handy F. (2018) Immigrant Integration Through Volunteering: The Importance of Contextual Factors. *Journal of Social Policy*, 47 (4), p. 804.

building an inclusive and diverse society: as showed the Diversity Barometer, which was created at the University of Uppsala, in 2018 three out of ten native Swedes have never interacted with non-European migrants.¹⁴⁴ Social contacts can be largely influenced by the negative perceptions of the host society about the migrants, and increase discriminatory practices, marginalization and segregation.

Integration is not some kind of a program that stops after a particular period of time, but it is a long term process aimed at economic and social inclusion. Successful long-term integration is tightly linked to the local level. As noticed in the OECD report on local integration of migrants and refugees, where migrants go and how they integrate into their new communities depends on the specifics of cities and regions.¹⁴⁵ For this reason, local authorities and communities themselves play a vital role in the process of integration. It is not always possible to use a particular model for integration that will work everywhere and for everyone, but it is crucial to study the features of the particular environment and take into account the needs of specific groups of people. By applying a multi-stakeholder approach with the involvement of local and regional authorities, employers, trade unions and civil society organizations, Member States will ensure that their integration policies “correspond to actual needs and circumstances and benefit migrants and refugees in an optimal way.”¹⁴⁶

Management of integration programmes on the local level, however, has to correspond with the central state policy and possess the funds. 2018 OECD survey of 72 cities, including nine large European cities (Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Paris, Rome, and Vienna) showed that about 90% of these 72 cities reported a lack of adequate coordination with the central government in this area; many cities mentioned experiencing structural problems in the delivery of public services and housing for migrants.¹⁴⁷ Searching for assistance and alternatives, a lot of them have tried more

¹⁴⁴ Ahmadi, F., Darvishpour, M., Ahmadi, N., & Palm, I. (2018). Diversity barometer : attitude changes in Sweden. Nordic Social Work Research.

¹⁴⁵ OECD. (2018). Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees. OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 5.

¹⁴⁶ EESC Study Group on Immigration and Integration (2020). The role of civil society organisations in ensuring the integration of migrants and refugees. [Project Summary Report]. Par. 1.4

¹⁴⁷ OECD. (2018). Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees. OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 18.

innovative approaches to integration services, including cooperation with local CSOs, that provide complementary integration practices (language, cultural and vocational training, skills assessment, internships and volunteer experience, etc.) as early as possible after the arrival of refugees and migrants.

However, in order for civil society groups to truly contribute to the integration policies, certain conditions have to be met. First of all, there should be established relationships between the state authorities and CSOs, including dialogue, mutual trust and cooperation. Secondly, in many cases, CSOs work is not recognized and they do not receive the necessary support and resources, which challenges their ability to provide services. In its report, EESC notices that in many situations the funding of CSO's activity is project-based, so instead of concentrating on the long-term progress, civil society "finds itself firefighting".¹⁴⁸ Finally, it is important that civil society takes some part in the designing of integration policies. Civic actors work at the grassroots level and can share their expertise so that authorities "learn what has worked or not in the past and design adequate solutions with them".¹⁴⁹ Civil projects also allow applying the individual need-based approach, taking into account the needs and skills of a particular person. Such practices enhance migrants' and refugees' participation, considering them not as members of a vulnerable group and passive recipients of the help (which may lead to even higher marginalization and overall negative sentiment among local residents), but as active contributors to the well-being of the society and local development.

This study argues that volunteering is one of such practices and an effective tool for integration of migrants and refugees, which is closely connected to at least two key dimensions of integration as employment and education. Besides, benefits of volunteer activities also correspond with such principles and values of the EU action plan as "inclusion for all", "targeted support where needed" (volunteer program can be designed to make the best use of the participant's skills), "maximizing EU added value through multi-stakeholder partnerships". Furthermore, volunteerism is a helpful practice for the elimination of discrimination and stigmatization that migrants and refugees often

¹⁴⁸ E EESC Study Group on Immigration and Integration (2020). The role of civil society organisations in ensuring the integration of migrants and refugees. [Project Summary Report]. Par. 4.8.

¹⁴⁹ OECD. (2018). Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees. OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 120.

experience in new societies. As was stated in Chapter I, volunteer activities create grounds for civic dialogue and social cohesion, they can raise social awareness and serve as one of the paths for education and training for all citizens. Therefore, migrant volunteering can become a good complementary measure to the major integration programmes, enhancing long-term inclusion and active participation of TCNs in the host societies. The phenomenon of migrant volunteering will be examined more thoroughly in the next chapter.

4. Conclusions

The protection of vulnerable groups is particularly important in the open democratic societies that promote integration and inclusion as their key principles. Everyone should have a right and an opportunity to participate in social and economic life, being protected from discrimination, xenophobia and stigmatization. Continued tolerance of discrimination against migrants in social, economic, cultural and political spheres directly obstructs integration efforts, contradicting with claims that migrants should integrate and increasing the risk of poverty and social exclusion. In other words, migrants can only ever integrate into countries to the extent that the majority of societies are willing to accept them.¹⁵⁰

At the same moment, migrants are not inherently vulnerable, neither it is a characteristic of the migrant group. The vulnerability appears in the social, economic, political contexts, with particular social and institutional relations. Therefore, emphasizing the vulnerability of migrant groups sometimes just put more accent on the specificity of their situation, which can increase discriminative practices and exclusion. Instead, it is crucial that migrants are granted all the opportunities in a new society, where they can contribute their skills and knowledge and actively participate.

Integration policies are meant to facilitate such participation, integrating newly arrived foreigners into society. The European Union strives to increase the labour market participation of immigrants and refugees on the same level as the majority population. Nevertheless, all the commitment and efforts, bringing new positive things still fall short, It is due to the fact that integration does not stop after a defined period of time, while mainstream policies do not support ongoing inclusion or follow-up to the primary courses. Additionally, the integration approaches need to be more targeted, helping newcomers to integrate quickly by making the best use of their background.

In that light, the potential of volunteering in the migrant integration policies should y examined. It can become a sustainable practice directed more at the long-term, providing

¹⁵⁰ Thibos C. (2015). Researching Third Country Nationals' Integration as a Three-way Process Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of Integration. Expert Survey Report. European University Institute.

social network and bonds, skill development and vocational training that might be needed to enter the job market. Volunteerism is also an effective tool for the inclusion of vulnerable groups and the elimination of discriminative practices.

CHAPTER III – Migrant integration through volunteering

1. Introduction

The 2018 UN State of the World's Volunteerism Report provides strong evidence that local volunteerism is a fundamental strategy and property of sustainable communities, while an enabling environment for volunteerism strengthens community resilience.¹⁵¹ Resilient communities, in turn, are not possible without diversity and inclusion of their members, especially the most vulnerable ones: “Resilience is strengthened only when the participation of all people is nurtured and supported”.¹⁵² Similar views are shared by the European Commission, which highlights the specific significance of integration which is “key for people coming to Europe, for local communities, and for the long-term well-being of our societies and the stability of our economies”.¹⁵³

Therefore, volunteerism, being one of the tools for building resilience and sustainability, should also be inclusive and diverse, attracting as active participants individuals with different backgrounds, and especially those who are often addressed as ‘vulnerable’ and are at risk of social exclusion. The engagement of less-privileged groups as direct contributors to social well-being and development can make an important change in the focus of their vulnerability, reducing the associated risks. From this perspective, migrant volunteering is a promising practice, which may complement integration policies by promoting social cohesion, non-discrimination, participation and skills-development. Most existing volunteer opportunities today view immigrants and refugees solely as beneficiaries of the volunteer activities carried out by native-born citizens. However, treating them as legitimate volunteers can be equally beneficial.

This chapter consists of two main parts. The first part is theoretical, it studies the phenomenon of migrant volunteering through the lens of a possible complementary measure for integration as was stated in the previous Chapter. The particular focus is

¹⁵¹ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 98.

¹⁵² *Idem.*

¹⁵³ European Commission. (2020, November 24). Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. [COM(2020) 758 final], p. 1.

made on obstacles that may arise for TCNs in their decision to undertake volunteer labour, as well as on the benefits of volunteering as derived from the various “capital” concepts, that were discussed in Chapter I of this paper. Volunteering cannot be forced, it cannot be an obligatory activity, but only a chosen action which facilitates integration and inclusion of newcomers in the receiving society, allowing them to actively participate and gain new social connection, skills and experiences. Moreover, the study argues that volunteering is more beneficial for more vulnerable groups of persons as migrant women and young people, who due to various social factors are more likely to be at risk of discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.

The second part is based on independent empirical research, which includes mapping of initiatives and good practices on immigrants and refugees volunteering around Europe, and their further review. The analysis of the role of these practices for integration policy was mainly carried out using reports produced during or at the end of the relevant projects.

2. Volunteering among migrants and refugees in Europe

2.1. Migrant volunteering for integration

In 1997 the UN initiated a Programme for Reform, calling all the bodies and agencies of the UN system to mainstream human rights in their projects and activities, and in 2003 issued a statement on the common understanding of the human rights-based approach among all UN entities.¹⁵⁴ Before that the development agencies had applied solely a ‘basic needs’ approach, identifying the needs of beneficiaries, and supporting the initiatives to improve the delivery of services, or advocating for their implementation. A human-rights approach focuses specifically on the rights of people, especially those who are most marginalized, excluded or discriminated against, empowering them to know and claim their rights and enhancing the accountability of duty-bearers to respect, protect and guarantee these rights. The shift from the needs-based approach to a rights-based one implies meaning that persons of concerns should not be solely perceived as passive recipients of aid and services, but regarded as active participants in the design and delivery of services addressed to them, their families, and their communities.¹⁵⁵ In that sense, migrant volunteering is a good example of such a shift of the paradigm: by means of volunteer work, immigrants and refugees can properly participate in the life of hosting society, implementing their knowledge and skills to provide help, and not just passively receive assistance, services, and goods from the benefactors.

As was mentioned in the previous chapters, volunteering also has been recognized as an effective tool for social inclusion and a helpful integration practice in many documents, including reports and plans of action among different European institutions. For example, in its recent Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, the EC encourages the Member States to “promote exchanges with the host societies through volunteering, sport, non-formal education, youth and cultural activities”¹⁵⁶ and promises to empower host communities by financing projects that “promote volunteering actions co-designed by

¹⁵⁴ United Nations Development Group (2003). *The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies*

¹⁵⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2014). *Speaking for Ourselves - Hearing Refugee Voices*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵⁶ European Commission. (2020, November 24). *Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027*. [COM(2020) 758 final], p. 22.

migrants and host communities”¹⁵⁷. This appeal highlights the EU’s concern over the lack of complementary integration measures and the need for more multi-stakeholder partnerships that are built at EU, national, regional and local levels. Besides central governmental programs, local authorities and civil initiatives play no less important role in enhancing immigrants’ social participation, and the promotion of volunteering opportunities is one of the measures that has to be used.

