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VOLUNTEERING
INFRASTRUCTURE IN EUROPE
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Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe Publication

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Cyprus

1.VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE CONCEPT DEFINITION

Volunteering in Cyprus reflects a mixture of historic path-dependent traditions, legacies and norms of the Cypriot society. Volunteering has developed under various forms, norms and perceptions which still interact in a dynamic way to shape the volunteering landscape in Cyprus. Consequently, the legal framework on volunteering in the Republic of Cyprus reflects these historic legacies and safeguards the constitutional rights and liberties of a democratic context.

*Structurally, the non-governmental & non-profit contexts present a rich landscape of or*ganised structures composed of coordinative councils, associations, organisations, foundations, networks, federations, confederations, community councils/committees, etc., which serve different purposes and tasks in various policy domains.

The volunteering infrastructure not only involves these legacies, traditions and structures, but also a number of other dimensions. It involves the human resources (board members, volunteers and staff) and the relationships that exist in the internal structures of the voluntary sector. It furthermore involves the external environment, as well as the tools and means that support volunteering such as research, databases, capacity building, etc. In other words, the volunteering infrastructure concept should also be understood as the whole system supporting and enabling volunteering and its development, including the political and political framework, funding mechanisms, etc.

No single definition exists to define volunteering infrastructure, nevertheless existing legislation and practices provide a framework to understand concepts and dimensions on volunteering and its infrastructure.

2.VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE

Defining and exploring the volunteering landscape has limitations, considering that volunteering in Cyprus remains not only an under-researched topic but also a contested notion in relation to its definitional, conceptual and dimensional boundaries. This is not a unique phenomenon since the term encompasses so many different and complex meanings across countries. Voluntary sectors across countries have followed diverse traditions, shaped by various socio-economic, political, cultural and religious factors, while their trajectory have been influenced by forces embedded in every country's regime [1]. This also applies to Cyprus.

Historically, the volunteering landscape has evolved and developed in various forms such as charities, philanthropic associations, church related networks (i.e. philoptochoi), voluntary organisations, foundations, social movements, social economy organisations, etc. If volunteering is to be conceptualized in its wider sense to capture the whole fabric of the civil society, the landscape can include non-profit groups related to labour and professional issues, recreational activities, political ideologies, etc.

1 Anheier, K. H. and Salamon, M. L. (1999) Volunteering in Cross-National perspective: Initial Comparisons, Journal of Law and Contemporary Problems, 62(4), pp. 43-65
Defourny, J. and Pestoff, V., 2008. Towards a European conceptualization of the third sector, In: Defourny, J. and Pestoff, V. eds. (2008) Images and concepts of the third sector in Europe, Working Paper No. 08/02, EMES European Research Network 2008, Available at: www.emes.net
Evers, A. and Laville, J. L., 2004. Defining the third sector in Europe, In: Evers, A. and Laville, J. L. (ed.), 2004. The third sector in Europe, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing
Morris, S. (2000), Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Some Lessons from History, Voluntas, 11(1), pp. 25-43

Today volunteering reflects a concept connected with a diverse array of activities undertaken by individuals, groups and organisational structures. Volunteering takes informal and formal forms and paths. Formal volunteering is usually perceived to be conducted by volunteers who act on behalf of legally registered organizational entities. A typical voluntary/non-profit organization shares common features with other countries: it is organised, structurally separated from the government, non-profit, self-governing and depends on voluntary participation [2] .

Whether formal, informal, ad-hoc, systematic, individual or collective, volunteering activity serves multiple purposes and diverse objectives. Volunteering expands to address societal, welfare, environmental, cultural and other issues contributing to national policy goals and objectives in different policy areas. Volunteering encompasses a diverse range of activities such as: social, environmental, cultural, educational services/programmes/activities, mutual aid, "self-help", advocacy and campaigning, community action, etc. Volunteering structures are continuously transforming into more modern and professionally-managed structures that have the capacity to develop innovative forms and areas for volunteering.

