

Analysis of external factors influencing the development of volunteering, gender, and social inclusion activities

Mapping carried out of Europe, Morocco, Palestine, and Spain

CB4VOL: Across borders, strengthening youth volunteering to fight for gender equality and social inclusion



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1



Index

1. Introduction

2. Regional analysis

2.1. Europe

2.2. Morocco

2.3. Palestine

2.4. Spain

1. Introduction



1. Introduction

Alianza-ActionAid, together with ASTICUDE, WIDE+ and YWCA are implementing the CB4VOL project, Across borders, strengthening youth volunteering to fight for gender equality and social inclusion, which seeks to strengthen the capacity of the partner organizations to develop a volunteer work at the local level through the promotion of the participation of young people in the local communities, the improvement of awareness and knowledge of gender equality and social inclusion.

As part of this initiative, an analysis of external factors is carried out to provide a general overview of the regional realities that surround and affect the different organisations when developing work on volunteering, gender equality and social inclusion, in order to offer an insight into the different contexts and to adapt the work and the project strategy to these realities.

This analysis is also intended to be of use to other organisations in these regions in developing their work in these areas.

This study will offer an insight into the different regional contexts, as well as the opportunities and barriers to building volunteer work with young people, which will determine the work to be carried out and the starting point of the project. In this way, it will allow the partners to know the realities that determine the actions of each of them and determine the relevant needs to be taken into account for the development of the content of the next steps and for the development of sustainable and long-lasting volunteerism.

The methodology used to carry out the studies was based on the consultation of some key actors in the development of local volunteering policies and plans (primary sources) and the research of related texts, studies and publications (secondary sources).

Thus, the working process is based on the following steps:

1. Choice of factors to be studied

Sharing among the organisations the regional aspects outside the organisations that

are considered to be conditioning factors to be taken into account when carrying out voluntary work.

Following this line, the partners had a working day where they identified the most important external aspects to be taken into account in the development of volunteering programmes and which were common to all. This identification allows to narrow down the information and to focus on what is really important:

- The context of volunteering in the region
- Context of work on gender equality and social inclusion
- Accessibility to volunteering of people with fewer opportunities
- Legislation and/or policy regarding volunteering
- Funding opportunities for volunteering
- Socio-economic and cultural norms affecting volunteering

2. Preparation of the people who will carry out this research

It is necessary to know and understand that this mapping work is characterised by:

- Being an external study of the context in which the organisation is framed.
- The relationship between these external factors and the work and needs of the organisation.
- Facilitating action plans and finding opportunities

3. Implementation of the study

This research must be as complete, rigorous and objective as possible. To this end, reliable and up-to-date sources of information must be used. Furthermore, these sources of information and the content reflected in each factor should refer to the regional context to which each organisation belongs, trying at all times to obtain the most specific information possible.

Once this study has been carried out, it will provide a comprehensive analysis of the reality that surrounds and shapes the volunteering work of each of the organisations in their regions. This analysis will then provide insight into how each organisation's work can benefit from and develop its volunteering strategy according to the regional external factors that surround and shape them.

The results of this work will also serve as a comparative tool for youth volunteering, gender equality and social inclusion work in each of the regions analysed. An analysis will be obtained and will allow us to observe the different advances and obstacles and the road still to be travelled in this area. Additionally, it is expected that the results of this analysis of regional externalities will be useful to other organisations in these areas of volunteering, gender and social inclusion by providing an insight into the current situation that also determines the work of other organisations in these fields.

2. Regional analysis



2. Regional Analysis

2.1. Europe - by WIDE+

1. The context of volunteering in the region

In Europe (at least at the EU level), volunteering is understood as a key tool of citizen engagement and expression of solidarity contributing to the future of Europe and equality on the basis of EU Values and active citizen engagement.

Volunteering, both in the EU and beyond, constitutes a rich experience in a non-formal and informal learning context and enhances young people's personal, socio-educational and professional development, active citizenship, civic participation and employability. Young people's spirit of initiative is an important asset for society and for the labour market.

It is estimated that between 92 and 94 million adults in the EU – i.e. 22 % to 23 % of Europeans aged over 15 – are involved in volunteering.

An Eurobarometer survey published in April 2015, revealed that the most common areas for volunteering are charity, humanitarian and development aid (44 %); education, training or sport (40 %), and culture or art (15 %). Their activities are usually aimed at a local community (66 %) or the volunteer's country as a whole (27 %). Cross-border volunteering remains modest, with only 7 % of activities being aimed at another EU country, and 11 % at other parts of the world.

Volunteering has evolved at a different pace across the EU. While some countries have long-standing volunteering traditions, in others, the voluntary sector is still poorly developed or has yet to emerge. For instance, over a third of young people in Ireland (42 %), Denmark (39 %) and the Netherlands (38 %) have done a volunteering activity, while respondents in Bulgaria (10 %), Greece (13 %) and Sweden (15 %) are the least likely to have done so.

In terms of youth volunteering, the European Union Youth Report in 2015 shows that around 1 in 4 (25%) young people across the EU were involved in some kind of voluntary activity. However, the same research shows that the rates of involvement were very different between countries, with the highest over 40% and the lowest around 10%. The research also shows that as young people got older, fewer take part in any kind of voluntary activities. In 2014, across the EU, 29% of 15-19 year olds were active, but only 23% of 25-29 year olds.

2. The context of work on gender equality and social inclusion

In European youth work and non-formal education, social inclusion is understood as a broad practice which ensures that people with fewer opportunities than their peers have equal access to the structures and programmes offered. Inclusion was already one of the priorities in the previous generation of the EU youth programmes.

