

EYV 2011 - VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

Impact of Youth Volunteering in Austria

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**By Thipparaju,
Volunteer from India**



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1 Action Research

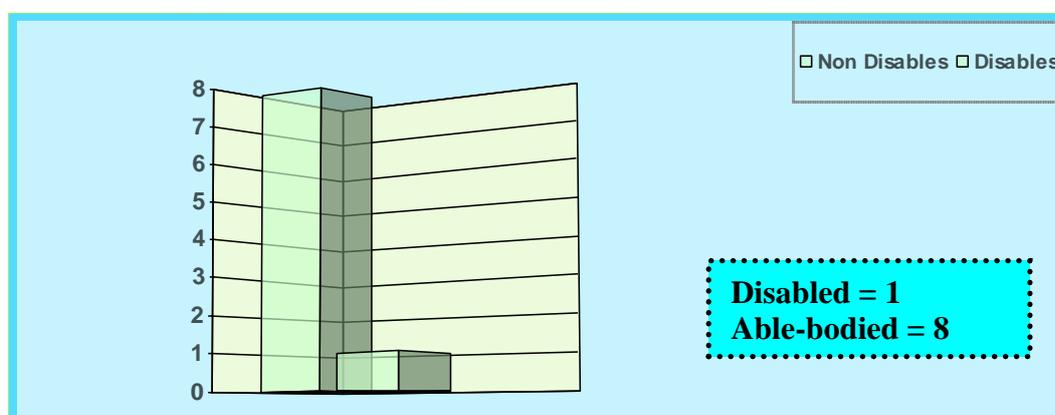
The main objective of the impact assessment

This research is part of the impact assessment of the project “EYV-2011 Volunteering Matters”, which aims to take stock, raise awareness and address volunteering programmes and practices vis-à-vis disabled / non disables, and to bring into focus the disability situation in the participating EU and Partner countries for young people and for society as a whole.

The objective of the questionnaire used in this study was to assess the benefits and challenges of international volunteering from the point of view of the host organisation.

2 ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTEERS´ INPUTS

2.1 *General Information about Volunteers*



The above diagram shows that the participation of the disabled in EVS programmes is not bad. Based on the 9 responses, it is clear that just one disabled person is working as an EVS volunteer. However, if taken in terms of percentage, then 89% are able-bodied volunteers and 11% disabled volunteers in Austria. This means that in the meanwhile it possible for the disabled to apply for a voluntary service project.

There is however yet another volunteer not belonging to the EVS Programme but she is a volunteer in the experience Austria programme.

Volunteers Projects

Many volunteers choose projects working with children, and it appears that most of them are very interested in working with children or in inclusive educational programmes.

Diana and Jenny chose their projects based on their interests

Example: Diana is working in organic farming without the chemicals and Jenny volunteers in general campaigns presentation and development, translation, managing the reception and updating the database.

Among the other volunteers, one works with elderly disabled people and another works on international exchanges, web tools designing and providing assistance to incoming and outgoing volunteer.

2.2 Motivations

More are less all the volunteers said that they are very eager to know about other countries to learn about other cultures, as this is a very good way of creating opportunities for young people become independent in their lives through training and intercultural exchange. From the nine respondents, four were interested in learning about others countries and cultures. One volunteer said she took this work as a challenge, two were eager to learn about their work and the two volunteers did not reply to this question. As such, ICYE primary mission in promoting cultural exchange and learning works very actively.

Their Projects

Many of the volunteers interviewed were new to their work field and were curious about their projects.

Contents	Agree	Disagree	Not Related
I had special skill in working field	3	3	3
I want to know about my work field	7	1	1
Getting to know about the foreign culture and their own culture.	9	0	0

- The responses show that out of nine volunteers only three had special skills related to the work in their project. Another six had no knowledge of their field of work field. This shows that volunteering is a learning process for them.
- Out of nine volunteers, seven volunteers agreed that they want to know more about their field of work. One volunteer disagree because she would like to help in a kindergarten or school and last one wants to learn more about pedagogy.
- For the last statement, all volunteers agreed that they wish to know about the foreign culture and also their own culture.

