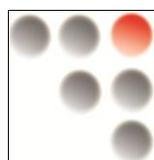


ANNUAL REPORT

2010



Malta Council for the
VOLUNTARY SECTOR

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector **Report 2010**

The National context: challenges and possibilities

Malta has an established and highly active voluntary sector and volunteers have been providing services across all sectors: welfare, culture, education, health, sports and environment at both local and national levels. Voluntary Organisations play a key role in Maltese society and their invaluable work is acknowledged by all. In many cases these organisations maintain a relatively high profile and are major contributors to civil society.

Voluntary Organisations are mostly composed of hard-working and dedicated individuals, coming from a variety of backgrounds that in many cases provide unparalleled service to society and its members. They are generally capable of providing a more personalised service that better address the individual's specific needs and their contribution can often complement that of the State.

Notwithstanding the active role of the Voluntary sector in Malta there are a number of challenges which this sector currently faces. These challenges include:

- ❑ Insufficient recognition of the contribution of individuals within the voluntary sector;
- ❑ Notwithstanding the Voluntary Organisations Act of 2007 in some areas it is still felt that there is the need of a specific legal framework for volunteers;
- ❑ Lack of adequate research and data collection;
- ❑ Insufficiently utilised structures for funding and volunteering activities.

The annual strategy 2010 of the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) included the following objectives and strategic thrusts:

Objective 1

To support the development of a more effective and efficient voluntary sector in Malta through the delivery of a range of support and capacity building services including information, advice, and training;

Objective 2

To support the development of a more influential and cohesive voluntary and community sector in Malta by facilitating networking and partnership within the sector as well as with the public and private sectors;

Objective 3

To take a lead on governance training for all stakeholders in the voluntary organisations

Objective 4

Provide a link and a forum for consultation between the different partners within the voluntary sector

Strategic Thrust 1

Launch a new pro-active programme on governance/trusteeship good practice through the following initiatives:

- ☛ Establish clear guidelines on what is expected from voluntary organisations;
- ☛ Create an auditory arm to monitor and secure good administration of voluntary organisations;
- ☛ Establish a certification programme which identifies, classifies and authorises the VOs operations;
- ☛ Launch a new programme on approaches to financial sustainability;
- ☛ Following a review of the short course training programme for viability of organisational training and support, develop further thematic programmes with a focus on accreditation;
- ☛ Improve funding conditions for the sector by; influencing the lottery's policies/practices; facilitating consultation and seeking to influence use of unclaimed assets.

Strategic Thrust 2

Establish and deliver the Supporting Voluntary Action programme through the following initiatives:

- ☛ Provide organisational development support in the key areas of governance, financial sustainability, strategic and business development;
- ☛ Provide quality systems & policy development services to third sector organisations;
- ☛ Provide excellent office and venue facilities at MCVS offices;
- ☛ Promote MCVS as the main information centre for media contact on the sector;
- ☛ Provide professional communications services to voluntary organisations;
- ☛ Promote and develop information helpline service, and supporting website and publication materials.

Strategic Thrust 3

Improve the MCVS organisational and network structure through the following initiatives:

- Introduce corporate branding to MCVS;
- Develop and maintain mechanisms for communicating knowledge of the sector to audiences at local, national and international levels;
- Support the Voluntary Sector's network;
- Promote the sharing of best practice between and among different voluntary sector groups;
- Explore the feasibility and demand for an HR support service;
- Maintain and improve the MCVS Central Database for use regarding customer contact.

Strategic Thrust 4

Internationalisation of Voluntary Organisations' (VO) network through the following initiatives:

- Assist in the internationalisation of the promotion and fundraising of the VOs efforts;
- Promote Malta internationally so as to attract more VOs to the country;
- Promote and deliver successfully a comprehensive programme of national conferences, lectures, and seminars while also attracting to Malta international speakers for such events.

The MCVS has continued to work in close collaboration with the sector to set up a long term strategy and to guide and inform our actions, aspiring to provide the direction and commitment needed to ensure that the Voluntary sector has the recognition and support that its work merits. The MCVS looks forward to working with all its members, as well as with Government, to achieve such an aim.