Membership in various organizations helps newcomers in gaining social capital that was lost during migration, create new social bonds, learn the local language, etc. Furthermore, the migrant population is highly heterogeneous with regard to the educational level, skills and qualifications of its members. They could share these competences with their host communities, at the same moment contributing to the diversity of the civil society and the multicultural environment. Currently, many organizations across Europe engage tens of hundreds of volunteers to help refugees communities and asylum-seekers and support their long-term inclusion, but rarely vice versa: migrant volunteering remains a rather neglected tool in integration policy and practice. One possible reason for this may be a certain difference in their volunteering behaviour between native-born citizens and third-country nationals.

In their study of the immigrant engagement in volunteering activities Greenspan, Walk and Handy examined the differences between immigrants and native-born volunteers in Germany.¹⁵⁸ Firstly, using the German Survey on Volunteering (GSV) they tested the differences between immigrants and native-born citizens in terms of the general “volunteer proclivity” and the differences of volunteer behaviour on a number of indicators among those who reported to volunteer (age of participants, areas of volunteer work and tasks, volunteer hours, etc.). Then the founded differences were analyzed in two ways: between the full sample and volunteers only, and using the propensity score matching method to reduce confounding. As immigrants constituted a relatively small proportion of 8 per cent out of the full sample, in this method immigrants were matched with the most compatible individuals from a native-born group based on several

¹⁵⁷ *Idem.*, P. 16

¹⁵⁸ Greenspan I., Walk M., Handy F. (2018) Immigrant Integration Through Volunteering: The Importance of Contextual Factors. *Journal of Social Policy*, 47 (4) pp. 803–825.

characteristics as gender, age, education and employment status, which allowed to compare similar individuals reducing the selection effect. The findings have shown that volunteering rates are significantly lower among migrants than within native-born individuals (25 percent and 36 percent respectively). However, according to the indicators, the two groups share similar volunteer behaviour. Immigrants tendency to volunteer was found to be influenced majorly by contextual factors like social networks and membership of organizations. As a result, authors suggest that as long as the difference is not strictly defined by values, attitudes or behaviours of individuals, there should be more emphasis on the contextual factors in policy design, which can positively influence the volunteer participation rates among immigrant groups.¹⁵⁹

Speaking about migrant volunteering and volunteering practices in the European context, two things have to be noticed. Firstly, although estimates show that over the past decade the number of active volunteers and volunteer organizations in Europe has increased, there still exists a difference between states and the attitude towards volunteer labour. If in some countries volunteerism is rooted as a long-standing tradition (over a third of young people in Ireland (42%), Denmark (39%) and the Netherlands (38%) have done a volunteering activity), in other states it has developed quite poorly (in Bulgaria, Greece and Sweden the respective numbers are 10%, 13% and 15%).¹⁶⁰ These indicators can have a particular impact on the involvement of TCNs in volunteer activities in their host communities, as well as on a ratio between immigrants and native-born volunteers. And the second point is that the researches show that migrants and refugees often face many barriers and sometimes experience discriminatory or inequitable practices that affect their choice to undertake volunteer labour in the host countries.¹⁶¹ That becomes one of the important factors when comparing the volunteering rates of TCNs to native-born citizens and should be taken into account when designing projects on the involvement of volunteers with a migrant background.

¹⁵⁹ Idem. Pp. 819, 821.

¹⁶⁰ Volunteering among immigrants – VAI. (2019). Orientation Manual for Volunteering. European Union, p. 13.

¹⁶¹ Greenspan I., Walk M., Handy F. (2018) Immigrant Integration Through Volunteering: The Importance of Contextual Factors. *Journal of Social Policy*, 47 (4), p. 819.

2.2. Challenges and advantages of volunteer work for migrants

2.2.1. Main obstacles

In general, there appear many more challenges in undertaking volunteer opportunities for migrants and refugees than there are for locals starting from a general attitude towards volunteer labour to personal obstacles. First of all, volunteering is perceived differently in different cultures. Although in many Western societies it is a common practice, for people from other traditions it may be understood differently. The problem here is that, as was mentioned earlier, volunteering does not always have a recognized definition or it has “a variety of negative connotations in some societies where “forced” volunteering has been a widespread practice”.¹⁶² Forced labour connotation is especially powerful in societies that have experienced communist regimes, as people often have been exposed to the obligatory “volunteer” work for the production of collective property.¹⁶³ This heritage still negatively impacts the promotion and development of the volunteer sector, so the emphasis on the image of volunteering as a meaningful activity, a value-based work and not simply as non-prestigious labour is an important part of the awareness-raising and training of potential participants.

Another significant step for presenting voluntary activities as a coherent integration and inclusion partway is to avoid an image of the substitute for real employment. Although in recent years the majority of researches have agreed that volunteering is labour rather than a leisure activity and definitions of volunteerism now include a reference to work, this work is unpaid and in many cases, it becomes a choice when engagement in paid work is unavailable.¹⁶⁴ And when volunteering turns into productive long-term labour instead of being an activity for widening social networks, learning, and developing skills, it becomes an unfair substitute for a paid job and rather serves marginalization and discrimination. For this reason, insisting too strongly on volunteer participation among migrants (as opposed to normal employment) or turning volunteerism into an obligation linking it to easier access to the social benefits risks to reinforce “a paternalistic approach

¹⁶² International Labour Organization (2011). Manual on the measurement of volunteer work. International Labour Office, Geneva, p.11.

¹⁶³ European Volunteer Centre (2012). Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe

¹⁶⁴ Overgaard C. (2019). Rethinking Volunteering as a Form of Unpaid Work. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 48 (1), p. 136.

to integration and discounting immigrants' skills and experience, or even taking advantage of barriers they may face in local labour markets or a lower awareness of their rights".¹⁶⁵ Therefore, encouraging volunteer action as a part of the integration project means to avoid any correlations with simply unpaid labour, which is exposed to less-privileged persons, or with an urgent fill-in for deficient integration policies. To keep the attractiveness and effectiveness of this practice, migrant volunteering has to stay a freely chosen activity, which, moreover, is specific and complies with the individual integration plan built around the knowledge, skills and aspirations of a newcomer.

When arriving in a new country, immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers go through a strong emotional, social and economic distress, defined by a difficult process of acculturation.¹⁶⁶ The lack of knowledge on local social and cultural norms or overall distrust of a foreign country and culture often prevent the choice to volunteer in the host country, or in general, makes it uncomfortable to go beyond the asylum reception centre and the well-known local refugee community.¹⁶⁷ Local language creates no less barrier to potential participation in volunteering opportunities. Such resettlement problems and adjustment to a new society lead to a lower level of civic participation compared to the locals who know the "rules of the game".

Among other obstacles for volunteer participation among people with a migrant background, UNHCR reports a range of economic reasons (e.g. lack of money for public transport) and language barriers or other difficulties in communicating.¹⁶⁸ Although volunteer work is an unpaid activity, in some cases participants receive a stipend as a form of reimbursement for their expenses. So while there is a certain distinction between subsistence and remuneration¹⁶⁹, coverage of at least transport and other reasonable expenses that may appear while undertaking activity can become a deciding factor in the

¹⁶⁵ Patuzzi, L. (2020). *Driving Migrant Inclusion through Social Innovation: Lessons for cities in a pandemic*. Brussels and Geneva: Migration Policy Institute Europe and International Organization for Migration., p. 13.

¹⁶⁶ Greenspan I., Walk M., Handy F. (2018) *Immigrant Integration Through Volunteering: The Importance of Contextual Factors*. *Journal of Social Policy*, 47 (4), p. 805.

¹⁶⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2014). *Speaking for Ourselves - Hearing Refugee Voices*, p.50.

¹⁶⁸ *Idem*. P. 50.

¹⁶⁹ International Labour Organization (2011). *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work*. International Labour Office, Geneva.

choice if to volunteer. In many cases, people also simply do not have free time to dedicate it to any social activities, as they have full-time employment, have to look after their children or still await reunification with their families, experience troubles with housing or go through time- and energy-consuming paper procedures.

Furthermore, some cannot volunteer because of disabilities, mental conditions, etc. Mental health problems and traumas, sustained during the migration journey or while living in limbo waiting for the asylum application to be processed, can also turn into an obstacle to communication between people, which is a regular component associated with volunteering activities.¹⁷⁰

2.2.2. Benefits

Unquestionably, a lot of migrants and refugees need the help provided by local native-born volunteers, especially in the primary stages of arrival in a new country, applying for asylum, waiting for the documents to be ready, adjusting to the rules of a new environment, etc. However, this practice should work both ways as volunteering by migrants and not for them brings a lot of advantages to the newcomers themselves and the local communities. With the support from governments, volunteer action can be an effective tool for inclusion and provide missing complementary part to the integration policies, filling in the gaps of the current programs that are based majorly on civic education and basic language training. The benefits of volunteerism for migrants and people with the migrant background will be examined better through the various “capital” concepts that were discussed earlier.

From the socio-economic aspect, volunteer activities help to restore human and social capital, which often get lost during the migration process. The possibility to replenish social capital via volunteer work is, perhaps, one of the most important sides of migrant volunteerism. Accommodation in a new society means a lack of familiar social connections, networks and overall social connectedness, which, in its turn, leads to a

¹⁷⁰ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2014). *Speaking for Ourselves - Hearing Refugee Voices*, p.50.

greater decline of participation in social and civic life and higher risks of exclusion. Hence, in order to occupy a stable position in the new community social ties are required, to enhance both ‘bonding’ social capital (within a like-minded group) and ‘bridging’ social capital (within other groups or broader community).¹⁷¹ Volunteering is one of the ways to find these new connections and also a mean for civic engagement participation in local public life, which is one of the key dimensions for the entire integration process.