Social inclusion means "improving participation for all in society through enhancing opportunities, equal access to resources, having a voice and respect for everybody's rights. It requires the distribution of opportunities and resources in a way that minimises disadvantage and marginalisation. This implies that institutions, structures, and measures, such as learning opportunities, should be designed to welcome the diversity of life's situations and identities.

When it comes to gender equality, the EU has made significant progress in gender equality over the last decades. However, gender gaps remain and in the labour market women are still over-represented in lower-paid sectors and under-represented in decision-making positions. When it comes to gender equality, attitudes towards equality are evolving, but even today's younger generation is not immune to gender stereotypes and disparities. Today, inequalities between women and men persist, particularly in the job market.

The European Commission has placed gender equality high on its political agenda and has recently adopted an ambitious Gender Equality Strategy (2020-2025) aimed towards a gender-equal Europe. Gender equality-related projects are supported and funded through a number of EU programmes: from dedicated grants under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (1.55 billion euros) to the big structural, social and cohesive EU funds.

Gender equality as a core value of the EU is enshrined in European youth policy documents. However, even if youth policies are a central feature of policymaking both at EU and national level, the gender dimension is lacking in a large number of the recommendations, resolutions and studies that have been enacted and carried out on this issue. Apart from general considerations, most research and policy documents very rarely tackle gender differences, even if attention to this issue has been increasing in recent years.

Under the main EU programme for volunteering, European Solidarity Corps, gender equality is an important element of the European Solidarity Corps. Project promoters are invited to consider this when developing their project proposal and demonstrate how they will ensure gender balance among participants. The Corps also supports projects dealing with the issue of gender equality; e.g. focusing on changing mentalities, sensitising communities to gender and diversity, contributing to breaking down barriers for women's access to employment.

A specific topic on gender equality has been added for the European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 that will enable to track the number of projects, involved participants and related funding, addressing this policy.

3. How is the accessibility to volunteering of people with fewer opportunities?

Inclusion was already one of the priorities in the previous generation of the EU youth programmes. However, the new Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes 2021-2027 have become even more inclusive. Dedicated financial support for inclusion, new formats, simplified application processes, as well as

training and networking opportunities for organisations and youth workers, increase the programmes accessibility for grassroots organisations, as well as a significant number of young people who face more obstacles to participating in international projects than their peers.

The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (in SALTO-YOUTH, 2021) supports and strengthens the inclusion and diversity dimension in the new programme generation 2021-2027. It highlights that European youth work should promote diversity and create equitable access opportunities for everyone by addressing the barriers and variety of obstacles that keep many young people from participating in international youth projects. The understanding of the programmes is that inclusive activities should target all young people and to achieve this, special emphasis should be placed on reaching young people with fewer opportunities.

Under the European Solidarity Corps Programme, youth can apply for funding to cover these needs through inclusion support (to support participation of young people with fewer opportunities or special needs related to reinforced mentorship, monitoring and support of participants, preparation of tailor-made activities to support participation of young people with fewer opportunities) or exceptional costs (to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities or special needs on equal terms as others related to reasonable adjustments or investment in physical assets).

4. Legislation and/or policy regarding volunteering

There is no specific legislation, but other policy instruments to govern volunteering. Though it is not binding, there is the European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers which serves as an appeal to local, national and European authorities to adequately design and update policies relating to volunteering. The Charter gives also guidance on the rights and responsibilities that volunteers and volunteering providers should undertake.

In terms of youth volunteering programmes, other than Erasmus+, the main programme for youth volunteering, which was previously known as the European Volunteer Service (EVS), is the European Solidarity Corps. In fact, the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2021-2027 provides funding for this programme in the areas of volunteering and local solidarity projects.

Young people aged between 18 and 30 can volunteer for community projects in their own country or in foreign countries. The list of projects and areas is diverse and can go from education and training, citizenship and democratic participation to environmental and nature protection, migration and culture, and much more.

There are also campaigns like the European Volunteering Capital competition which aims to promote and develop volunteering at local level. This open Europe-wide competition for municipalities aims to promote volunteering at local level by giving recognition to municipalities that support and strengthen partnerships with volunteer centres, and organisations involving volunteers, and celebrate and promote volunteering and the impact made by them. The project is initiated by the Centre for European Volunteering (www.europeanvolunteercentre.org).

5. Funding opportunities for volunteering

Yes there are funding opportunities, and the main youth volunteering programme is the European Solidarity Corps. With a dedicated budget of €1.009 billion for 2021-2027, the new European Solidarity Corps programme will provide opportunities for at least 270 000 young people. They will help address societal and humanitarian challenges through volunteering or by setting up their own solidarity projects. The programme's ambition is not only to be more inclusive but also greener and more digital. For the first time, the programme will also allow young people to volunteer in the humanitarian aid field across the world.

There are also funding opportunities for volunteering under the ERASMUS+ programme, Erasmus+ is the EU programme that aims to improve the skills and employability of young people, promote their social inclusion and well-being, and

foster improvements in youth work and youth policy at local, national and international level. It has an estimated budget of €26.2 billion (2021-2027). The 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life.

6. Socio-economic and cultural norms affecting volunteering

In terms of socio-economic and cultural barriers affecting volunteering, cultural differences may be perceived as barriers and can particularly affect people with fewer opportunities. Such differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, all the more for people with a migrant or refugee background, especially newly-arrived migrants, people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc. Being exposed to foreign languages and cultural differences when taking part in any kind of programme activities may put off individuals.