Volunteering is based on the norms and values of social responsibility, solidarity and active citizenship, collective engagement/participation, etc in order to address the needs of society. Strong social ties, trust and the motive to work collectively, influenced by embedded socio-cultural forms and traditions, form the key dynamic mechanisms of most informal and formal volunteering activity [3]. These concepts, values and conditions do not present a unique case, rather prominent features of other countries [4]. Volunteering remains an important tool for the effective use of social capital, an aspect of Cypriot life, and a means to meet common goals. It is allegedly "accountable" for the strong levels of social cohesion and solidarity on the island of Cyprus [5].

Although it is beyond the scope of this report to explore the blurring sectoral boundaries and complexity of volunteering related terminologies, it is important to mention that, in Cyprus, various terms (e.g. voluntary associations, non-governmental, non-profit organisations, civil society organisation, voluntary/third sector, philanthropic associations, etc.) are interchangeably used to describe the big picture of the volunteering context, most of which are not defined in current legislation. These definitions touch upon different principles and ideologies on what volunteering is or how is represented and practiced in different types of volunteering structures. Nevertheless, most share common notions that relate volunteering with the non-profit principle and the urge to work for the "collective good". The blurring definitional and "cross-sector" boundary does not make the Cypriot context a unique case. It rather represents a cross-country phenomenon, resulting from the fact that voluntary sectors have been shaped by particular historical events, traditional perceptions, socio-cultural traditions, western influences and dynamic forces.

Salamon, L. M. and Anheier K. H., 1996. Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Non-profit Sector Cross-Nationally, Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project

2 Salamon, L. M. and Anheier K. H. (1996), 'Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Non-profit Sector Coss-Nationally', Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, no. 22, the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy: Baltimore

3 Patsalidou, O. (2008) Understanding the factors that have influenced the development of the voluntary sector in Cyprus from the mid-end Colonial Period (1950/1960) to the present day, PhD Thesis, Nottingham University, UK

Volunteering in Cyprus has not only been influenced by historical forces [6], traditions and legacies, but has also been shaped by institutional strategies set and developed by the State. Traditionally, the state has played an important role in the development of volunteering and has to a large extent shaped the environment in which it functions. Perhaps this has been an outcome of institutional choices of the State that recurred in a path-dependent pattern, transferring responsibilities to the third sector, mainly in the delivery of welfare.

The Social Welfare Services' (SWS) Community Work Service is the first governmental structure that has supported the voluntary infrastructure in the area of welfare (as early as the time of the British colonial Rule in Cyprus). Following the island's independence, in 1960, the SWS have developed a specific strategy for voluntary structures in the area of welfare. The SWS have traditionally aimed to assist "local communities identify and meet their social needs; to encourage cooperation between the State, the community and individuals for the best interests of the community members; and to promote decentralisation regarding the provision of social services... [in order] to safeguard social cohesion through collective actions in the community "[7]. In many similar ways, a number of governmental, semi-governmental, local authorities and independent bodies have set volunteering related goals, developed partnerships and collaborative strategies with voluntary/non-profit associations in order to contribute to specific policy objectives.
This culture of collaboration has grown and strengthened over time.

Since 2013 a Commissioner for volunteering and NGOs has been appointed by the President of the Republic of Cyprus with a specific mandate to
" a) implement policies to encourage active citizenship for active participation at all levels,
b) create tools in order to empower and facilitate better communication between the government and the citizens,
c) coordinate voluntary organizations, local authorities and the Church,
d) support the work of volunteer organizations and NGOs, respecting their autonomy and independence,
e) utilize european programmes,
f) recognize non-formal and informal learning on the basis of the legal framework of volunteering and
g) spread volunteerism in society" [8].

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4 Salamon, L. M., Sokolowski, W., List, R. (2003) Global civil society – an overview, Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies
Anheier, K. H. and Salamon, M. L. (1999) Volunteering in Cross-National perspective: Initial Comparisons, Journal of Law and Contemporary Problems, 62(4), pp. 43-66
5 See authors:
Amitsis, G. and Marini, F. (2003) Dependency of welfare clients on benefits and services - The case of Cyprus, National Studies Project in the Field of Social Exclusion, Institute of Social Innovation, Nicosia: Republic of Cyprus
Konis, T. (1984) Social reconstruction: Social Issues of the post-war period 1974-1984, Nicosia
Triseliotis, J. (1977) Social Welfare in Cyprus, Zeno Publishers, London
6 The island of Cyprus has experienced an extensive history of conquerors and foreign rule, a turbulent socio-political environment, has the characteristics of postcolonial societies and has only enjoyed its democratic status in 1960 when it was granted its independence. Following the Turkish invasion on the island in 1974, Cyprus remains occupied and divided. (More information can be found on the Publications website of the Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/publications/