In terms of human capital, which represents knowledge, skills and abilities derived from education and training, volunteer activities give a chance to learn new skills, receive knowledge in a particular field and gain professional experience, which can be a deciding factor when searching for a job. Additionally, previous research suggests that connections with native-born citizens through volunteering can positively affect labour market integration.¹⁷² Communication with locals also helps to learn the local language or to improve the knowledge gained at the language course provided as a part of the integration contract with the State. In the European context, language skills are viewed as a component of human capital that can produce benefits in the labour market, such as higher wages, or better employment opportunities.¹⁷³

According to P. Bourdieu, linguistic capital is a form of cultural capital, as linguistic abilities predetermine a person’s position in society.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, language is a certain cultural acquisition, linked to cultural abilities and competencies. By volunteering together with local residents, migrant volunteers not only practice the local language but get to know more about the social norms and values of their receiving society, traditions and local culture. It is equally important that in diverse inclusive societies such learning cannot be a one-way process when foreigners simply assimilate to the hosting culture. Cultural diversity requires mutual learning with an effective dialogue, which eventually builds more understanding and trust within communities. Speaking about cultural and religious backgrounds, sharing experiences and ideas is also a crucial part of the de-

¹⁷¹ Handy, F., Greenspan, I. (2009). Immigrant Volunteering: A Stepping Stone to Integration? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38(6), p. 960.

¹⁷² Kanas, A., Van-Tubergen, F., Van der Lippe, T. (2011). The role of social contacts in the employment status of immigrants: A panel study of immigrants in Germany. *International Sociology*, 26, (1), 95–122.

¹⁷³ Gazzola, M., Mazzacani, D. (2019). Foreign language skills and employment status of European natives: evidence from Germany, Italy and Spain. *Empirica* 46, pp. 713–740.

¹⁷⁴ Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Harvard University Press, 302 p.

stigmatization of migrants and people with a migrant background and the elimination of discriminative practices against them.

Migrant volunteer action, as value-based labour and an opportunity for newcomers to provide their services for the well-being of the host community, is utile for building social trust and mitigating some of the negative sentiments that exist around the topic of immigrant integration. Scholars suggest that such activities can help immigrants and refugees to stop being seen as welfare abusers and free-riders.¹⁷⁵ Their overall active participation in the local economies, politics, art and sports sectors, public institutions, and volunteering helps to produce new patterns, collective experiences and defeat the stereotypes. The OECD report recommends that migrants engagement in their local community life “can help to demonstrate their positive contributions and to overcome trust barriers”.¹⁷⁶

Migrant volunteering can be beneficial when taking place in any sector, but more importantly, it should be defined by the skills, knowledge, and needs of the volunteer. In this way, their talents and skills will be put to great use, while migrants will reform their social identity and go through the integration process, which has individual specificities according to different individual backgrounds. The problems can only be solved if the newcomers are recognized as individuals, and not as a homogeneous group for which the very same measures are provided.¹⁷⁷

2.3. Women and youth

Speaking about the specificities of different persons, within all the migrants and refugees group volunteering opportunities can be more beneficial for some more vulnerable subgroups of persons, as, for instance, women and young people. Both are highlighted in

¹⁷⁵ Greenspan I., Walk M., Handy F. (2018) Immigrant Integration Through Volunteering: The Importance of Contextual Factors. *Journal of Social Policy*, 47, (4), p. 805.

¹⁷⁶ OECD. (2018). *Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees*. OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 36.

¹⁷⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Bureau for Europe. (2013). *A New Beginning: Refugee Integration in Europe*.

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as those to be especially taken into account when planning developmental programs and creating inclusive opportunities, jobs, training and livelihoods.¹⁷⁸ Women and youth are exposed to the risks of poverty, violence and discrimination, especially when being migrants or refugees, while the importance of their integration into society cannot be underestimated.

According to research, women play a key role in the integration process, and their willingness to integrate often determines the success of integration for the whole family.¹⁷⁹ However, many of them, on contrary, are left out of integration measures because of the lack of childcare and the inability to attend courses. In the majority of cases, women's lives are defined by their husband's migration project, so this recreates traditional gender roles of the country of origin and makes it difficult for women to balance working responsibilities and taking care of their families.¹⁸⁰ Women are also more likely to uptake the “informal volunteering” activities in their communities, which are often regarded as an extension of their domestic roles.¹⁸¹ Although being very time-consuming, these duties do not bring the same results as formal volunteering opportunities. In addition, based on Eurostat data, when getting a job in a new country, migrant women also turn out to be overqualified for their jobs than native women (40,7% for migrant women and 21,1% for native-born in 2019).¹⁸²

In many European countries, there already exist specific projects aimed at women engagement in receiving societies, supported by authorities or run by local NGOs. However, there is a great need for further development of formal and job-related opportunities. In the first place, all the EU Member States should provide access to childcare facilities and schools, so that women have an opportunity to develop their professional skills, apply already available qualifications and integrate into the labour

¹⁷⁸ United Nations. (2013). A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development [Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda].

¹⁷⁹ EESC Study Group on Immigration and Integration (2020). The role of civil society organisations in ensuring the integration of migrants and refugees. [Project Summary Report]. Par. 4.6.

¹⁸⁰ European Network of Migrant Women, Yilmaz S., Zobnina A., Bondarenko M. (2018). Volunteering: Perceptions, Experience and Barriers among Migrant Women, NGOs and Private Sector, p. 6.

¹⁸¹ United Nations Volunteers. (2018). The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), p. 46.

¹⁸² European Commission. (2020, November 24). Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. [COM(2020) 758 final], p. 7.

market. Furthermore, more programs that will facilitate this inclusion are needed. Volunteering, for example, can bring real benefits to female migrants in terms of learning the local language and understanding new culture, creating new social connections, and accessing resources. But besides, volunteering activities can also serve as a mechanism for acquiring new professional skills and experience, facilitating employment. Meanwhile, studies of activities proposed by CSOs show that the majority of these organizations provide informal volunteering not clearly defined with an agreement, and only a few NGOs offer professional tasks to volunteers, helping to gain competences transferable into labour market skills.¹⁸³

The same applies to developing the capacity of young people. The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion outlines that young migrants (aged 18-24) born outside the EU were much more likely (21%) than native-born young people (12.5%) to be “neither in employment nor in education and training”, especially migrant girls and young women (25.9%).¹⁸⁴ Moreover, in 2019 40% of foreign-born young people compared to 24% of native-born young people are at the risk of being in poverty or socially excluded.¹⁸⁵ Through non-formal learning and skills training, the youth sector and social enterprises can help young migrants and refugees to get prepared for their future career, enabling a smoother path from education to employment. Volunteering activities give experiences that are often required when applying for jobs, so economic integration is also tightly linked to the projects aimed at personal growth and acquiring professional competencies.

To start a new life in a new society for young people is to be socially included in their specific surroundings and the local community.¹⁸⁶ It is especially crucial in the case of unaccompanied minors, who are under 18 years old and arrived in a new country alone, without parents or any legal guardians. If while gaining permits and legal status they are

¹⁸³ European Network of Migrant Women, Yilmaz S., Zobnina A., Bondarenko M. (2018). Volunteering: Perceptions, Experience and Barriers among Migrant Women, NGOs and Private Sector. SMART Volunteering for Migrant Women, p. 14.

¹⁸⁴ European Commission. (2020, November 24). Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. [COM(2020) 758 final], p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ Eurostat. (2021, January). Migrant integration statistics - socioeconomic situation of young people. [Web page].

¹⁸⁶ Danish Red Cross and British Red Cross (2013). Amir's Volunteering, A study on volunteering as pathway to social inclusion for young asylum seekers and refugees - Opportunities and barriers in a European context, p. 6.

surrounded by institutional structures and services around them (as, for instance, asylum centres after it the integration largely depends on the civil society and local communities with the respective activities and opportunities, that start to define daily lives of young people. At this stage volunteering action with its capacity to build social relations and create networks plays an important role in the integration process.

Moreover, a failure to adequately integrate young migrants and refugees into host society means creating a more disadvantaged and disaffected population which can result in “a massive waste of resources, both for the individuals concerned themselves and more generally for <our> economy and society”.¹⁸⁷ Young people are the ones to work for social and economic growth, challenge existing social norms and values. If the future society will be inclusive and resilient depends on them, thus, empowering young people through social and civic participation, teaching them principles of non-discrimination and equality, providing opportunities for leadership and decision-making is an essential investment in social development.

An important distinction of volunteerism is that normally volunteer activities do not require full-time occupation or high qualifications, which is highly valuable for those who have other responsibilities or lack professional skills, yet preparing for the future career, developing both hard and soft skills. The most important is that such opportunities are not abused by employers or volunteer organizations by getting no-cost labour and taking advantage of participants' skills and education without appropriate compensation. The following part will present several examples of migrant volunteer action, and try to assess their advantages and drawbacks.

¹⁸⁷ European Commission (2016, June 7). Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals. [COM (2016) 377 final].

3. Migrant volunteering: mapping good practices across Europe

Volunteering programmes and activities can be implemented at various levels (e.g., local, national) and by various actors (government, NGOs, social enterprises corporations, educational institutions) or multiple stakeholders. Handy and Greenspan notice that despite an implementation level, it is crucial that volunteer organizations or communities manage to create a migrant-welcoming environment, which actually enables immigrants and refugees to undertake volunteer opportunities.¹⁸⁸ That is to say, there exists a direct link between the individual's free will to volunteer and the design of institutional structures that policies could improve. Therefore, to promote volunteering as an integration measure, it is important that organizations do not merely involve volunteers with any background, and migrants among others, but create targeted projects, facilitating TCN's choice to undertake volunteering opportunity.

Around Europe there exist a number of practices that promote and implement migrant volunteering. Collecting these good practices helps to learn more about successful and innovative European projects that are targeted at migrants' and refugees' support and integration, it enhances the development of policy-making, and raise awareness of the general public. Collected initiatives can provide further ideas on how to address particular topics or beneficiary groups, show new methods that can be replicated by other stakeholders and offer effective tools for integration and inclusion.

In order to map good practices on the implementation of migrant volunteering across Europe, first of all, the list of integration practices provided by the European Web Site on Integration (EWSI)¹⁸⁹ was studied. As of February 2021, the EWSI has collected over 1200 good practices, where good practice implies “strategies, approaches and/or activities that have been shown through research and evaluation to be effective, efficient, sustainable and/or transferable, and to reliably lead to the desired result”.¹⁹⁰ Among these initiatives, there are some projects that state promotion of volunteering among migrant communities or employment of volunteers with migrant backgrounds via volunteering as

¹⁸⁸ Handy, F., Greenspan, I. (2009). Immigrant Volunteering: A Stepping Stone to Integration? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38(6), pp. 956–982.

¹⁸⁹ European Web Site on Integration. Integration practices.

¹⁹⁰ European Web Site on Integration (2014, May 28). What are 'good practices'?

their primary goal. All the listed practices were examined, mainly by searching the key term ‘volunt’ on the page of each practice and the subsequent checking of the description for compliance with the research topic.