Socio-economic disadvantage like a low standard of living, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, in long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc., may represent a barrier. Conversely, people with a high socioeconomic status are more likely to volunteer because they have more verbal, writing, and social skills, which give them more confidence to reach out to others and make them more desirable as volunteers.

Another issue is the lack of recognition of abilities gained through volunteering practices and experiences and the promotion of the field as a system supporting personal and professional development. The recognition of volunteer-based youth workers is clearly linked with identity issues and the transition of beginners entering the world of youth work at the local, national and European levels. Other difficulties may derive from the limited transferability of services (in particular support to people with fewer opportunities) that needs to be "mobile" together with the participants when going to a far place or, all the more, abroad.

The impact of COVID-19 has brought additional challenges and financial hardships to implementing volunteer-based youth work due to the increased precarity of certain communities which affect youth, but at the same time has provided opportunities for intergenerational solidarity, something that needs to be strengthened.

Overall, these are the main barriers to volunteering from youths:

- A lack of motivation and information about how to start volunteering,
- Too few role models that young people can be inspired by,
- Not enough information on the opportunities and projects that are available,
- The costs of taking part can be too high,
- Very little recognition of all the effort put in,
- Little acceptance by potential employers of the new skills gained through getting involved.

2.2. Morocco - by ASTICUDE

1. The context of volunteering in the region

In Morocco, the new law defines contractual voluntary work as any activity carried out by one or more self-persons, outside their family, studies, job or occupation, voluntarily and without pay, under a written contract between them and the organization organizing contractual voluntary work with the aim of achieving a public benefit.

Voluntary work is based on several principles, including freedom to volunteer, independence in organization, impartiality, impartiality and quality in the implementation of voluntary work, solidarity and the will to actively participate in social life. The principles also include equal access to contractual volunteer work, non-discrimination between contract volunteers and beneficiaries, the maintenance of the dignity of volunteers and beneficiaries and respect for their physical and psychological integrity.

According to the Moroccan law, voluntary work, whether inside or outside Morocco, and from there, may only be organized by every private legal person that does not aim to make a profit, or every public legal person who performs this work in accordance with legislative and regulatory texts.

On the other hand, the volunteer contract signed between the volunteer and the organization organizing the contractual volunteer work is not considered an employment contract, or a service provision contract, and it is prohibited to compensate employees, wage earners or service providers with contracted volunteers.

In order to organize contractual voluntary work, it is required to obtain in advance an accreditation, which the administration receives after submitting an application. Legal persons subject to public law who organize contractual voluntary work in accordance with the law are excluded from obtaining accreditation.

The accreditation is granted to organize contractual volunteer work for a minimum

period of three months and a maximum of four years, after which an extension request may be submitted and considered by a committee that will be established for this purpose.

In regard to the volunteer, he/she must meet several conditions, including being 18 years old. Those who have completed 15 years of age can participate with the approval of their legal representative. The volunteer must also not have a judicial decision that acquired the force of the *res judicata* issued against him in order to commit felonies or misdemeanors against the state or a terrorist crime or felonies or misdemeanors related to rape, money, forgery, plagiarism, bribery, abuse of influence, treachery, or embezzlement or wasting public money, unless consideration is given to it.

The Moroccan law concerning volunteering, provides a number of rights and duties for the benefit of the organization organizing volunteer work, such as submitting a request for public and private support and concluding partnership agreements; And must sign a contract to ensure the contracted volunteer for accidents and diseases that may result from the implementation of the volunteer work, in addition to an insurance contract to guarantee civil liability.

Under the new text, a national registry for contractual volunteer work will be created to collect information related to this work, prepare an annual report, study the constraints it faces, and submit proposals aimed at its advancement. In the chapter on penalties, the law stipulates fines from 20 thousand dirhams to 50 thousand dirhams for each violation of its requirements.

2. What is the context of work on gender equality and social inclusion?

At the level of the oriental region of Morocco, we can talk about two levels of declination of the gender and social inclusion issue, either at the level of public policies or at the level of territorial policies.

At the level of public policies, we can talk about programs and the tendency to

have an annual gender report at the level of the ministries of finance, which are in charge of it. There is also an inclusive public policy for all the vulnerable groups through sectoral programs, either at the level of health or at the level of social and even economic level.

At the local level, we can talk for example about the issue of gender-sensitive budget which is a requirement in Morocco and It is recognized as an important tool to:

- Make public policies and budgeting practices more transparent and effective
- Reduce the various gender dimensions of poverty and inequality; and
- Integrate gender into daily human resource management, capacity building, knowledge management and institutional communication practices.).

There is also at the level of territorial planning the preparation of the communal action programs by integrating gender into development projects. It consists of an approach that aims to promote development through the implementation of tools that allow gender equality to be achieved at all stages of the management of projects or local public programs.

It is, therefore, necessary to systematically carry out gender analysis, i.e. to question the role and place of women and men during the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. Also, these programs focus on 3 main levels as following:

- At the political level; the involvement of all social groups in political decision-making makes it possible to provide solutions that are better adapted to all categories of populations, in addition to improving the effectiveness and impact of local public policies.
- At the economic level: legal access to economic opportunities and resources increases productivity, profitability, and economic benefits
- At the social level: allow all categories of populations to access social services

- At the cultural level; to allow all social groups to access cultural spaces and fields

These programs and levels, consist of a roadmap, a reference for planning and developing either at the level of the municipalities or at the level of the region, which has a regional development plan that sets out the region's development strategy and takes into account gender, climate change and also vulnerability. In addition to the statistics issued by the HCP, the High Commission for Planning, which are classified by gender, category and social stratum, etc.