Language learning

Most of them said they want to be fluent in another language and that they are very interested in learning other language. Few of them said they want to learn English

Language Learning Interest - Volunteer Pyramid

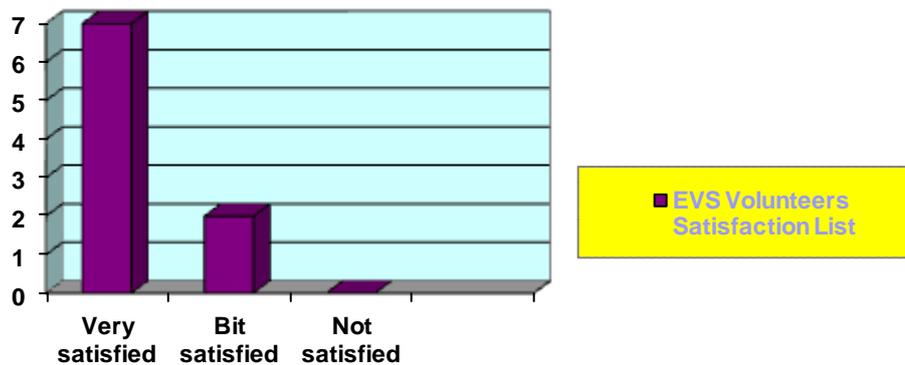
Interested in learning basic German – 6

Interested in learning fluent German – 1

Interested in learning English - 1

Eight volunteers replied and one did not. Six volunteers expressed their interest in learning basic German and one is interested in fluently. From all volunteers interviewed one volunteer was eager to learn English.

2.3 Personal Impact



The graph above reveals that most of them are very satisfied. Thus, out of nine volunteers, seven volunteers are very satisfied. For example, one volunteer said that this experience abroad, living in a different country is very nice. Another said that she came to Austria as she is very curious about European society, for example, in the Austrian nature, pines forest, frozen summit of mountain harmony nature in a village setting and intermingling with village people.

Nevertheless, two volunteers are only slightly satisfied. One replied that what she had not expected was the tasks and methods of work and that she does not have a working structure in her project. Another volunteer replied that she had a lot of children in her project (a kindergarten which is why she was not very satisfied).

2.4 Present services for the disabled

2.4.1 Suggestions for Improvement

Learning more about the current situation of disabled people is a crucial part of my research. However, I unfortunately received only one reply to my questionnaire. Apart from that, I interviewed some disabled people. Thus, the information I collected is based on an interview with a volunteer and one other interview.

Integrative and Inclusive Education

Except for severe and profoundly disabled persons, most generally study in ordinary schools. The severe and profoundly disabled usually study in special schools.

Barrier free environment

The barrier free environment here is very good but they need more such measures in public places. Yet, they are happy with the facilities provided in public places such as metro stations, some streets and restaurants, etc.

Medical follow up

They feel good about receiving insurance and such kind of services that are vital to their daily needs.

Vocational and Job Opportunities

There is a need for more disabled vocational training centres where they get trained to read and write, which opens up chances for work. At the same time, those who cannot write and read could receive training in music and art.

2.4.2 Rights for the disables

Austrians don't have separate rights for the disabled because these rights are connected with basic human rights. This impressed me a lot, that in the meanwhile, the disabled are not treated specially or differently. In India, where I come from, disabled people receive special treatment. We have a separate law (means they are special regulations) for the disabled regulated state-wise. The existing situation of the disabled in Austria is not bad and there are many services and other things and people survive quite well. However, some disabled peoples feel that they need more services.

It's unforgettable for me what I experienced here and I feel this has been a great chance to learn about the other country's rights for the disabled. Based on the situation in India for the disabled, it is around 70% different here. Thus my plan had been to work in this sector when I return home.

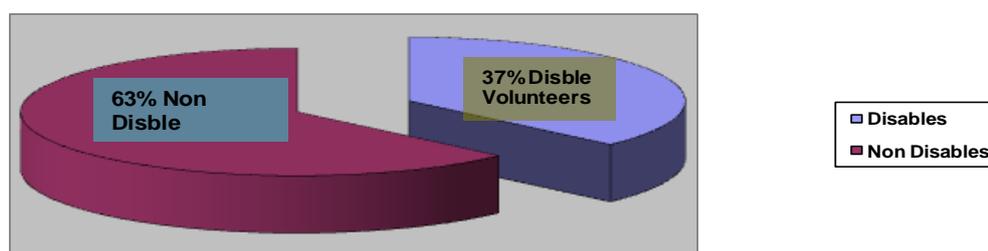
3 ANALYSIS OF HOST PROJECTS' INPUTS

3.1 General Information about Organisations

Field of work:

Contents	Project
Education	
Inclusive Education	2
Non Formal Training	
Disabled	1
Social Problems	1
Others	1

This table shows that two organisations focus on inclusive education, one works with the disabled in kindergartens and in vocational training and one in media. For example, one organisation works on two aspects: inclusive education and social problems. Other NGOs work with media assistance and radio administration, underaged refugees and vocational training (for the disabled), as well as integrated education.