The Administrative Structure

The 1st MCVS was appointed in October 2009 for two years in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act, art. 35 (6). It consists of a Chairperson and nine other members. Its aim is to "provide a forum for the voluntary sector and a platform from which to develop cooperation between voluntary organisations and the Government and co-operation between voluntary organisations amongst themselves." (Art. 35 (1)). The Council also acts as an advisory body to the Commissioner in developing policies and practices in relation to the voluntary sector, for example in the formulation of codes of good practice.

The set-up of the Council is meant to represent the voluntary sector in a manner that corresponds to the diverse sectors in which VOs operate. Thus, the members of the Council are appointed as follows:

- Five members from among the voluntary sector of which
- One member to represent founders of and donors to VOs;
- One member to represent members of VOs and volunteers;
- One member to represent administrators of VOs; and
- One member to represent foreign and international organisations.

- One member is appointed by the Minister of Education, Employment and the Family (formerly Minister for Social Policy) to represent the Government.

The Council has set up a number of sub-committees to facilitate its work. The sub-committees include the following:

- Advisory sub-committee to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations
- Strategic Management and Direction Committee;
- EU Affairs and Funding.

The European Year dedicated to Volunteering (EYV) 2011

The Malta Council for the Volunteer Sector (MCVS) was nominated by the Maltese Government to act as National Coordinating Body (NCB) for the "European Year of Volunteering 2011"(EYV 2011) designated by the EU Council. The organisation of the Year had been proposed by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Parliament. As stated by Mr Maroš Šefčovič, the EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, said: *"Volunteering is a way for individuals to make a valuable contribution to society. At the EU level, volunteering promotes civic participation, social cohesion and provides learning opportunities for the volunteers as well as a multitude of benefits for society at large."*

The "European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship in 2011 is intended to foster volunteering in Europe and to help civil society, local and regional communities and Member States to achieve the following objectives:

- Work towards an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU;
- Empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering;
- Reward and recognise achievements gained in volunteering activities; and
- Raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

For this reason the MCVS will launch has prepared a programme of activities to promote the EYV 2011 locally across Malta and Gozo. As the NCB for this year, MCVS will be inviting all Voluntary Organisations to actively participate in the year's activities, both by participating in the MCVS events as well as by organising events to promote and celebrate volunteers.

National priorities for the EYV 2011 (Malta)

MCVS intends to present an EU Funded project for the EYV 2011 with the intent to raise general awareness on the importance of volunteering as an expression of civic participation which contributes to issues which are of common concern of all EU Member States, such as a harmonious societal development and social cohesion.

The MCVS has chosen as its three main National priorities Youths, Elder Citizens and Corporate Volunteering.

Activities of the EYV 2011

Launch Seminar

A half day seminar with delegates from the NGOs and Media Sectors as well as participants from the general public will be organised with the aim of launching the European Year of Voluntary Activities. Invites will also be sent through the Malta Chamber of Commerce and the Malta Employers' Association, In order to reach out to the corporate sector, use of the social networking site *Facebook* will be made to target youths, whereas retired persons will be specifically targeted through the national newspapers and local radio stations. This will officially launch the Year in Malta.

The key messages of the campaign will revolve about the value of active citizenship amongst the different age groups, the way in which volunteering can help mitigate social exclusion, and how through volunteering, one can gain invaluable skills and experience which can enhance the value of life of the individual.

Interactive Website

MCVS will set up its new website - www.volontarjatmalta.com - which will include a wealth of information on the voluntary sector and a number of good practices and the value of volunteering and the voluntary sector.

Conference on Employee Supported Volunteering

Another conference will be organised for delegates coming from the Human Resources and the NGO sectors, together with members of the general public. Media delegates will also be invited to attend in order to cover the event. Across the country, thousands of people serve in a wide range of roles essential to the successful running of the Voluntary Sector. Some of these roles are well known, however, many others, although no less essential to the accountability and effectiveness of organizations, are far less visible and, as a result, far less appreciated and understood.

The conference objective will be to educate and encourage employers to allow their staff to volunteer for these important roles and to help employers appreciate the value of employee volunteering, both to their business, their staff and to the organisations with which the employees volunteer. Employee volunteering can build skills and confidence and expose the employee to information and circumstances that can be helpful back in the business. In return, the organisation with whom the employee volunteers can benefit from the vast range of skills that exist in other sectors.