Therefore, there is at the regional level of data processing concerning these two components and this at the level of the actions that are implemented take into account the consideration and the gender and inclusive approaches not only at the social level but also at the planning level.

3. Accessibility to volunteering of people with fewer opportunities

Normally, the opportunities of volunteering for people with fewer resources are scarce. This is because of two factors. The first one has to do with the economical aspect of volunteering. Often, the programs are not paid so they require the volunteer to fund these experiences from his pocket. In other words, the major category of the volunteer profiles are people who do not have a reliable income, which is the reason why they seek a paid voluntary mission instead.

The other factor is related with the skills that some programs demand from the volunteers. Some of the main projects, which are funded, demand some abilities from the volunteers like, language skills, university studies, etc. It's evident that, the vast majority of people with fewer resources, has not access to this sort of education specially when compared with those ones who has economical means.

Most of volunteers are usually required / recruited by civil society organisations as part of their projects and missions for this reason each organization requires a certain profile depends on the requested projects for example, some associations seek for people with language skills profiles, others demand volunteers with the

ability of teaching more over there are several organizations that needs social promoters... So, there is always a variety in the requested skills which is sometimes considered as constraint for people with fewer opportunities in terms of capacities and competencies.

In spite of the effort institutions have made in order to provide opportunities for those ones with less resources, this is still a pending issue to be tackled.

4. Legislation and/or policy regarding volunteering

There are more than 1.2 billion young people in the world, all of whom have incredible potential to meet the challenges of today's world and act as productive agents of change. Volunteering gives young people the opportunity to acquire practical and professional skills that will serve them throughout their lives, while preparing them to take an active part in their societies and in the international community by putting into action the skills they have acquired during their previous training.

Volunteering can play a crucial role in instilling human values of participation, solidarity, positive citizenship, distribution of wealth and struggle for life in young people. The world, does not tend, precisely, to lose these values so much claimed by all determinisms and philosophies where Man is supposed to be the real center of interest in all our concerns.

Currently in Morocco, hundreds of Moroccan volunteers are engaged in national and international volunteer missions. The government has adopted the bill 06.18 regulating contractual volunteering inside and outside Morocco (July 2021).

Indeed, the text of the law tends to define the concept of contractual volunteering, to set its system, the conditions of its practice as well as the procedures and administrative measures related to it, says a statement issued after the Council.

It also aims to regulate the rights and obligations of the parties of contractual volunteering, the clarification of control mechanisms and the system of penalties

relating thereto, and the creation of a national register of contractual volunteering.

This bill comes in an international and national context marked by the importance of volunteerism in the implementation of initiatives aimed at combating poverty, achieving development and socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable social categories, says the same source.

5. Funding opportunities for volunteering

Currently there are no opportunities of funding for volunteering. However, there is a vision forward for providing volunteering funding opportunities after the legislation policy regarding it. On the other hand, there are funding opportunities provided in the frame of the European Union programs for instance, ASTICUDE forms part of different volunteer programs within European union programs such as, EVA; SHARE,VIVE and E-voluntarist. Therefore, some of these programs are for volunteer deployment and currently, we have a European volunteer in the association and another volunteer who contributes online. Regarding the rest of the programs, they are based more on capacity building instead of deployment.

6. Socio-economic and cultural norms affecting volunteering

At the cultural level, there is a strong ethic of volunteerism since it is a practice in Islam, which encourages humanity to share their time, wealth, knowledge, and acts of kindness with others voluntarily. However, when it comes to women's volunteerism, the socio-cultural context somewhat affects it as it is difficult for some girls/women to travel or live alone. According to some data offered by the Moroccan Government in 2018, more than half of the Moroccan women have suffered any kind of gender-based violence. From this index, those between 18 and 29 years, where the women most exposed to violence. This type of violence, which is totally perpetuated in society, is further strengthened by the lack of access to social and economic services.

From 2020 onwards, this problem has been aggravated by the arrival of the crisis caused by COVID-19. Like all other sectors, volunteering has been affected by the various economic and social difficulties that the population has been forced to face. The increase in the unemployment rate, social exclusion and gender violence as a result of this crisis have had direct effects on volunteering, which we are still working to alleviate today.

Regarding, the economic level, some of the volunteers prefer a paid volunteerism and some others are not capable of covering all the fees. In addition to people who have personal expenses and financial commitments the reason such as heads of family and people who are family allowance or also financial debts etc... Low school enrolment and high unemployment force young people to seek economic opportunities that will enable them to achieve a stable socio-economic level. As a consequence, the option of volunteering is completely outside their interests.

2.3. Palestine - by YWCA

1. The context of volunteering in the region

Traditionally volunteerism was a very important aspect of Palestinian culture and was called ('Oneh). In the old days, the villagers put all their efforts into helping the rest of the people in the community by building numerous houses. The same applied to harvesting, livestock and different aspects of life. People worked voluntarily (without being paid) with the rest of the community for their neighbors, and they knew that when they themselves needed help, their neighbors would gladly be there to help and support them voluntarily. Volunteerism was also common in weddings, funerals and any other aspect of life where people volunteered to host such events for their neighbors in their own homes for free. Several aspects of this volunteerism still exist nowadays, but there is no written rules or regulation regarding it.