Additionally, several good practices were found as they are mentioned in other reports and publications that have been used in the preparation of this study. For example, the “Volunteering for Social Inclusion – VSI” project, run by Danish Red Cross and British Red Cross (see p. 2.2.1.) and “VAPAA – Volunteering in Refugee Work” project were discovered thanks to UNHCR publication “Speaking for Ourselves - Hearing Refugee Voices” (2014); the project “Refu Interim” (p. 2.2.5.) is mentioned in the publication “Driving Migrant Inclusion through Social Innovation” (2020); “SMART – Volunteering for Female Migrants” (p. 2.2.3.) was found while examining projects funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). After that, all the collected projects were selected under the criteria of good practice.

3.1. Selection criteria

The EWSI collects good practices through submissions of specific templates, which contains all the necessary information to evaluate if an approach or activity suits the definition of good practice and to assess whether it can adapt to other contexts. For the integration practice to be eligible, it has to meet several conditions:

- it has a clear context description;
- it has a clear description of the objectives and purposes;
- it has a clear description of the actions/activities involved;
- it has to be at least one year old.

Furthermore, for the practice to be selected, it has to be relevant and appropriate in terms of meeting the identified needs and engaged stakeholders and target group; it should demonstrate sufficient indication of transferability, which is based on whether the activity has continued after the initial stage, if it attracts structural funding and support from new

sponsors, or generates its own resources. The good practice should also show potential for replication in different contexts.¹⁹¹

The EWSI selection criteria, thereby, was used as an initial one. In addition to it, when selecting good practices I primarily took into account the goals of each project and its main target audience, from the perspective of migrant volunteerism. First of all, to be considered as a good practice in the framework of this study, the project has to identify migrants and refugees not as passive recipients of voluntary service, but as active providers and agents of social change. In other words, proposed volunteering activities have to be performed by migrants and refugees, with explicit recognition of volunteer action as a tool for integration and inclusion. Secondly, in the research scope were included formal projects that target migrant volunteers and volunteers with a migrant background, creating grounds for their access to volunteering opportunities or providing direct volunteer activities that are designed specifically for them.

In my research, I examined relevant projects that are both ongoing and no longer active. In case the project has been finished, it is preferable that report on the project activity was prepared by the end of it, with recommendations for other practices and future initiatives. It is also important if the project report is available in English, or several European languages, so that experience and results of the initiative, its pros and cons, can be easily accessed, analyzed and used for future work by other organizations. Lack of the full project report did not influence selection if the project is ongoing, especially if it is relatively new, and there exist other resources that provide basic information, goals, and interim statistics (as, for instance, description, aims and main numbers on the project's page on the EWSI, or the AMIF factsheet compilation¹⁹²), which allows estimating its efficacy and replicability.

Geographical coverage of the projects and initiatives include the EU Member States and also the United Kingdom. The decision to include the latter into the scope is based on the premises that the Brexit process occurred on 31 January 2020 (with a transition period prolonged until 31 December 2020), so before that the United Kingdom used to be a

¹⁹¹ European Web Site on Integration (2014, May 28). What are 'good practices'?

¹⁹² Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. (2020). AMIF Factsheet Compilation.

member state of the EU. Therefore, as long as this research includes also archived projects, some of them were funded by the European Union institutions, while others came as a result of the collaboration between organizations from the current EU Member states and the UK.

As a result, fifteen projects carried out over the past decade (from 2010 until today) were selected as good practices.

3.2. Key indicators and assessment

Although all the selected practices recognize volunteering as a tool for the integration of migrants and refugees, they cover different types of initiatives and activities. Some of the projects are introduced and implemented by a single organization, while others run by multiple stakeholders across the EU; some of them are more prescriptive, designed to create guidelines for implementation of migrants volunteering activities and capacity-building, while others provide TCNs with direct volunteering opportunities. For this reason, it was complicated to build a consistent evaluation criteria system for all the projects. However, to conduct the overall assessment the following key indicators were introduced:

- ‘Geographic area’
- ‘Duration of the project’
- ‘Type of activity’
- ‘Target beneficiary groups’
- ‘Area of implementation’
- ‘Project executors’
- ‘Source of funding’
- ‘Project overview’
- ‘Outcomes’

‘Geographic area’ allows estimating the number of national, bilateral and EU-wide projects among the selected practices. Ten projects were found to be national, one project

organized by two National Societies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was bilateral, while the other four were designed and run in collaboration between several European countries.

‘Duration of the project’ shows the years when activity was carried out, so it is possible to count the number of active and inactive projects. The findings showed that, first of all, eight out of fifteen practices were held before 2015, so before the increased influx of refugees and migrants and Europe's refugee crisis. Secondly, only two chosen projects are still active: Agricultural cooperative for asylum seekers in Ormea, which started in 2015, and the Refu Interim project which has been active since 2017.

Three main ‘types of activity’ were identified as a research project, capacity building program, and volunteering opportunity, which stands for the direct volunteering activity. As was noticed, all three types often overlap, approaching migrant volunteerism from different sides.

‘Target groups’ of beneficiaries were identified according to the definition of a particular practice. They include all migrants and refugees (also when addressed as TCNs in the projects description), asylum-seekers, migrant women, young or old people, local communities. Six projects out of fifteen stated to work with more vulnerable subgroups out of all migrants and refugees community: three selected projects address directly young migrants (“Germany: Get up, move yourself!”, “Volunteering for Social Inclusion – VSI”. “The Welcome Digital project”) two practices are aimed at female migrants (“ACE - Active Citizenship and English” and “SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants”), and one project used to work with older people and children with a migrant background (“Our grandmothers and grandfathers sing and play in many languages”).

According to the projects’ objectives, five main ‘areas of implementation’ of migrant volunteering emerged as more frequent: ‘education and training’, ‘employment’, ‘social participation’, ‘social network’, ‘raising awareness’. These areas correspond with the benefits of volunteer actions for TCNs that were discussed earlier. ‘Education and training’ stands for language learning, skills development and the educational needs of participants. ‘Employment’ indicates practices that address the issue of labour market integration and imply a transition from volunteering to employment. ‘Social

participation’ area corresponds with civic participation of refugees and migrants in community life and public spaces. ‘Social network’ highlights projects that are aimed at building more social connections and bonds, sharing experience and overcoming cultural gaps within TCNs and with the local population. ‘Raising awareness’ indicates practices that affect cross-cultural understanding between TCNs and the broader community, including such activities as integration courses with intercultural elements, public talks aimed at visibility and recognition of migrants’ and refugees’ experience, anti-discrimination and human rights campaigns, etc. The majority of discovered practices implements activities connected with awareness-raising, social networking and social participation. However, only four practices have directly addressed the employment issue, while integration in the labour market was recognized as one of the main potential benefits of the volunteer action.

According to the list of project executors, the initiatives on migrants volunteering were mostly designed and implemented by National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement or local NGOs. In some research-based projects the Universities and research institutions were also involved. In the list of good practices there are three initiatives that engaged local municipalities: Piraeus Municipality (Greece) in the project Volunteering Among Immigrants (VAI), Municipality of Ormea (Italy) leads the “Agricultural cooperative for asylum seekers in Ormea” program, and the City of Ghent (Belgium) was originally engaged in the project “Refu Interim”.

As for the ‘source of funding’, four out of seven recent projects that took place after 2015, were funded by the EC via Erasmus+ Programme or the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Here I presume that sources of funding affect the duration of the projects, as long as the EU financial support allocated to organizations as a grant for specific purposes of a specific program. I will elaborate more on this topic in the Outcomes section.

All the selected practices with respective indicators can be consulted in the table in Annex 1, brief projects overviews and outcomes in Annex 2.

Besides, five practices were analyzed and assessed in more details. These practices represent a different type of activities and areas of implementation, as well as the target

groups. However, all of them in one or another way emphasize the importance of volunteerism for integration and inclusion and approach the phenomenon of migrant volunteerism from different angles. In the analysis of these projects, I tried to pay attention to their main advantages, as well as if the practice addresses the obstacles that might be faced by participants when undertaking the activity: whether the project provides a tailored approach, identifying skills and talents of their volunteers individually, whether there is a pre-activity training (if applicable) to facilitate integration in volunteerism, or any coverage of expenses (e.g. transportation refund), etc. Also, I had previously suggested that volunteering activities may be more beneficial for migrant women and young people than other groups of persons, so when evaluating projects, special attention was paid to the respective focus on these two subgroups.

3.2.1. Volunteering for Social Inclusion (VSI)

The Volunteering for Social Inclusion (VSI) project is an experimental comparative study of volunteer action as a possible way for social inclusion of young people. It took place between September 2011 and September 2013, and was carried out by the Danish Red Cross and the British Red Cross with the financial support from the EU. The project's target group consisted of young people between the ages of 17 and 25 in Denmark and Scotland and young refugees of the same age who have recently received residence permits. The VSI project also gave a specific focus on young people's transition from asylum status to refugee status, especially when they are unaccompanied minors, outlining the significance of voluntary service in creating "a balance between new refugees' institutional and social affiliation in civic society".¹⁹³

The project was divided in three main phases in addition to the initial research to build the background for developing further activities. It included the development and execution of interactive workshops for young refugees with focus on the opportunities of volunteerism, the cooperation with local organizations for monitoring young people's

¹⁹³ Danish Red Cross and British Red Cross (2013). *Amir's Volunteering, A study on volunteering as pathway to social inclusion for young asylum seekers and refugees - Opportunities and barriers in a European context*, p. 7.

specific participation in volunteering activities followed by the qualitative interviews with participants, and analysis of the experiences gathered during the project by stakeholders in Denmark and Scotland with following recommendations. In total, 135 young asylum seekers and refugees took part in the VSI project workshops in both countries, out of which 84 showed interest in volunteering following the workshops phase and 54 tried voluntary service through the VSI project. Volunteering activities included both short-term (1 day) activities and long term voluntary service, working with sports associations, cooking and catering for music festivals and volunteer cafes, sewing clothes for children of poor families, visiting the elderly in care homes, volunteering at recycle stores and community gardening.

The VSI worked a lot with the participants reflections on the social inclusion and volunteering, their motivation and obstacles for voluntary service. The assessment of the barriers that are often faced by young refugees and asylum seekers (as well as their differences) when they choose to volunteer allowed to take into account individual resources, competences and motivation, tailoring the approach. Among the common motivation factors there were named language, social life, cultural and competencies, quality of life. Although, for instance, in Danish context volunteering was found to be a much greater motivation for making new social connections, while in Scotland people were more driven by the development of professional competences for future work.¹⁹⁴ The obstacles, meanwhile, at least partially explained the drop-out rate from 84 workshop participants who were interested in volunteerism to 54 people who actually started to volunteer. As the study highlights, motivation can be as well the obstacle: this especially relates to the language factor. Time issues, personal and psychological problems, lack of access to economic, social or housing support have also influenced the participants' decisions.¹⁹⁵

The VSI has also become one of the pilot comprehensive projects which explicitly recognized volunteering as a tool for migrant integration and young refugees as “active providers” of the voluntary service¹⁹⁶, at the same moment giving access to the practical

¹⁹⁴ Idem, p. 36.