As in most geographical contexts, the voluntary sector in Cyprus functions in a challenging environment, which poses many threats to its future development and sustainability. Issues like lack of resources, increased regulations, limited funding, pressure to adopt modern and managerial-like practices, changing values towards the traditional volunteerism culture, increased needs at different levels, are only some of the problems that the sector faces today. Looking forward, many forces are expected to change the nature and role of the volunteering infrastructure in Cyprus. Clearly there is not one future, but multiple possible possibilities, depending on how the voluntary sector will choose to respond to the challenges or create change. Volunteering is evolving, adapting and changing to meet the changing needs of society, but also the developments of the information society and new technologies. Hence volunteering structures are driven to transform and adapt to all new challenges imposed by the internal and external environment in order to assure that they can continue to have impact on the needs they intend to address.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The basis for volunteering is found in the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. Article 21(1) under the Fundamental Rights and Liberties section of the Constitution, safeguards that "every person has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly" [9]. While the Constitution guarantees the right to association, a broader legal framework sets the provisions for the establishment, registration, functioning, governance, regulation, funding, etc of volunteering, non-profit organisational structures.

Legislation for coordinative volunteering bodies

The Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council law 61(I)/2006 provides a context for the establishment of a coordinating body for volunteering and organizations. The law grants a status to the Council as a supreme coordinative body of volunteering and defines its role, scope, governance, administrative affairs, regulatory framework and membership structure. The authorities of the Council, as defined by the law, are:

A. Identification, study and analysis of social problems and needs
B. Contribution to social policy planning and programming in the Republic of Cyprus
C. Development of volunteerism based on best practice
D. Study, monitoring, promotion and advancement of the work of the voluntary organisations, volunteering and social welfare
E. Coordination of the activity and planning of its member organisations across the volunteering landscape as well as between voluntary organisations and the state (public authorities)
F. Support and reinforcement of the member organisations' functioning and activities, on a consultative basis
G. Development of the short and long-term strategic policy on volunteerism and the voluntary sector
H. Development of policy and strategy for the advancement and achievement of the short and long-term objectives of volunteering, the voluntary sector and social welfare
I. Provision of technical or other support and consultation services to the member organisations for the promotion of public benefit programmes and projects
J. Provision of capacity building, training and development to the member organisations
K. Establishment and administration of volunteer centres
L. Promotion and advancement of volunteering, voluntary service and the welfare sector in the Republic of Cyprus

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7 Social Welfare Services (2011) Official Website, Available at: www.mlsi.gov.cy/sws
8 Office of the Commissioner for Volunteering and NGOs available at: http://www.volunteercommissioner.gov.cy (mission)
9 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, (1960) Article 21, Part II Fundamental Rights and Liberties, Republic of Cyprus

The law not only creates a basis for an enabling environment for volunteering but also addresses issues such as the representation of NGO (members) in central and local coordinating structures, participation in the policy making process, the development and support of volunteering.

Legislation for the registration and regulation of NGOs

The existing legislative framework recognises the following legal personalities for voluntary organisations/NGOs [10]: associations, foundations, federations and/or unions of organisations, organisations that are registered abroad and are active in Cyprus and not-for-profit companies.

Associations, foundations, federations and/or unions of organisations, register under the Law on Associations and Foundations. Non-for-profit companies register under the Companies Law.

Progressive amendments to the Law on Associations and Foundations of 1972 have been approved in 2017 by the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus. This new and modernized legal framework defines the registration procedure and introduces better provisions on good governance and transparency, obligations of NGOs, etc.

The laws clearly provide definitions that distinguish the different types of legal personalities (i.e. association, foundation, etc) as well as other definitions (i.e. not-for-profit).