We know that Palestine had no independent entity or state and was under occupation for a long time, so politically active people, out of awareness and social responsibility, took the lead to offer services to their people otherwise offered by governments. In the early 1980s for example, as a result of accumulative work, these active people voluntarily build institutions that were expected to lead the society in the absence of a formal state. At that time, volunteer organizations were set up on grassroots level for women, youth, workers unions, etc. Together, they gave rise to a strong volunteer movement representing 38 small volunteer committees from Palestinian towns and villages that formed the Higher Committee for Volunteerism in the West Bank and Gaza. It counted with 1,500 members and by 1982, it grew to 4,000. All these organizations acted voluntarily out of a sense of responsibility for humanitarian and national values and aspired to achieve them. These volunteers were representing all socio-economic levels of society and the main characteristic was their national awareness and their aspiration to serve their society in the absence of a national government.

In order to build on the successes of this huge movement that took place in the absence of a legislative state, there were initiatives in Palestine to develop a draft law for volunteerism and to demand that the civil service law include at least one chapter on volunteerism, but this did not work. Nowadays there is no law or regulation to govern or manage the voluntary work or activity. A consortium of Palestinian non-governmental organizations has written a document which seeks to regulate volunteer work to some extent. In practice, the national organizations and community-based organizations do include volunteerism in their programs, each one internally. Universities, schools and vocational training centers have a system to send their students to voluntary work, and these volunteers need to submit reports and data proving that they did the work. Non-governmental organizations as well as community-based organizations also include volunteerism in their programs. All these activities aim at encouraging the sense of social responsibility, at sustaining the soul and spirit of volunteerism

2. The context of work on gender equality and social inclusion

There is an increasing and clear effort produced by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the community-based organizations (CBOs) especially the women and feminist CBOs working and advocating gender equality. These organizations work on promoting women's and youth leadership and rights to promote their full participation in decision making, freedom of expression and social justice. They also perform programs and campaigns aiming at women's economic empowerment. The Palestinian government acceded to and signed the CEDAW regulations (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) with no reservation from its side whatsoever around 8th of March 2017 in a meeting with the women's organizations and as a result of their demand. Nevertheless, in order for CEDAW to be legally implemented, it had to be published in the official newspaper and this never took place, meaning that no part of CEDAW can be used as a reference in court. The Palestinian women's organizations believe and know that CEDAW is about social justice, but there are some movements who

did not really understand or even read its items but launch attacks in social media, public and religious meetings against CEDAW.

It is imperative to say here that the family law in Palestine refers to the Islamic religious law (Shari'a law) which is not a civil law. There are certain legal items in the family law that use the Jordanian law which was applied in Palestine pre-1967. This law was upgraded 3 times in Jordan while the Palestinian courts cannot use it because the Palestinian legislative council is not legally capable to endorse its by-laws. Needless to say, that the basic Palestinian law states that all Palestinians are considered equal under the law and that there are demands asking for separating the religious law from the state, but this step is not possible at the moment.

The Israeli law on the other hand is a common law, a civil law.

As per the law of inclusion, Palestine has a law of inclusion signed in Gaza city for the Palestinian state in 1999 but there are questions as per whether or not it is implemented. Nevertheless, NGOs and CBOs are working towards implementing this law inside their organizations.

3. Accessibility to volunteering of people with fewer opportunities

Although there is a wide array of volunteer opportunities available to the Palestinian youth, participation remains low.

Currently, in Palestine, the youth unemployment rate is 41%, reaching over 60% in some places such as Gaza. This situation means that young people living there prioritise finding paid work rather than volunteering. Young people have fewer and fewer opportunities and that is why the search for paid work is their main objective, giving volunteering a secondary role.

In addition, most of the projects in which young people can participate are done within the framework of a specific project, and once the activities are finished, they are not maintained over time. This leads to the fact that young people who are willing to participate, despite their interest in getting involved in social issues, face obstacles in finding long-term participation options, which can lead to a lack of motivation to get involved in such projects.

Despite these circumstances, it is worth noting that, although much work remains to

be done, women are one of the groups that participate most, especially in projects to vindicate their rights and in the fight against gender violence.

What is clear is that the value of awareness-raising and community work actions has been confirmed, as a strategy, not only for the promotion of rights but also for strengthening the capacities of the young people who participate in them. Therefore, it is clear that local organizations should be supported to be able to train and strengthen themselves to implement models of youth participation that are sustainable and accompany them for the adequate performance of these programs, for volunteerism to become a solid XXX in Palestine.

4. Legislation and/or policy regarding volunteering

As noted above, Palestine does not currently have any legislation or policy on volunteerism. At the time, when the volunteer movement grew so strongly in Palestine in the 1980s, there was an initiative that sought to promote the development of a draft law on volunteerism. There were also calls for the civil service law to include at least one chapter on volunteering, but this attempt also failed.

The aim of the development of a law on volunteerism was to be able to establish common bases and rules regarding volunteerism in a place where this practice became the tool used by active people who, out of awareness and social responsibility, took the lead to offer their people services that should be provided by the government. At that time, volunteerism was counteracting the absence of a legislative state, and that is why the creation of a common law seemed to be important.

As a result of the failure to create a civil law on volunteering, and moved by the need for some common grounds, a consortium of Palestinian non-governmental organizations wrote a document which seeks to regulate volunteer work. This is the only written documentation that can be found as regulation of volunteerism in Palestine, but, unfortunately, in practice, national organizations and community-based organizations follow their own rules and programs developed internally.