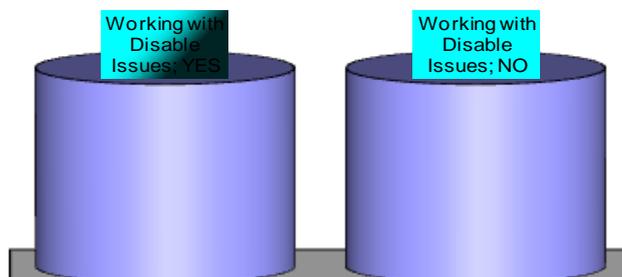


Previous Experience of the Organisations (Volunteers Hosting):

Volunteers were hosted from 2000 – 2011:

- Totally 54 volunteers have been hosted by the Grenzenlos during this period. From a total of 54, 20 disabled are volunteers in the EVS programme.
- In Vienna, out of four Organisations, two address disability issues.
- Two organisations address other issues such as radio and media assistance.

- One organisation works with underaged refugees. As such, it appears that 50% of the organisations address disability issues. The other 50% work on other subjects such as inclusive education and social problems, underage refugees, media assistance-radio, administration and vocational training-integration education.



3.2 Motivations

- Two organisations replied differently: One Organisation said: “We wanted to give those volunteers that had a difficult situation in their former project a second chance to continue their voluntary service.” Another one said: “As community radio station we appreciate the cultural exchange within people from different European countries. The diversity of languages has especially in a community media context a strong tradition. Working with volunteers who speak other languages than German as first language is usually enriching in terms of dealing with language diversity in everyday work. Another motivation is to work with young adults to get to know their perspectives on different community media related topics.”
- Another 2 organisations said the same thing: “Very important to motivate people toward Intercultural Exchange.”

Volunteers with disability

The organisations hosting disabled volunteers replied that:

- Inclusion is their primary mission and they want to be a role model for other organisations and give the opportunity to experience being abroad.
- They are creating these opportunities to learn “Intercultural and Peer group activities”.

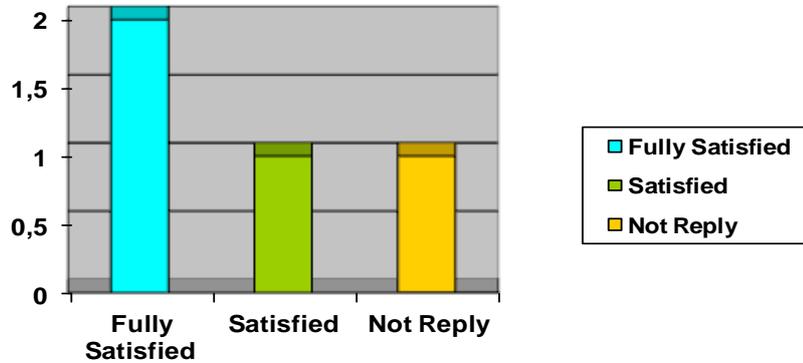
3.3 Statistics Related to Volunteers in Host Organisations

Duration for volunteers working in the host organisations interviewed:

Months	Almost Always	Occasionally	Rarely or Never
Disable Volunteers			
1 to 3 months	0	2	0
3 to 6 months	0	1	0
6 to 12 months	0	1	0
Total	0	4	0
Non Disable Volunteers			
1 to 3 months	0	1	2
3 to 6 months	1	2	1
6 to 12 months	2	1	1
Total	3	4	4

3.4 Volunteer Impact

Satisfaction Levels of the Organisations



Half of the organisations are fully satisfied working with the international volunteers, whereas one organisation states that it is satisfied by the volunteers work, and one organisation did not respond to this question.

3.5 Learning and Conclusions

What is the situation of disabled volunteers in EVS (from the perspective of the host organisation)?

Disabled people are getting opportunities to work as EVS volunteers in Vienna. The responses to this research indicate that 37% of the disabled persons have been in the EVS programme and presently some are still volunteering in EVS. This is very good sign for the disabled community, which enables them to learn more things, also through the intercultural exchange with people of other countries. If this percentage continues, I feel it will be a great opportunity for the disabled. In Vienna, there are many volunteers working on disability issues and importantly inclusion is the medium through which the work is carried out (except for people with severe disabilities). It's very nice know it, disable peoples are not separated by the community instead of that they are accepted as a vital part of society. Here rights of the disabled are merged with human rights and services are very good. Nevertheless, many disables peoples are not aware of their rights. Since some organisations and volunteers work on disability issues, it would be very useful to inform the disabled about their rights.