¹⁹⁵ Idem, p.41.

¹⁹⁶ Idem, pp. 6-8.

involvement to the young people. Overall, it has covered different areas of implementation as ‘education and training’, ‘social participation’, ‘awareness raising’, and ‘social network’. However, as long as the main aim of the project was to study the effects of participation in volunteering activities on social inclusion (according to scheme (voluntary work > social engagement > social inclusion), insufficient attention was paid to the labour market integration and market-transferable skills that can be acquired via voluntary service. Issuing recommendations to the governments, EU institutions and organizations, the final project report advises that young asylum seekers and refugees have to have access to social and economic support, language tuition, and information on the opportunities, but it never mentions a direct correlation between volunteering activities and the future employment.

3.2.2. The Digital Welcome Project

The Digital Welcome project’s aim is to enhance digital skills of young refugees and asylum seekers aged 16 to 30, by this facilitating their social integration in the European communities. Funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), this two-years project took place from 2017 to 2019 in five European countries, including Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain. By the end of the project, the final report with the best practices from seven local organizations was produced in order to make an overview of all run activities and take stock of “what is already out there” in terms of creative ICT workshops for vulnerable groups.

The project has resulted in a 60-hours training program which consisted of four modules: introduction to coding, digital storytelling, digital journalism, soft skills and communication. With these modules the Digital Welcome aimed to five objectives as organization of creative IT workshops to boost young migrants language, digital and soft skills; fostering inclusion through volunteering; coaching participants as mentors and animators; providing young people with digital storytelling instruments; and empowering them to motivate peers and raise awareness.¹⁹⁷ In two years, over 120 young TCNs took

¹⁹⁷ Digital Welcome Project. (2019). Best Practices Report, pp. 6-7.

part in the training, getting the opportunity to practice local language, enhance digital skills and broaden social networks. To become volunteers, participants of the program were coached by trainers from partner organizations, so after they could become mentors and conduct the workshops. Volunteers taught other groups of migrants and European-born citizens such skills as how to use computer, how to create and edit a video, etc.¹⁹⁸ However, the exact number of TCN volunteers is not mentioned in neither report nor website of the project.

Although the program did not explicitly cover the area of employment, its clear advantage is in the focus on the training of marketable hard skills as digital competences, so as soft skills to the disadvantaged target groups. As for obstacles that was faced by the project, there were stated difficulties in the participants recruitment from organizations as the Red Cross and reception centers due to complex administrative procedures.¹⁹⁹

3.2.3. SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants

The SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants is another AMIF-funded project, which was carried out between January 2018 and December 2019 in collaboration between organizations from six European countries coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce of Seville: Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom. The SMART project is another example of targeting more vulnerable groups of persons; in this case, migrant women. The practice was aimed at the development, testing and implementation of innovative practices that will allow active participation of female TCNs in the socio-economic life of receiving societies. To achieve that, the project has involved for cooperation two more target groups: voluntary CSOs/NGOs and organizations from the business sector.

The project had started from the initial research, which established the main challenges faced by migrant women when transitioning into European society, and analyzed the companies' perceptions of migrants engagements as well as NGOs' views on the migrant

¹⁹⁸ Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. (2020). AMIF Factsheet Compilation.

¹⁹⁹ Idem.

volunteering. In creating the methodology, SMART engaged 55 TCN women, who had of different ethnic background and were (high) skilled, 31 CSOs with experience in working with volunteers and 90 small and medium business organizations. The findings have shown that majority of NGOs lack recruitment strategies to outreach female migrants or have ethical considerations about unpaid labour preferring to engage interns supported by universities. They also rarely use offer professional tasks for employed volunteers, providing unorganized volunteer opportunities, so it may be difficult to acquire marketable skills.²⁰⁰ As for the business sector, most companies mentioned language barriers, lack of relevant skills and difference in cultures as the main barrier to work with migrant women. SMART's report specifically highlights "striking lack of diversity skills" inside the business community, lack of sufficient knowledge and awareness on the diverse groups in Europe by the private companies.²⁰¹ Moreover, volunteering opportunities are not so common in sector, as long as only the Spanish law out of six countries allows for-profit companies to engage with volunteers.

Based on the conducted research, SMART proceeded with the Volunteering Awareness Training for partner voluntary organizations, NGOs and social workers, as well as business advisors in order to train and recruit trainers, who, in their turn, would guide migrant women on their journeys. A total of 127 people participated in the training sessions in all countries.²⁰² Among the SMART's innovation tools the personal development training called Circles™ is to mention. This activity allowed migrant women to establish a broader social network, by bringing them together and allowing to share personal stories and inspiring each other. Such diversity circles were also practiced with business associations and NGOs.

At the end of the project an online platform with all the learning materials was built. The SMART also created an awareness campaign, share the stories of migrant women as role models for the European societies. Although the project explicitly addressed the market integration issue, the outcome of these efforts stays unclear. The website of the project

²⁰⁰ European Network of Migrant Women, Yilmaz S., Zobnina A., Bondarenko M. (2018). Volunteering: Perceptions, Experience and Barriers among Migrant Women, NGOs and Private Sector. SMART Volunteering for Migrant Women, p. 15.

²⁰¹ Idem. P. 20

²⁰² SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants. (2019). Pilot Testing WP2 – A4. Comparative Report, p.5.

contains several success stories on taking part in voluntary service and finding job thanks to volunteering by female TCN participants in Europe, however no certain statistics on the participants' employment after the project is presented. It makes more difficult to measure the success of the practice and use its results for further project implementation.

3.2.4. Volunteering Among Immigrants (VAI)

The fourth practice is called Volunteering Among Immigrants (VAI) and it was delivered between 2018 and 2019. It is another AMIF funded initiative, which was run by ten partners from different countries (Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy) and from different fields (academia, civil society, local government and media). The project emphasizes that migrant volunteerism can be both instrument for and an indicator of integration.

As the previous project, the VAI had started from initial research on volunteering stage, which resulted in the production of four national reports on volunteering. Thanks to these studies, the difficulties that organizations are confronted with in the field of voluntary work were recorded, and the similarities and differences between voluntary work in the partner countries were identified. One of the most important findings of the overall study is that both organizations and volunteers would like to have a better defined structure of the volunteer work, with clear framework and long term goals. Based on these findings, the second stage of capacity building was introduced, aimed at helping immigrants, NGOs or other organizations to implement and participate in meaningful volunteering activities. The main project's output on this stage is the production of an Orientation Manual for Volunteers, a Guide for Immigrant Volunteers, a Guide and Toolkit for Training Migrant Volunteers. No less important is that all these materials are available in four languages: English, German, Greek and Italian, while the Guide for Migrant Volunteers and the website posts are provided in Arabic as well.²⁰³

The VAI website also names a number of pilot practices that emerged during the project, as the established volunteering opportunities. Among them there are initiatives run by

²⁰³ Volunteering Among Immigrants – VAI. Outputs. [Webpage].

Hellenic Red Cross, that have involved TCNs as volunteers in their corps; action by the University of Calabria on organization of round tables and workshops to promote best practice; initiative of the Cidis Onlus in implementing two training courses to learn more about voluntary work done at a local level; etc.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, here the same issue with inability to track the follow-up of the practice, the usage of its issued manuals and toolkits, or the long-term impact appears.

3.2.5. Refu Interim Project

In September 2016, the European Social Fund (ESF) project was launched in Ghent, Belgium, which aimed to turn volunteer activities into jobs for 320 asylum seekers. In the summer of 2016, a social-artistic NGO “Cirq vzw” managed to organize volunteer work for 80 asylum seekers during summer festivals in and around the city. Because of such a success, this initiative was turned into a project called “Refu Interim”. In 2017 it received a one-off subsidy from the City of Ghent to get established, and since 2018 has been funded by the Flemish Ministry of Culture.²⁰⁵ This project is a part of Ghent’s strategy on integration, which includes various stakeholders among the administration, civil society and citizens.

The Refu Interim helps refugees to find volunteer work in the cultural, social and leisure sectors. The project specifically focuses on the optimal match between the interests, talents and experiences of the refugees and needs of an organization which looks for the volunteer work. In order to reach such match, the Refu Interim has implemented a two-pronged approach: at first, the talents and skills of the participants are discovered, and then the volunteer associations are asked about their offers and the support they provide, whether they are willing to integrate diversity at all the levels of their activities. The project has also reported to run the orientation session, training sessions and courses, leisure activities, ensuring a positive and non-discriminatory environment.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Volunteering Among Immigrants – VAI. Pilot Actions. [Web page].

²⁰⁵ Ghent Refugee Taskforce (2018). *Anticipating the Exodus. Community, Welfare and Health* Department of the City of Ghen, p. 37.

²⁰⁶ *Idem.* P. 38.

In 2017, 250 newcomers were registered with Refu Interim, while the two-pronged approach resulted in more than 140 newcomers doing voluntary work mainly in the cultural sector in around 60 organizations in and around Ghent. The project seems to be a successful example of transition from volunteering activities to the labour market, which also attempts to work with individual approach to participants. However, there is no report or recent data on the project development available, and no details on the provided training and courses either. For this reason, it is difficult to evaluate whether this practice is easily reproducible in other contexts.

3.3. Discussion

The research has identified several local, national and EU-wide integration practices that imply volunteering as a tool for inclusion of migrants and refugees in social, cultural and economic life of European communities. These projects have started yet from the beginning of the 2010's and although the majority of them are not active anymore, all the selected practices outline the positive sides of volunteering activities for TCNs and the efficacy of volunteering as an integration tool. They recognize the necessity for newcomers to use different sides of social life to start feeling a part of a new community. Good practices concentrate on tailored approaches, trying to work with the skills and talents of migrants, accommodate particular needs and not propose the same solutions for everyone.

In light of the conducted study with selected good practices, several points should be noticed. First of all, it is very important to work with the phenomenon of migrant volunteering on the local level. As was previously mentioned, it is mostly local communities, and so organizations that are based and embedded on the local community level, that have an opportunity to reach and engage hard-to-reach people among whom migrants and refugees constitute a large population, and contribute more to the development of their networks.²⁰⁷ These organizations also better understand the needs

²⁰⁷ OECD. (2018). Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees. OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 163.

of the populations and social groups within their communities, so have an opportunity to meet the requirements of a particular environment and develop individual approach according to the participants' skills, talents and aspirations. The good example of such practice is the Refu Interim Project, which brings together refugee volunteers and organizations, motivating the newcomers to use and develop their talents, reducing the distance to labour market.