5. Funding opportunities for volunteering

There are some projects that encourage youth to volunteer for the sake of gaining experience that might lead to a job such as paying stipend for graduate volunteers for a fixed period of time aiming at getting experience for employment. Nevertheless, in the non-governmental organizations and the community-based organizations, volunteerism is highly encouraged and included in some projects with a small budget line given to volunteers as a stipend to cover transportation or lunch. As mentioned earlier, volunteerism is part of the program executed in educational institutes as a pre requisite to graduation but we have no evidence of research or study on whether or not this has led the youth to a state where they have embraced the real value of volunteerism

6. Socio-economic and cultural norms affecting volunteering

The idea of volunteerism in Palertine is a positive cultural issue. Palestinian society has always encouraged volunteerism in the shape of social networking. People helped each other in daily life issues. Nevertheless, there is a growing tendency for people preferring to get paid for their efforts especially that so many families live under poverty lines. Schools, universities, vocational training institutes, youth and women organizations encourage volunteerism in their programs and in all educational institutes even make voluntary work mandatory in order to graduate, as these institutions are committed to the noble idea of volunteerism and would like to install it in the mindset of the future generations.

Women are one of the groups that participate most, however, their situation and role in society are also factors that determine their participation. In Palestine, women enjoy very little civic participation and representation. It is also important to add that according to data from 2019, 29% of married women between the ages of 18 and 64 admit to having suffered some form of violence and more than half, as well as unmarried women under the age of 29, remain silent about these assaults. Likewise, religion plays a role that in some cases perpetuates the situation of

discrimination, establishing unfavorable socio-cultural values towards them. For all these reasons, there is a strong need to work from an empowerment approach with women to become active agents in the defense of their own rights.

Moreover, due to the Palestinian context, young people report feeling insecure and distrustful of their surroundings. This leads to a low participation of young people in the work for social transformation, coupled with limited opportunities for free expression and democratic spaces.

2.4. Spain - by Alianza-ActionAid

1. The context of volunteering in the region

In Spain, citizens collaborate with NGOs in different ways: associatively, as donors in kind or exclusively financially, and through volunteering. This last modality of collaboration with organisations represents the lowest percentage in Spain (6.3%), and includes those aged between 25 and 44 years, according to the latest report by Plataforma de Voluntariado (Volunteering Platform). According to the survey carried out in July 2021, 6.6% of the Spanish population over 14 years of age is involved in volunteering. In Spain there are around 2.7 million volunteers, a figure that does not make us an exemplary country within the European continent, as we are ranked 24th in the solidarity ranking, which places us well below most of our EU neighbours.

Most of these people are women and of Spanish nationality, so the feminization of volunteering continues, with women representing 53.9% of volunteers in 2021. When it comes to choosing the areas in which to exercise solidarity, men and women remain faithful to traditional gender roles: women prefer educational or socio-health volunteering, while men opt for civil protection, sports, or international volunteering. On the other hand, foreign nationals are under-represented in volunteering, accounting for only 3.4%.

Looking at other aspects of the volunteers, most of them are employed and live with 4 or more people. More than half of the volunteers in Spain have a medium or high socio-economic status and have a medium or high level of education. Looking at the employment situation, slightly more than half of the volunteers are currently working. There are also more or less high percentages of retired/pensioners/disabled people, followed by the unemployed. On the other hand, the lowest percentages are found among unemployed people looking for their first job, students and houseworkers.

In general, most of the volunteers have intermediate (Vocational

Training/Baccalaureate) or higher (university) studies. The number of volunteers increases as the level of education increases. In the first place, the smallest number of volunteers are people with no studies or only primary education. This is followed by an increase in the number of volunteers with a level of education equivalent to Compulsory Secondary Education (almost 2 out of 10). After this, we reach the peak where almost half of the volunteers have a university level of education (Degree, Bachelor's degree, etc.). Finally, we note that only 0.8% of volunteers have reached a postgraduate level of education. In other words, there is indeed an upward trend in volunteering as the level of education increases.

The crisis caused by the COVID19 pandemic has led to greater participation in volunteering, with an increase in the number of volunteers in October 2020. Volunteering has increased in recent years, both in terms of the number of people doing voluntary work, and the number of entities that people doing voluntary work, as well as the number of entities declaring themselves to be voluntary or volunteer organisations claiming to be volunteering or voluntary organisations. There are several reasons for this: public initiatives to promote volunteering, the increase in the number of volunteer the increase in the number of volunteer organisations, the increase in the number of volunteers and the increase in the number of social services provided by the public sector. volunteers and the increase in the number of public social services that are developed through volunteering. volunteering. In addition to this, there is a tendency to volunteer for short periods of time in very short projects. small periods of time in very specific projects, which increases the number of volunteers.

Social volunteering is the one that stands out above the rest, with just over four out of every ten people carrying out this type of voluntary action. Following on from this area, and to a lesser extent, the volunteers with the greatest participation are those involved in development cooperation and socio-health. Thus, seven out of ten people carry out one of these types of voluntary work. This preponderance of social volunteering may have to do with the tradition of this type of volunteering and the number of associations that promote it.

At the other end of the spectrum are environmental and civil protection volunteering, which have the lowest percentages. In the case of the latter, the results are normal, given that it is an area in which the number of volunteers is low. The results are normal in the case of the latter, given that it is an area of volunteering that is carried out occasionally and has little tradition.

Environmental volunteering, which according to Law 45/2015 seeks to reduce the negative impact of human beings on the environment and to protect, conserve and improve it, also shows low percentages. These figures may have to do with the fact that this area is more closely linked to activism, although we think that they may increase with the development of the 2030 agenda.

Volunteers who are not involved in this type of volunteering are evenly distributed among the other areas.