A new draft law on Public Benefit Status, still in process and under review, will grant public benefit status to NGOs, and will replace the Charities law. The draft law aims to give NGOs an added status (of public benefit) and introduce transparency conditions but also benefits that are expected to facilitate a more sustainable development and future.

Specific legal status for some NGOs
Certain organizations enjoy a specific legal status under specific laws, such as:
- the Cyprus Red Cross (Law 39 of 1967);
- the Boy Scouts Association (the Boy Scouts Association Law Cap 34);
- the Cyprus Girls Guide Association (the Cyprus Girls Guide Association Law 81/1968).

Legislation on fundraising

Fundraising has been regulated since 1973 (the Street and House to House Collections Law - Cap. 95. N.41/73). Fundraising is now regulated by a new and modernized legislative framework (Law on the Conduct of Fundraising) which specifies better provisions and procedures on the conduct of fund-raising activities, regulation, monitoring and transparency. The law provides a more effective context for controlling and protecting fundraising from unlawful acts.

Other legislation

The legislative framework also includes provisions for exemptions that benefit NGOs (i.e. the Capital Gains Tax Law, the Value Added Tax (VAT) Law, the Income Tax Law, etc.

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10 The existing legislative framework does not include the term NGO

Definitions

Some useful definitions found in the existing legal framework can facilitate a better understanding on aspects and concepts of the volunteering infrastructure:

● Not for profit purpose is "every voluntary action or act which tends to alleviate or relieve human suffering, human poverty, illness or need … any action which contributes to the improvement of the welfare of the people in the Republic of Cyprus" [11]

● A volunteer is "any natural person who offers, without any reward, financial or other, services or other means to individuals or groups or to the society at large, in order to address social and other needs" [12]

● A voluntary organization is any "organisation which is comprised of volunteers and its main or exclusive purpose is not for profit" [13]

● Not-for-profit in relation to an association/foundation is "an association or foundation, that does not distribute any profits that may arise from its activities to its members, its founders, its Board of Directors, or its officials, but invests or uses any profits toward the continuation and achievement of its objectives" [14]

Other definitions and aspects that relate to the volunteering infrastructure:

- **Active Citizenship /Active citizen-** in the Charter of Active Citizenship , drawing insight from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU as well as from national experience . The Charter sets :
  a) The General Principles of the roles of the active citizen , the state and the Active Citizenship Bodies (NGO's)
  b) Rights of the Active Citizen
  c) Obligations of the Active Citizen

As defined in the Charter , the 16 articles of the Charter "are the embodiment of the fundamental rights and as such they exist and must be followed even if the European and national legislations do not provide explicitly for their protection". The recognition of this Document by the Republic of Cyprus will contribute to its building and development through the collective exercise of citizens' rights, already recognised as guaranteed fundamental rights [15].

11 The Pan Cyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council Law no. 61(I)2006
12 bidd
13 bid
14 The Law on Associations and Foundations

4.STRUCTURE OF THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING

The structure of the sector reflects the unique characteristics of the history of the island which has been progressively developed according to the specific socio-economic and political circumstances of various eras of the history of Cyprus. The current structure of the sector is comprised of a wide range of organised forms spread at national and local levels, covering satisfactorily, the geographical map of the island.

The structure of the sector

The structure of the sector involves organisations with members (as physical persons), organisations with members as legal personalities but also informal groups of volunteers.
Hence organisations act as:

- middle level membership structures (such as confederations and federations and councils) whose membership consists of organisations sharing the same objectives (i.e. Pancyprian Con-Federation of Organisations for the Disabled, Pancyprian Federation of Associations for the Welfare of the Elderly, Federation of Environmental and Ecological Organisations of Cyprus, etc).

- higher-level membership structures (such as national umbrella, coordinative bodies/councils) whose membership consists of both standard and middle level membership structure organizations.

This rich landscape of volunteering structures engages volunteers in different ways to achieve diverse purposes. The forms of volunteering performed in most structures may take different forms, for example, administrative/leadership volunteering (volunteers as board members and leaders), grass-root volunteering (volunteering in local/community projects), 'professional' level volunteering (highly skilled and trained volunteers who engage in demanding activities), campaign/advocacy volunteering etc.