Secondly, it is especially significant that volunteer organizations in their activities focus on more vulnerable people within migrant groups, like female migrants and young people. For them, volunteering can provide important labour market skills, vocational training and help to find employment. For this reason, such recent projects as “The Digital Welcome Project” and “SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants” are of high importance. “The Digital Welcome Project”, for instance, has also worked with highly demanded professional skills that are easy to adapt to the market realities. However, more practices that are aimed at labour market integration have to be implemented, as only four out of fifteen practices directly deal with this side of the volunteerism potential.

Thirdly, multidimensional TCNs volunteering projects foster the research on topic of migration and inclusion, at the same moment providing volunteering opportunities, plans of action, and recommendations for further initiatives. Nevertheless, lack of clear common indicator system for measurement of effects of the volunteer work affect the results of such researches. Project as the VSI and the VAI are directly concentrating on the effects of migrant volunteering for integration and social inclusion of TCNs, providing guidelines and training materials as result of their activities, but none of the projects has collected comprehensive data in a longer run (e.g. surveys and interviews after some time, employment rates and correlation between undertaken volunteer opportunity and the job). For this reason it is difficult to estimate on practice how volunteering affects participants' long-term integration. This is also due to the time constraints faced by most projects funded by grants or one-off subsidies.

Lack of sustainable financial support with the respective time-limitations seems to be one of the main difficulties faced by the projects, and it can explain why many organizations have suspended their work. After 2015 with an increased flow of migrants most measures

were implemented as urgent solutions, which has resulted in a lack of sustainable practices. For example, project on integration through volunteer work, the Czech NGO “Amiga” notes that although their project was very positively evaluated by all participants and organizations involved, origination did not have enough resources to enlarge the scale of the project, so volunteers themselves oversee the coordination and financial management of the project. As a result, they could not provide all volunteers with the number of activities they would like to participate in and tailor the activities according to the participants’ needs.²⁰⁸ Lack of sustainable financial support means that organizations have to work from project to project without long-term planning and cannot sufficiently develop their activities, concentrating exclusively on the short-term goals.

Last but not least, the lack of involvement of local migrant organizations was observed. The only two examples of the project partner organizations that led by migrants are the European Network of Migrant Women, which took part in the “SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants” project and the Vilnius African Community, which participated in the project “Multicultural volunteering centre (MVC)” from Lithuania. Lack of visibility and recognition means that such organizations do not receive enough support, despite the important work they do. Moreover, it contradicts with the notion that migrants and refugees are agents of social change who can invest in social development and inclusion at the same level as native-born citizens. The participation of migrant groups at all levels of the projects’ execution should become an important part of all future practices, ensuring a holistic approach to migrant volunteerism.

²⁰⁸ European Web Site on Integration. (2014, August 28) Integration through volunteer work - Inclusion of volunteers in social and cultural activities in Prague.

4. Conclusions

Thus, this chapter overviews the phenomenon of migrant volunteerism, elaborating on the challenges and benefits that this activity can bring to the TCNs. Among the main obstacles for participation in the volunteering activities can be named negative connotations that exist around the image of volunteer labour, a paternalistic approach to integration, the distress of newcomers caused by the arrival in a new society, language and cultural barriers, lack of time and troubles with documents, mental health problems.

However, while being obstacles for volunteering, these factors can also be partially overcome by the involvement in voluntary activities. Volunteering by migrants and refugees allow them to communicate with locals and learn the local language better, to restore human and social capital lost in the migration process, to gain new knowledge, skills, or even professional experience which can facilitate labour market entrance. The latter is specifically important for persons who more often experience social and economic exclusion when relocating to a new country, as women and young people. Migrant volunteerism also helps to transform the image of immigrants and refugees as free-riders or welfare abusers, which is often present among native citizens. Therefore, overall lower rates on the volunteering engagement of TCNs do not mean that volunteering is unnecessary or unwanted practice, but it just emphasizes the importance and impact of the contextual factors.

With the implementation of well-designed opportunities, integration and inclusion of TCNs in European society will be fostered. Good practices also fill in the gaps in the existing integration policies and provide important follow-up measures. Based on the examined good practices carried out around Europe between 2010 and today, the following observations on the good practices can be made. Good practice should not treat migrants solely as the 'subjects' of their activities; they should not present volunteering as a substitute to real employment or use long-term volunteering by less privileged people who simply cannot find a paid job; do not use the same approaches for all participants and in all the places. Contrariwise, analysis of the projects on migrant volunteering has shown that good practices should work with local communities and newcomers, assessing the needs on both sides; they should recognize migrants and refugees as equal

contributors to the social well-being. Good practices tailor approaches to their volunteer regarding talents, skills and aspirations of the participants; they try to involve more vulnerable groups as migrant women and young refugees, and focus on volunteering as a learning opportunity, which facilitates social inclusion and labour market integration.

General conclusions

The given study argues that migrant volunteering can become a useful tool for strengthening European integration policies, as it addresses many issues that the current integration programs do not always take into account. Moreover, volunteering can serve the goal of long-term inclusion, providing some follow-up mechanisms inside the host communities. To address and evaluate why volunteering by migrants and not just for them is an effective and necessary practice for integration in the EU, theoretical and empirical approaches were used.

The conceptual framework of this study explained how volunteering is beneficial for migrants' integration and what is lacking in the current European integration policy to have a need for complementary measures. First of all, Chapter I defined volunteerism on a basis of several key features: "volunteering is work; it is unpaid work; it is work undertaken by people willingly, without being compulsory; and, in the first place, it is work performed for the benefit of third parties, like volunteers' communities or society as a whole". This part also outlined overall advantages that volunteer work brings to individuals and societies, approaching them from socio-economic, political and value aspects. Summing up briefly, volunteer labour helps to build social capital and human capital, including social networks and bonds, skills and education; it contributes to the establishment and development of civic and intercultural dialogues, helping to enhance reciprocal trust and feeling of security. By this, volunteer action affects the social, cultural, political and economic sides of life. Volunteering, however, is a two-way process: it enhances participation, social cohesion and mutual trust in communities, at the same moment being more widespread when the community is cohesive and resilient.

In modern European society, volunteering plays an important role and is an essential attribute of democratic life. There exist a lot of projects that implement volunteering activities to assist less-privileged and vulnerable groups like migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. However, there are not so many practices that reverse this focus. By the means of volunteering only for the benefit of these groups, their vulnerability raises by being constantly highlighted, which can lead to even greater discrimination, stigmatization, and social exclusion. In Chapter II it was noticed that vulnerability is not

an intrinsic characteristic of migrants and refugees. Although the vulnerability is often used in relation to migrant groups, who are exposed to many social and economic risks, it is a contextual and institutional phenomenon, which is not ultimate or definitive in describing migrant populations. Immigrants can also work for their benefits and the well-being of their communities. When feeling to be a part of the society, newcomers often become agents of social change and active contributors to their new societies on the same level as native-born citizens. However, to feel this belonging, TCNs have to be adequately integrated, have access to participation and be encouraged to participate. An essential condition for participation is non-discrimination, meaning the elimination of all the direct or indirect discriminatory practices or structural discrimination on the institutional level. Non-discrimination, participation and integration are tightly interconnected processes, and all of them relate to volunteering.

Volunteering activities provide migrants and refugees with benefits that are not always accessible for them in the general integration programs. Overview of these programs on the European level in Chapter II showed that in most cases they are limited to civic education and basic language training, which is not enough for a holistic and long-term approach. As a result, TCNs stay at higher risks to be insufficiently integrated, with subsequent exposition to various social risks and poverty. Undoubtedly, volunteering cannot serve as a basis for the state-run integration policies, but it is a helpful additional practice, which provides a follow-up mechanism to introductory courses and fosters social inclusion of third-country nationals in educational and social activities, cultural and economic life.

Chapter III highlighted the benefits and obstacles to migrant participation in volunteering opportunities. It was figured out that TCNs are less likely to undertake voluntary activity as they face many more obstacles than EU-born volunteers do, starting from language and cultural barriers to mental health issues and lack of time. However, when choosing to volunteer, migrants and refugees get more engaged in their local community life, get new social contacts, learn new skills and competences, learn better the local language, and get more chances to more easily integrate into the labour market.

In the part of the empirical research, the approaches to migrant volunteering were specified more, with the conditions that have to comply in order to use voluntary opportunities as a complementary integration measure. That was done by using examples of real practices carried out in several European countries. Fifteen projects that implement volunteering as a tool for integration and inclusion of different groups within TCN populations, were selected as good practices. The selection criteria included a clear project's focus on migrants engagement in volunteer opportunities, their recognition as active providers and agents of social change, as well as recognition of volunteer action as a tool for integration and inclusion. All the good practices were assessed according to seven indicators. In addition, five of these practices were examined in more detail as a more thorough assessment allowed to understand their main pros and cons. The evaluation of migrant volunteering projects showed that these practices implement activities in education and training, employment, social participation, raising awareness, and social networking. Lack of a common indicator system to measure volunteer work makes it difficult to evaluate the impact of some projects but provided reports and records of volunteers' experiences allow to identify volunteering as a positive and helpful integration tool.

In order to perform their role effectively, volunteering projects for migrants and refugees should not be aimed at filling in the gaps in the labour market or substitute traditional employment for less-privileged groups. Volunteer opportunities cannot be either forced work, but only a freely undertaken activity. To bring the most benefits to the participants, the organization has to apply a tailored approach taking into account the needs and skills of their volunteers. In this case, it will also bring the best outcomes for the local communities, as migrant populations are very heterogeneous in sense of knowledge, experience and talents, so can contribute a lot to their host societies lives. According to the research, volunteering activities can be a powerful instrument for labour market integration. And it is especially important for more vulnerable groups within migrant communities like women and young people, who need to acquire marketable skills for future employment and stay away from increased risks of poverty and social exclusion.

Therefore, with certain conditions volunteering can become a successful complementary part of the integration programs, bringing benefits to both migrants and refugees

volunteers and the local communities, facilitating the resettlement process and creating grounds for socio-economic integration. By now, volunteerism has been already recognized as an effective tool for social inclusion and a helpful integration practice in many documents, including reports and plans of action among different European institutions. It was hoped that according to the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, projects related to migrant volunteerism will also receive better funds to be able to invest in longer-term development and plan their activities in a more sustainable way. The use of appropriate practices and the promotion of migrant volunteerism should strengthen the integration policy of the EU and direct it towards actual inclusion.