2. The context of work on gender equality and social inclusion

In Spain, gender equality is covered by the legal framework. The Organic Law for Effective Equality between Women and Men introduced gender equality as a basic principle in public action, applicable to universities and research centres. The law obliges companies and institutions with more than 50 employees to implement equality plans. This Organic Law has been extended several times since its creation.

The III Equality Plan for Public Administrations was approved in December 2020. Its objective is to comprehensively address gender equality in the General State Administration and to eradicate any form of discrimination. It has six axes, with 68 cross-cutting measures in all ministerial departments.

The Ministry of Equality is responsible for general policies on equality between women and men, the prevention and eradication of different forms of violence against women and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Within its competencies, the Women's Institute is an autonomous body in charge of promoting and developing the application of the gender perspective and the

principle of equal treatment and opportunities between women and men.

With regard to volunteering, Law 45/2015 establishes the characteristics that all volunteering actions must have, not only in terms of the people who participate as such, but also in terms of the activities, projects, management, etc. of the entities that carry out volunteering. In this sense, the law proposes equal opportunities for men and women as one of the essential principles of volunteering, which permeates the practice of volunteering. of volunteer practice, which permeates all areas of volunteer action, establishing transformation, both in the personal and social aspects, as one of the dimensions from which volunteering should be approached. Also provides, in Article 10, on the rights of volunteers to "be treated equally, without discrimination, respecting their freedom, identity, dignity and other fundamental rights recognised in conventions, international treaties and the Constitution". As far as social action organisations are concerned, the law addresses equal opportunities between men and women not as an obligation, but as a guiding principle and as a right of the organisations in making the selection of their staff. right of the organisations to select volunteers, without any discrimination on the basis of sex (art. discrimination on grounds of sex (Article 14).

Also Law 43/2015, of 9 October, of the Third Social Action Sector, in article 4, establishes the guiding principles of the entities of the Third Social Action Sector as contributing to making social cohesion effective, by means of citizen participation in social action, through volunteering and "acting in such a way that the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment and non-discrimination is effectively observed in their organisation, operation and activities, regardless of any personal or social circumstance, and with special attention to the principle of of equality between women and men".

In the other hand, the data provided by the FOESSA 2021 Survey reflect a decrease in the levels of social integration in Spain with respect to 2018. Currently, only 42.2% of people do not suffer from some type of social exclusion. The areas that have grown the least are education and social isolation and the one that has grown the most is employment, followed by social conflict. In relation to sex, the data

show that the processes of social exclusion affect women and men differently, with women being affected to a greater extent. Looking at the age variable, the data reflect a greater concentration of social exclusion processes among population groups under 65 years of age. Specifically, the people most affected by social exclusion are under 18 years of age.

In 2019, the National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2019-2023 was approved. The Strategy is inspired by the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and, in particular, its objective to lift 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion across the European Union by 2020.

However, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an increase in the economic and social vulnerability of the population, which has aggravated poverty and economic and social vulnerability of the population, aggravating the situation of poverty and increasing the proportion of the population at risk of poverty. Moreover, not all people are affected by the risk of poverty and/or social exclusion equally, but it depends on their characteristics, such as gender, age or type of household, among others.

In the case of gender, the risk of poverty or social exclusion affects women to a greater extent than men, to which it should be added that the population most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion continues to be the population under 25 years of age.

In response to this situation, on 21st July 2020, the European Council agreed on a temporary exceptional recovery instrument known as Next Generation EU for an amount of EUR 750 billion. The Recovery Fund ensures a coordinated European response with Member States to address the economic and social consequences of the pandemic. The plan's measures are built around four main axes:

- The ecological transition where public and private investment is reinforced to reorient the productive model.
- Digital transformation, which includes reforms and investments to boost the infrastructures, skills and technologies necessary for the digitalisation of the

economy and society.

- Social and territorial cohesion, reinforcing the Welfare State, the education system, quality employment and addressing the demographic challenge and opportunities for future generations.
- Gender equality with measures aimed at raising the female employment rate, improving, strengthening and reorganising the long term care system, raising the educational educational potential, equal opportunities and reducing the digital divide.

3. Accessibility to volunteering of people with fewer opportunities

It is necessary to reflect on the lack of diversity among volunteers, both with regard to the presence of people with disabilities and the presence of ethnic minorities and migrants. In this respect, the Law on Volunteering introduces in Title II: Volunteers, that entities "must guarantee the right to equal opportunities and universal accessibility for elderly, disabled or dependent volunteers, so that they can exercise, on equal terms with other volunteers, the rights and duties that correspond to them in accordance with this Law, eradicating any possible form of discrimination". The new Volunteering Law (BOE 15 October 2015) is committed to open, participatory and intergenerational volunteering. It covers voluntary action without adjectives, without excluding, and favours that it can be promoted not only in the Third Sector, but also in other more innovative areas, such as companies, universities or public administrations themselves.

Volunteers contribute enormously to social inclusion but volunteering itself must be more accessible to people of different backgrounds, ages and personal situations. In the European Volunteering Plan 2030, a guide for the various actors in volunteering, and especially for policy makers regarding the steps to be taken for volunteering to reach its true potential, the 2011 EYV Policy Alliance Agenda on Volunteering in Europe (P.A.V.E.) provides recommendations for a more efficient and effective European policy framework to support and promote volunteers, volunteering,

volunteer involving organisations and their partners. Among these recommendations it indicates several to be taken into account with regard to accessibility to volunteering for people with fewer opportunities. It states that:

Policy makers should:

- Invest in research and data collection to be able to report on the lack of inclusivity and disparities in volunteering caused by restrictive legal frameworks due to bias, stereotypes or inequality bids.
- Use data and evidence of inequalities and lack of inclusiveness, whether by age, ethnicity, gender, etc., as a basis for supporting mitigating activities and policies as part of a concrete action plan in collaboration with civil society partners.
- Collaborate with volunteer development and volunteer engagement organisations, as well as volunteer-led initiatives through public policy and funding, to help them set an example of change to raise awareness and visibility of diversity, remove psychological and physical barriers to volunteering, develop support systems and protect volunteering as a norm.