Publication of an NGO Directory

MCVS will compile and publish a directory with information on a vast number of non-governmental organizations registered in Malta, which will be distributed in printed version whilst also being available electronically for downloading on the above mentioned website. A press release will be issued in order to ensure that the general public is informed about the launch of this directory. Registered NGO's will be informed directly via email.

Ongoing Support to NGO's

Another service will be to provide VOs with mentoring and support in order to tangibly strengthen their operations for enhanced efficiency and good governance.

EYV 2011 Bus Tour Malta Visit

The EU is centrally organising the bus tour scheduled to visit a number of European Countries through the EYV 2011 and will be visiting Malta on the 5th December 2011.

National Volunteering Award

MCVS will launch an annual award ceremony in recognition of outstanding volunteers. The Aims of the award are:

- ☘ To give broad recognition to the service done by the nominated volunteer.
- ☘ To create awareness of the exemplary values displayed by the nominated volunteers with the goal of locating role models for youth and wider society.
- ☘ To recognise the important contribution that the nominee has made in various fields.

Two research projects commissioned in year 2010

Two research projects were commissioned in 2010 and their finding will be available and published during European year of volunteering 2011. These projects are:

Research project 1 - Participation of Young People in the Voluntary Sector

The object of the project is to research the participation of Maltese youth in voluntary work both locally and abroad. The focus of the research will assist in understanding how young people shape their own development, involvement and visibility as socio-political actors within their virtual and real communities and neighbourhoods. We will endeavour to understand the impact that such an involvement has on the potential for young people's civic consciousness to translate into public, social, philanthropic and religious movement participation. The research will:

- ☘ Collate data on the participation of Maltese Youth in the voluntary sector in Malta
- ☘ Collate data on the participation of Maltese Youth in voluntary work abroad
- ☘ Collate data on Maltese youth participating in related EU programmes
- ☘ Gather data when youths tend to participate most
- ☘ Itemize the different sectors of voluntary work in which youth are active
- ☘ Investigate the present encouragement offered to youths by means of grants, learning credits etc by different agencies in the education and social sector to do voluntary work
- ☘ Review systems of inducement, reward and encouragement in the other European countries and available through the EU

- ☛ Investigate what young Maltese people regard as the obstacles for doing voluntary work in Malta and abroad and
- ☛ Make recommendations

Research project 2 - A Comparative Study of NGO Legislation in Selected EU States

Volunteering is a core expression of civic participation and democracy, putting European values such as solidarity and non discrimination into action and contributing to the harmonious development of our societies. It plays an important role in sectors as varied and diverse as education, youth, culture, sport, environment, health, social care, consumer protection, humanitarian aid, development policy, research, equal opportunities and external relations. Non-governmental organisations play an important role in the European Union. While research on such organisations and on their economic and social role has been increasing, the NGO sector is still not supplied with the level of research available to the business and political sector. In recent decades, member states of the European Union have enacted laws on voluntary and charitable organisations but comparable analysis on the different laws covering NGO's in EU countries is still lacking.

The proposed research will consist of a comparative study between five EU states; Malta, Italy, France, Germany and the UK. The research will therefore provide a comparison of the different NGO legislation structures that have developed in these countries. Most of the countries chosen have a Civil Law system but they have developed a different legislative structure to regulate voluntary organisations. The research is aimed at comparing and contrasting their different legal structures.

The research will focus on other areas of NGO and Charitable Organisations of the Selected EU States such as the comparative study of excerpts from the Civil Code regulating voluntary organisations in the selected Civil Law states, the requirements for founders/members outlined in the five legal systems of the selected states, further comparisons on the definitions given to NGOs/charitable organisations and the constitutional rights and requirements in the five different legal systems, different regulations on the dissolution of NGOs and the different taxation regulations for voluntary organizations.

Expected results and impact

It is expected that following the implementation of the activities listed above, the Maltese general public will be better informed about the non-governmental sector and the key role that volunteers play in this sector. Additionally, the general public in Malta and Gozo, will be in a better position to understand the importance of active citizenship both for the individual concerned and society as a whole. Finally, members of the identified target groups, namely the corporate sector, youths and older citizens, will be in a better position to understand the mutually beneficial relationship that can be derived through volunteering initiatives.