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Annex 1 – Good practices on migrant volunteering: key indicators

Project title	Geographic area	Duration	Type of activity	Target groups	Areas of implementation	Project executors	Source of funding
Germany: Get up, move yourself!	Germany	2010 - 2013	Capacity building Volunteering opportunity	Young people	Education and training Social participation Awareness raising Social network	AWO Arbeit & Qualifizierung gGmbH Solingen	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Robert Bosch Foundation, own capital AWO Aqua gGmbH Solingen, prize money Alliance for Tolerance and Democracy Society Fund Coexistence" of the city of Hanover, the integration councils of the city of Hanover, The Association of Binational Families and Partnerships
Our grandmothers and grandfathers sing and play in many languages	Germany	2010 - 2014	Volunteering opportunity	Older people with a migran background; Children a migration background	Education and training Social participation Social network	Association of Binational Families and Partnerships, iaf e.V., Counseling Center Hanover	
Volunteering for Social Inclusion - VSI	Denmark, United Kingdom	2011 - 2013	Research project Volunteering opportunity	Young people	Education and training Social participation Awareness raising Social network	Danish Red Cross, British Red Cross	EU
Integration through volunteer work - Inclusion of volunteers in social and cultural activities in Prague	Czech Republic	2011 - 2015	Volunteering opportunity	All migrants	Social participation Awareness raising Social network	Agency for Migration and Adaptation AMIGA	Grants from the Prague 2 City district from 2011- 2015
Multicultural volunteering centre (MVC) ACE - Active Citizenship and English	Lithuania UK	2012 - 2013 2013 - 2015	Volunteering opportunity Volunteering opportunity	Migrants and refugees Migrant women	Education and training Social participation Awareness raising Social network Political and social participation	Tolerant Youth Association, Vilnius African Community, Mykolas Romeris University Learning Unlimited	European Fund for the Integration of Third- Country nationals. European Integration Fund (EIF)
VAPAA 'Volunteering in Refugee Work' project	Finland	2013 - 2015	Capacity building Volunteering opportunity	Refugees and asylum- seekers	Education and training Social participation Awareness raising Social network	Finnish Red Cross	European Refugee Fund
Frivillighet för delaktighet - Volunteering for participation Agricultural cooperative for asylum seekers in Ormea	Sweden Italy	2013 - 2015 2015 - present	Volunteering opportunity Volunteering opportunity	All migrants Asylum-seekers Local community	Social participation Awareness raising Social network Employment Education and training Social participation	The Swedish Red Cross Municipality of Ormea	The Swedish EFS Council Italian Ministry of Interior Self-financing
Community Mentoring and puicebuilding	Malta	2016 - 2017	Capacity building	Migrants Local community	Awareness raising Social network	Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM) ALL DIGITAL (formerly Telecentre-Europe AISBL), Belgium - Coordinator Media Actie Kuregem Stad (Maks), Belgium IASIS, Greece Stiftung Digitale Chancen (SDC), Germany Fondazione Mondo Digitale (FMD), Italy Colectic (formerly Associacio per a Joves Teb), Spain Centro Studi Citta di Foligno Associazione (CSF), Italy ifa Akademie University Federico II of Naples, Department of Political Science UNIVERSITY STEFAN CEL MARE SUCEAVA DAFNI KENTRO EPAGGELMATIKIS KATARTISIS European Management Education & Learning (e-mel) LLP SYNTHESIS CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION LTD MAKRO Yonetim Gelistirme Danismanlik Ltd. Sti.	Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme (VOPS)
Digital Welcome Project	Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain	2017 - 2019	Capacity Building Volunteering opportunity	Young people	Education and training Raising awareness Social network		Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)
MAV – Multidimensional training of adult volunteers to foster migrants' integration	Germany, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Romania, Turkey, the United Kingdom	2017 - 2019	Research project Capacity building Volunteering opportunity	All migrants	Education and training Social participation Awareness raising Social network		Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission the City and OCMW Ghent, Flemish subsidies for welfare and education and subsidies via the European Social Fund
REFU INTERIM	Belgium	2017 - present	Volunteering opportunity	Refugees	Employment	NGO Refu Interim the City of Ghent Camara Oficial de Comercio Industria Y Navegacion de Sevilla Incoma - International Consulting and Mobility Agency INOVA Consultancy Programma Integra MateraHub Elan Interculturel CARDET European Network of Migrant Women Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the University of Calabria, Leibniz University Hannover, Hellenic Red Cross, 4Elements, Piraeus Municipality, Cidis Onlus , Verein Multikulturell , Initiative Minderheiten , FREIRAD	
SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants	Belgium, Cyprus, France, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom	2018 - 2019	Research project Capacity building Volunteering opportunity	Migrant women	Social Network Raising awareness Social participation Employment		Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)
VAI - Volunteering among immigrants	Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy	2018 - 2019	Research project Capacity building Volunteering opportunity	All migrants	Awareness raising Social network		Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

Annex 2 – Good practices: project overviews and results

Project title	Project overview	Outcomes
Germany: Get up, move yourself!	<p>The project "Get up, move yourself!" was aimed at providing young people aged 13-29 with and without migration background with the possibility to gain practical volunteering experience, to develop social and vocational skills, to improve their self-awareness and to perceive themselves as actors of change in their society. The project tries to create an involvement opportunities that are based on participants' interest and capabilities.</p> <p>In the project older migrants were volunteering as the narrators, storytellers and mentors in family centers and day care centers in Hanover and the region. The volunteers visited once a week the institution and worked there for about an hour with the children aged 3 to 6 years. They sang, read, danced with the children and told stories. The aim of the initiative is to promote multilingualism and multiculturalism. The project was offered in Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, Russian and Polish.</p> <p>The Danish Red Cross and the British Red Cross carried out a series of interactive workshops with young asylum seekers and refugees between the ages of 17 and 25, highlighting different opportunities to get involved in volunteering. Young people who took part in volunteering activities were asked about their experiences, and volunteering organisations were also surveyed about collaborating with young asylum seekers and refugees. The VSI project's overall objective was to study the extent to which voluntary service can be a useful tool in a European context towards strengthening the inclusion of young asylum seekers and refugees in civic society.</p> <p>The aim of the project was to involve migrants living in the Czech Republic in volunteering activities in the local volunteer and community centers as a tool for their integration and empowerment.</p> <p>The main goal of the project is to develop the potential of migrants living in the Czech Republic as volunteers and to improve social services for senior citizens of Prague. The types of activities done by volunteers included lectures on health-related topics; lectures on cultures of different countries; handicraft workshops; English lessons for seniors; Russian lessons for health workers and volunteers in hospital; tea and culinary meetings.</p>	<p>In the context of the volunteering exchange about 60 young people were taught in the projects under the initiative, 160 got involved in 25 self-determined youth teams (e.g. in the fields of environment, education, media, bullying, racism, xenophobia, intercultural coexistence, integration, sport, culture ...) and 40 as part of the intercultural dialogue. Up to 200 young people were reached in the single events. Also 25 associations joined to participate, of which 10 are ethnic associations and migrant organisations.</p> <p>The unique characteristic of this project is the cross-generational approach. Between the children and the volunteers close social bonds were developed. For the children, the seniors were a real substitute for the actual grandmas and grandpas. The languages and the culture brought by the children with an immigrant background were valued and viewed as an asset of the society in Germany.</p> <p>Since the beginning in 2010 approximately 100 people benefited from the project. In total, 135 young asylum seekers and refugees took part in the VSI project workshops in both countries, and 54 tried voluntary service through the VSI project. The study found that voluntary service helps enhance competencies that can facilitate the social inclusion and wellbeing of young asylum seekers and refugees in Europe. Not only does it serve to establish a healthy social life, but it also contributes to developing skills and experiences that can facilitate access to the labour market in the future. The assessment of the barriers that are faced by young refugees and asylum seekers (as well as their differences) when they choose to volunteer allowed to take into account individual resources and motivation, tailoring the approach.</p> <p>The data is provided for 2013: 65 volunteers 18-74 years old participated in the project (10 volunteers did regular activities in senior centres, the rest participated in individual activities). Total number of participants in all events was approximately 400.</p> <p>The project is very positively evaluated by all participants and organizations involved. However, the NGO didn't have enough resources to enlarge the scale of the project. As a result, we cannot always provide all volunteers with the number of activities they would like to participate in. Regular supervision was also an important part of the practice.</p> <p>During the whole project, the centre was visited by 136 third-country nationals and 633 Lithuanians. The 'Living Library', which was organised with Vilnius African Community, was a successful part of the Project. More than 1340 schoolchildren were introduced to African culture, music and dances. Lithuanian society was actively involved by volunteering and teaching foreigners the Lithuanian language (at the same time foreigners had an opportunity to teach their own language). Thirty different educational-reflective discussions were organised on various social topics such as equal opportunities, human rights, employees' rights and responsibilities, homelessness, etc. According to the activities of the centre 'The guide of volunteering in the multicultural environment' was prepared. The final conference was organised in Mykolas Romeris University and the results of the project were presented to the society.</p> <p>Over the two years of the project, 65 women were trained as volunteer befrienders, supporting ACE learners in a wide range of ways such as meeting regularly to practise speaking English, signposting and providing local information, supporting class trips and support with exam preparation. 86 learners also took up supported volunteering opportunities at a range of organisations such as Kenwood House, children's centres, charity shops and events at both centres. And more than 100 learners were supported by volunteer befrienders at some point during the project.</p> <p>The project was evaluated throughout its lifetime (the impact assessment report was produced after the first year) and through a variety of methods.</p> <p>Refugees and asylum-seekers are approached to join the project through existing Finnish language courses or the integration services of the municipalities. To ensure that no one is excluded from this project, the Finnish Red Cross has tailored activities for the elderly, children and illiterate persons of concern. Women can also fully engage in the project by leaving their children into care, which is organized at the same time as the VAPAA activities. During the training phase of the project, persons of concern are invited to become volunteers of the Red Cross. As a result of the VAPAA project, their volunteering has led some persons of concern to become members of the boards of the local Red Cross associations, where they carry responsibilities beyond those of their initial volunteer activities. Volunteer asylum-seekers and refugees are now able to help their local Red Cross associations grow and plan their courses of action for potential volunteers in the future.</p> <p>However, no data on the engagement rates is in free access.</p> <p>The project managed to organise exchange of experience between participants in Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg. It attracted participants and volunteers from 26 countries, and some of them turned from being a participant to being a volunteer. In 2013, 24 participants have gone from being a participant to being volunteers. Project has recruited volunteers for an Arabic hotline in Gothenburg. It also guided participants through training in the Swedish language, tracing and family reunification aid, the employment office, swimming pools, music associations, etc. The project was meant to produce tutorial material in the form of a toolkit that will be helpful for future work with the target audience. Also, the first evaluation report was published in September 2014.</p> <p>In 2015, the Extraordinary Reception Center (CAS) in Ormea began hosting around 35 young, male asylum seekers (20-35 years old), coming from Sub-Saharan African countries (Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia, Mali).</p> <p>Initially, the hosted asylum seekers conducted voluntary activities such as snow clearance, improvement of the former retirement home (i.e. the asylum seeker accommodations) and path maintenance in the town, but eventually in 2018 project became an agriculture cooperative called La volpe y il mirtillo. Now it provides full-time employment for 12 people, among whom 9 are asylum seekers which is a significant number in a town of this size.</p> <p>A total of 209 TCNs and 185 Maltese / EU nationals were given training throughout the project. The research component showed that conflicts within communities were identified as a major barrier to joining the project, while volunteers highlighted personal challenges which left them little time to participate (e.g. time constraints and demanding daily jobs). Mentoring programmes that FSM provided during this project were attended by individuals of migrant and Maltese background. As a result of the activities and panels, the organisations involved in the project not only managed to bring together different migrant communities to strengthen their communication channels and networks, but also developed various best practices in the field of migrant adult education.</p>
Our grandmothers and grandfathers sing and play in many languages	<p>The Danish Red Cross and the British Red Cross carried out a series of interactive workshops with young asylum seekers and refugees between the ages of 17 and 25, highlighting different opportunities to get involved in volunteering. Young people who took part in volunteering activities were asked about their experiences, and volunteering organisations were also surveyed about collaborating with young asylum seekers and refugees. The VSI project's overall objective was to study the extent to which voluntary service can be a useful tool in a European context towards strengthening the inclusion of young asylum seekers and refugees in civic society.</p> <p>The aim of the project was to involve migrants living in the Czech Republic in volunteering activities in the local volunteer and community centers as a tool for their integration and empowerment.</p> <p>The main goal of the project is to develop the potential of migrants living in the Czech Republic as volunteers and to improve social services for senior citizens of Prague. The types of activities done by volunteers included lectures on health-related topics; lectures on cultures of different countries; handicraft workshops; English lessons for seniors; Russian lessons for health workers and volunteers in hospital; tea and culinary meetings.</p>	
Volunteering for Social Inclusion - VSI	<p>Main task of the project – to establish Multicultural volunteering centre by creating the possibility for Lithuanian society and third-country nationals to interact with each other, adapt to diversity and improve mutual understanding.</p> <p>During the whole project, many Lithuanians and foreigners from third-countries have visited the centre. One of the first activities was the training of mentors, where a wide network of volunteers and 30 mentors were trained. The most successful activities were cultural events, where people from different countries had an opportunity to introduce their own culture, prepare food, teach traditional dances, etc.</p>	
Integration through volunteer work - Inclusion of volunteers in social and cultural activities in Prague	<p>ACE was a 2 year project aimed at supporting women who were citizens of countries outside the EU and then settled in the UK. It encouraged active citizenship and helped to prepare newcomers to meet UK citizenship application requirements, they participated in different courses on women in politics, equality, home safety, British culture, traditions, crime, volunteering, and healthy eating.</p> <p>Participants were also trained as befrienders and offered to undertake volunteering opportunities as a part of capacity building training and support.</p> <p>The VAPAA project aimed to empower persons of concern to become volunteers of the Finnish Red Cross in their new host communities in eleven Finnish municipalities. Volunteering is a means for refugees and asylum-seekers to get to know their new environment and meet new people. VAPAA sought to provide them with the knowledge, motivation and skills needed for voluntary work.</p> <p>Through their involvement in the project, persons of concern strengthened their self-esteem, and build their confidence to go out, make contacts, and reach out to others. In this process, they also developed as active agents in their communities, and engage with others on an equal footing with Finns. Women of concern, in addition, learnt that in Finland they can make their own choices about life where this may not have been the case in their countries of origin. Refugees' and asylum-seekers' awareness of the so-called third sector in Finland, its role and contribution to Finnish society as a whole was also enhanced.</p>	
Multicultural volunteering centre (MVC)	<p>Organised by the Swedish Red Cross, the project aimed at implementation of volunteering as an arena to improve conditions for TCNs to participate in and influence the local community and thus contribute to integration. Being new to the community, the target group often lacks such social arenas and networks that can facilitate participation and inclusion. Another aim is for the Swedish Red Cross to be able to utilize people's knowledge, skills, experience and personalities. Thus, to be an organization made up of and based on the needs of people in the local community.</p>	
ACE - Active Citizenship and English	<p>The project is a good example of involvement from volunteering activities into full-time employment.</p> <p>The Municipality of Ormea, a small town in Italy, developed an agricultural cooperative for asylum seekers. As part of its undertaking, the Municipality of Ormea developed programmes for the asylum seekers' job-related training and activities to support the community, which aimed to assist not only the asylum seekers' integration but also to provide services to the community, which has an aging population and thus a labour shortage in various sectors.</p> <p>The project was carried out by The Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM) and drew on the work of migrants who were already providing valuable support to their communities: these individuals were acting as points of contact between TCNs and local population. The project identified three main objectives: to bring together migrant volunteers already carrying out significant work within their own communities (e.g. advocating for the rights of people in need, providing information on laws and services and offering social support); to deliver training and workshops to migrant and native community members; to strengthen and expand TCN community organisations by increasing the capacity of members and prospective members.</p>	
VAPAA 'Volunteering in Refugee Work' project		
Frivillighet för delaktighet - Volunteering for participation		
Agricultural cooperative for asylum seekers in Ormea		
Community Mentoring and puicebuilding		