4. Legislation and/or policy regarding volunteering

In Spain, there is Organic Law 45/2015 on volunteering. This law aims to promote and facilitate the solidarity participation of citizens and volunteering actions through entities. It establishes the duty of the entities to meet all the requirements, describe the cooperation, the scope of competences, etc. This law applies to volunteers, recipients and volunteering entities that participate, benefit from or carry out volunteering programmes, both inside and outside Spain.

According to article 3 of this law, volunteering is understood as the set of activities of general interest carried out by natural persons that must comply with certain specific characteristics:

- They must be of a solidarity nature;
- They must be carried out freely, without any personal obligation or legal

- duty, and must be undertaken voluntarily;
- That they are carried out without financial or material compensation, without prejudice to the payment of reimbursable expenses incurred by the volunteers in the performance of the voluntary action, in accordance with the provisions of the law;
 - That they are carried out through volunteer organisations in accordance with specific programmes and within or outside Spanish territory.

Activities of general interest are defined as those which contribute in each of the fields³ of action of volunteering to improve the quality of life of individuals and society in general and to protect and conserve the environment. Therefore, voluntary action represents a manifestation of citizen participation and, in turn, a fundamental agent contributing to the improvement of society's quality of life. Through the tasks and activities carried out in different areas of society, the interests of the people are defended and promoted.

Is made up of elements related to the identity (values), meaning (principles) and execution (functions) that voluntary actions must have. Its purpose is to give scope and coherence to each of the expressions contained in volunteering, whatever the field (social, environmental, cultural, sporting, educational, among others) from which it is developed.

Law 45/2015 establishes the characteristics that must be present in all volunteer volunteering actions, not only in terms of the people who take part in them, but also in terms of the people who participate in them.

The adoption of Law 45/2015 led to various autonomous communities, such as Andalusia, Murcia, Castilla y León, Asturias, Comunidad Valenciana, Galicia, the Basque Country, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Navarre, La Rioja, Extremadura and Madrid, have subsequently developed laws regulating the practice of voluntary at autonomous community level, which reinforces the conception of volunteering as an important way of volunteering as an important means of participation in the social state.

5. Funding opportunities for volunteering

In general, NGOs in Spain are financed through public and private funds. Public funds come from the central government, the European Union, the autonomous communities, city councils and other public administrations. Among them, we can highlight the Spanish Agency for Cooperation, which grants subsidies for Development Cooperation actions to NGOs, companies, international organisations, associations, foundations, public administrations of other countries, etc.

Unfortunately, Spain does not have any state subsidies for volunteering projects or actions, however, there are numerous aids through which it is possible to access subsidies. Among them are, for example, the IRPF calls, which do not finance volunteering projects as such, but do fund volunteering actions. In addition, the Autonomous Communities, independently, also offer aid in the form of subsidies for volunteer projects.

In 2022 the Community of Madrid has €30,000 to subsidise volunteering and social innovation projects by non-profit organisations. The aim of these grants is to support and encourage volunteering in the Region of Madrid, promote the development of innovative products or processes to solve social problems and promote entrepreneurship in the social sphere.

The public administrations allocate part of their budget to volunteering activities. Also, the autonomous communities and the cities of Ceuta and Melilla allocate part of their budget to regional voluntary projects on social matters. The autonomous regions and cities also contribute to the funding for the national and regional plans on volunteering. They tend to commit to contribute with an equal or greater amount of money than the contribution received from the national public administration. Moreover, there are agreements with private companies for the funding of NGOs and volunteering organisations.

6. Socio-economic and cultural norms affecting volunteering

The Spanish population considers that engagement in volunteering shows that a person has interest in social concerns. Most of the population considers that the increase in volunteering and NGOs shows that the Spanish society supports values such as solidarity. Therefore, there is a large social and cultural acceptance of volunteering and the majority of people regard volunteering activities in a positive way. Nevertheless, different sectors of the community have different perspectives on the cultural and social benefits of volunteering. It exists a negative perspective of volunteering in some parts of the private sector. There is also some literature that remarks on this issue. Moreover, some sectors of society perceive volunteers as cheap labour and as having an impact on the labour force. Although, other sectors such as the social service, which consists of the biggest percentage of volunteering activities, benefits from volunteers and the perception of volunteering is rather positive.

It should be noted that volunteering enjoys a good image and reputation among the general population. What is most remarkable is that, for the general public, volunteers show solidarity and want to change the world, not because of religious beliefs or political motivations, but because of solidarity itself. At the same time, they are not suspected of having hidden motivations or interests, nor of being taken advantage of in social intervention.

Spanish society agrees that volunteering is a change of life, especially for the young. Also, young people realize the power they have to change another person's life. The general overview of volunteering is that benefits the local community; it can result in the creation of new jobs and contribute to regional and local development. Also, it can help to develop common societal values, self-esteem, humanity and inter-generational dialogue. And last, but not least, volunteering organizations are seen by society as mechanisms to reach sectors the government does not, creating confidence in people, dignity, social cohesion, social inclusion, and regional development.