'Outside' the 'volunteering sector boundary' (if one can claim that such a boundary exists) the arena extends to include the whole fabric of the civil society, shaping a diverse arena of organisations characterised by plurality and multiple interests and sectors.

Areas of activity:

- welfare
- health
- religion/faith
- culture/arts
- advocacy
- sports activities
- student and youth affairs
- volunteering
- reconciliation and peace
- environment

- education, training and research
- grant-making/fundraising
- human/women/minority rights (rights of specific groups)
- refugees
- combating discrimination
- addressing violence and trafficking
- combating poverty
- humanitarian aid
- animal protection

Note: *This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it gives a good indication of the different areas of volunteering activity.*

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Human resources

Associations are governed by a board of members - administrative or executive boards, composed by volunteers and they also employ paid staff.

The structure of the supreme coordinating body of volunteering

The national non-governmental structure for volunteering coordination, promotion, advocacy and support (the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council (PVCC) enjoys a large membership of organizations representing a wide range of the interests of civil society and diverse areas of work. It was founded in 1973 and today functions under the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council Law 61(I)/2006) which has replaced the Council's previous law of 1989.

Membership structure (2020)

● 6 District Volunteerism Coordinative Councils (DVCCS)
● 83 NGOs (Pancyprian NGOs working at the national level)
● 333 local NGOs (members of the DVCCs)

Volunteer Centres
The Volunteer Centre, founded in 1991, functions as the coordinative and support centre for the promotion of volunteering in Cyprus. The Volunteer Centre is decentralised in each district of the Republic and functions under the responsibility of the District Volunteerism Coordinative Councils. The Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Paphos, Famagusta and Kyrenia Volunteer Centres coordinate, promote, support and facilitate volunteer service, voluntary projects and volunteering in general. The Volunteer Centres, coordinated by the PVCC, follow common policy and procedures: identification of social problems and needs, matching of need and demand, registration of volunteers, training and support to registered volunteers, monitoring of volunteers, development/implementation of voluntary projects, etc. The PVCC legislation, Article, 4(1)j provides the framework for the establishment, maintenance, education, administration and utilization of Volunteer Centers.

State-Voluntary sector relations

The voluntary sector has traditionally collaborated and communicated quite effectively with the external socio-economic and political environment, thus creating a satisfactory enabling environment for volunteering. Relations between the state and the voluntary organisations have traditionally focused to specific policy areas (i.e. welfare, health), but collaborations have expanded in other policy domains. Naturally, voluntary sector-state relations can change at different points in time. Key factors that can influence the State-voluntary sector relations are: changing perceptions and expectations of the roles and responsibilities of society and the state, the State's support (tools, funding, legal framework), the impact of political decisions on the sector or the groups, economic priorities, etc.
The State has traditionally promoted a "for-volunteering strategy" and assigned specific roles to NGOs in their official programmes and action plans. The Social Welfare Services have had the longest key role in promoting volunteering and mobilising community collective action through their Community Work programme. The increasing needs of the Cypriot state and ideologies on the roles and responsibilities of the state and society have mainly pushed towards the development of strong collaborative strategies with the volunteer involving organisations. State's funding strategy has been an important factor that has strengthened relations and has expanded collaboration projects to meet specific needs and objectives.

The long State-voluntary sector cooperation has also involved an "active participation in policy making" tradition, which has enabled the sector's representation in the State's advisory councils, boards and committees and the effective channelling of the needs, interests and concerns of society at the policy making levels.

5.OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

A number of key stakeholders of the Cypriot society have traditionally supported volunteering and have adopted "pro-volunteering" strategies.

● Social actors (trade union structures, etc), political parties and/or organisations associated with political ideologies have a long tradition in engaging their membership in volunteering in order to meet their objectives or even to support volunteers in communities.

● The private sector in Cyprus also has a long history of direct and indirect involvement with the voluntary sector. In the last decade under the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility the private sector has financed and supported volunteer projects, engaged in charity and fund-raising campaigns and events or have engaged in employee volunteering.