Project title	Project overview	Outcomes
Digital Welcome Project	<p>The Digital Welcome project is a two-years, main goal of which was to enhance digital skills of young refugees and asylum seekers by this facilitating their social integration in the European communities. In order to do that, five objectives of creative IT workshops were outlined: to boost young migrants language, digital and soft skills; fostering inclusion through volunteering; coaching participants as mentors and animators; providing young people with digital storytelling instruments; and empowering them to motivate peers and raise awareness. To become volunteers, participants of the program were coached by trainers from partner organizations, so after they could become mentors and conduct the workshops. Volunteers taught other groups of migrants and European-born citizens such skills as how to use computer, how to create and edit a video, etc.</p>	<p>52 participants have successfully completed the four modules during the first pilot programme. The second pilot is on-going and some 120 students will have enhanced their digital skills over the two phases. It is also anticipated that the trained volunteers will teach 40 creative IT workshops, reaching 400 people from groups of third-country nationals and Europeans. In addition, the digital stories are available on YouTube, helping to motivate other young people to volunteer. These films will also be disseminated to some 500 key actors in the education, social and cultural sectors. y the end of the project, the final report with the best practices from all five countries was produced in order to make an overview of all activities and take stock of "what is already out there" in terms of creative ICT workshops for vulnerable groups.</p>
MAV – Multidimensional training of adult volunteers to foster migrants’ integration	<p>The Multidimensional training of adult volunteers to foster migrants’ integration (MAV) supported and qualified volunteers to serve as mentors for migrants, encouraging migrants themselves to serve as volunteers. Thus, MAV developed training program for migrant volunteers for them to act as mentors for other migrants. Participants assumed a very active role during the training rogramme sharing their knowledge, experience, ideas and questions related to the topic and enhancing peer group learning. The overall purpose of the MAV project is to manage the migrant transition process from arriving in a country to integrating into the labour market of the receiving country. In this way, the project aimed to contribute to the enhancement of more inclusive societies across Europe.</p>	<p>As the main outcome, the MAV project has produced guidelines and training toolkits for direct use by trainers and tutors in adult education:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) MAV Guide for trainers – information on methodology, recommendations, formats. (2) MAV Adult training toolkit – training modules to train adult volunteers. (3) MAV communication toolkit – recommendations on how to advertise and communicate volunteer activities for migrant integration.
REFU INTERIM	<p>Refu Interim aims to promote the social and professional self-reliance of newcomers by helping them to find voluntary work in the broad cultural, social and leisure sectors. Project tries to achieve an optimal match between the interests, talents and experiences of the people concerned and the voluntary work in an organisation. This ideal match is based on a developed two-pronged approach: firstly, you need to discover the talents and skills of refugees and secondly, you have to ask voluntary associations about what they offer, the support they provide and their willingness to integrate diversity into every level of their operations. The main aim of the project is the development, testing and implementation of innovative practices and initiatives allowing migrant and refugee women to effectively integrate into the European societies. Besides female migrants, the project defined two more target groups, voluntary CSOs/NGOs and organizations from the business sector, trying to build effective cooperation between all actors.</p>	<p>In 2017, 250 newcomers were registered with Refu Interim, while the two-pronged approach resulted in more than 140 newcomers doing voluntary work mainly in the cultural sector in around 60 organizations in and around Ghent. The project seems to be a successful example of transition from volunteering activities to the labour market, but no updated data is available.</p>
SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants	<p>The project had started from the initial research, which established the main challenges faced by migrant women when transitioning into European society, and proceeded with the Volunteering Awareness Training for partner voluntary organizations, NGOs and social workers, as well as business advisors in order to train and recruit trainers, who, in their turn, would guide migrant women on their journeys</p>	<p>A total of 127 people participated in the training sessions in all countries. Among the SMART’s innovation tools the personal development training called Circles™ is to mention. This activity allowed migrant women to establish a broader social network, by bringing them together and allowing to share personal stories and inspiring each other. Such diversity circles were also practiced with business associations and NGOs. At the end of the project an online platform with all the learning materials was built. The SMART also created an awareness campaign, share the stories of migrant women as role models for the European societies.</p>
VAI - Volunteering among immigrants	<p>The VAI project emphasizes that migrant volunteerism can be both instrument for and an indicator of integration. It started from an initial research on volunteering. Thanks to these studies, the difficulties that organizations are confronted with in the field of voluntary work were recorded, and the similarities and differences between voluntary work in the partner countries were identified. Based on these findings, the second stage of capacity building was introduced, aimed at helping immigrants, NGOs or other organizations to implement and participate in meaningful volunteering activities.</p>	<p>The main project’s output on this stage is the production of National Reports on volunteering in 4 countries, an Orientation Manual for Volunteers, a Guide for Immigrant Volunteers, a Guide and Toolkit for Training Migrant Volunteers. No less important is that all these materials are available in four languages: English, German, Greek and Italian, while the Guide for Migrant Volunteers and the website posts are provided in Arabic as well. Thanks to the project, several pilot actions in the four countries were initiated, directly impolemeting migrant volunteering activities.</p>