● The Church of Cyprus and the wider religious-based structure such as "Philoptochoi" (friends for the poor associations) and various philanthropic-based associations and committees, established since the early years of the history of Cyprus, has historically been a key player in supporting and practicing volunteering and also implementing welfare projects and social programmes. Furthermore, the Church of Cyprus, as part of its social mission, finances and supports voluntary organisations, addresses contemporary social problems and the needs of society at large.

● The educational system has also a long tradition of promoting the values of volunteering and developing volunteering initiatives with the voluntary/non-profit sector's structures. A successful volunteering strategy developed between the official education system (the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus) and the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council includes the "School Social Clubs" institution and the "Youth and Volunteerism Programme", and the "National essay competition on volunteering". A Manual for promoting Volunteering and Active Citizenship at schools, has also been published by the Commissioner of Volunteering and NGO's.

6 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

● **State funding:** Various Ministries provide financial support schemes to NGOs in order to meet specific objectives in their area of competence. The Scheme with the longest tradition is that administered by the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. The systematic review of these schemes has progressively managed to improve bureaucratic procedures and minimize obstacles identified in the funding process.

● **EU and other funding:** EU funding programmes or other international funding, form another source of funding for NGOs that have the capacity and knowledge to respond to this demanding process.

● **Fundraising:** Most NGOs engage in fundraising in order to increase their sources of income and meet their demanding objectives.

● **Funding from the private sector:** The private sector has also a long tradition in supporting NGOs, either with direct funding or with innovative projects in collaboration with volunteers.

7.REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

Research on volunteering in Cyprus is scarce [16]. In the long social history of Cyprus, the 'persona,' contribution, underpinning ideologies, values and historical trajectory of an important structure of society (the voluntary sector) has not, unlike in some some other countries, been the subject of any substantial empirical and theoretical exploration [17]. There is no regular or systematic research on volunteering or its contribution in society, economy, etc. This lack of research data proves a constant barrier not only to the development and recognition of volunteering but also in setting strategic targets for its sustainability and long-term development.

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16 Latest findings on the volunteering infrastructure can be found in the following sources:
CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Cyprus
Directorate-General for Communication Directorate for relations with citizens, Monitoring Public Opinion
Unit (2011) European Parliament Special Eurobarometer 75.2-Voluntary work
Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and Directorate General Education and Culture (DG EAC) (2010) Volunteering in the European Union: Country report of Cyprus
European Commission (2018) Flash Eurobarometer 455, European Youth Report, Survey requested by the European Commission
European Commission (2013) Flash Eurobarometer 373, Europeans' engagement in participatory democracy, Survey been coordinated by Directorate-General for Communication
Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication
European Parliament (2011) Volunteering and Intergenerational Solidarity Report, Special Eurobarometer /Wave 75.2, Survey commissioned by the European Parliament and coordinated by the Directorate General for Communication (Public Opinion Monitoring Unit)
European Volunteer Centre-CEV (2009) An enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe: Situation – Trends – Outlook, Final Report – Conference Conclusions. Available at: www.cev.be
Patsalidou, O. and Kyriakou, A. (2009) Volunteering in Europe: The voluntary sector in Cyprus', Volunteering across Europe Project, Research Year III, on behalf of the Italian Volunteering Support Centres: SPES Lazio, CSV Friuli Venezia Giulia - Celivo Genova AVM Marche, CSV Basilicata, CNV Lucca, Publication: SPES;
Youth Board of Cyprus (2016) The active participation of youth in the public sphere and the democratic life
17 Patsalidou, O. (2008) 'Understanding the factors that have influenced the development of the voluntary sector in Cyprus from the mid-end Colonial Period (1950/1960) to the present day, PhD Thesis, Nottingham University, UK

8.ETHICS AND QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

Most authorities and volunteer related organisations acknowledge the importance of responsible volunteering and they work towards this direction using difference means to achieve quality and ethics. Promoting informed, skilled and responsible volunteers is achieved through training, codes of conduct, manuals on standards, roles and responsibilities, internal regulations, etc. In relation to volunteering, most organisations have their aims to implement effective strategies and practices, to involve volunteers in meaningful ways and to support volunteers. Although organisations may have their own internal strategies to achieve their goals, important tools have been developed by authorities responsible for volunteering , to strengthen ethics and quality standards for volunteering:

- **Code of Conduct, Good Governance, and Ethics for NGOs (2017)** - Published by the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council
- **Code of Ethics for volunteers (2017)** - Published by the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council
- **Manual for building a quality management system in NGOs** (based on the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 (2018) - Developed by the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council
- **Volunteer management** - **a Manual for volunteer coordinators** (2015) 3rd edition - Published by the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council
- **Volunteering Portal www.ethelontis.net** - it defines, among others, quality procedures for the management and monitoring of volunteers - Portal Administrator: Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council
- **Charter for active citizenship and active citizen (2017)** - Office of the Comimisioner for Volunteering and NGOs
- **Charter for the Rights and Responsibilities of volunteers** - Office of the Commisioner for Volunteering and NGOs

Other work has also been developed by a few NGOs in their area of activity to promote ethics and quality standards.

9.AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

The Volunteering Portal- www.ethelontis.net

The first database for volunteer management (The Volunteering Portal - www.ethelontis.net) has been developed byt he Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council in 2005.
The Volunteering Portal has 6 basic functions:

1.Registration of new volunteers
2. Registration of volunteer groups
3. Registration of needs from organized groups
4. A matching need and demand mechanism

Information:

    a. Announcements/Events
    b. Volunteer Calendar
    c. Information on Volunteerism
    d. Useful links
    6. Volunteer Information Service

The Service informs volunteers/volunteer groups on volunteering opportunities and sends alerts/reminders (through email and SMS) on their voluntary service schedule.

The Volunteering Portal has introduced quality standard in volunteer registration and management (training, monitoring, evaluation of volunteers, etc.) and has created a more effective and efficient process for matching needs and demands.

Another portal (Prosfero.com.cy) developed by the Office of the Commissioner of Volunteering and NGOs has the following main functions: search engine of charities or charity events, mechanism for offering assistance (i.e. material goods and/or services) to NGOs and facilitating volunteering in NGOs.

Promotion of Volunteering

National and local raising awareness volunteering campaigns are launched throughout the year by different actors. These campaigns aim to attract new volunteers, disseminate information about NGOs' work or to promote the values of volunteering. New technologies, along the traditional mass media and communication are used to disseminate volunteering developments, opportunities, projects, etc. Volunteerism Week, organized since 1994 by the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council, is the main/national activity to promote volunteering and its contribution to society. It is organized in the first week of December, to celebrate the International Volunteer Day [18].

10. ADDITIONAL COUNTRY SPECIFICITIES

As in most geographical contexts, the roots of the voluntary sector in Cyprus are found in its tradition, culture, religion and history. It has evolved under specific circumstances and historical conditions and influenced by a constellation of socio-economic, political and cultural forces and factors. Philanthropy has to a large extent formed the basis of most informal and formal voluntary activities through the years. Although the voluntary and non-governmental sectors of the modern welfare state still reflects the past, it has entered a new dynamic path characterised by professional and multi-dimensional volunteering practices.

18 The International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (IVD) was adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly in 1985 and has since then been celebrated by many countries

11.RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cypriot context has many positive elements which create the basis for an enabling environment for volunteering. Nevertheless NGOs/voluntary organisations function in a challenging environment, which influences their future development and sustainability.

Clearly, there is not one future, but multiple possible futures, depending on how the sector, the state and other key players will react/respond to these challenges in order to strengthen the volunteering infrastructure.

Some issues that could be addressed towards this end are: safeguard that legislation provides a comprehensive legal framework that addresses threats and challenges, develop a national strategy for volunteering as well as national quality standards, build more effective communication channels between the voluntary infrastructure and society at large, safeguard that all NGOs have access to funding and resources, strengthen NGOs' participation in policy making, improve capacity building to strengthen NGOs, provide incentives for systematic research on the voluntary infrastructure, improve policies and procedures and the environment in which voluntary organisations/NGO function and safeguard that this environment is supportive to organisations and that it provides opportunities towards building a stronger and more enabling environment for volunteering.