

## **NATIONAL REPORT – GERMANY**

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# 1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN GERMANY

## 1.1 History and contextual background

Germany is not a classic volunteering nation, such as the Netherlands, United Kingdom or the USA. Indeed, in a recent paper (2008)<sup>1</sup> it was argued that the development of the German civil society infrastructure has only taken place in the last decade. Because of the principles of 'subsidiarity' and 'self-governance' the free welfare organisations have, on the other hand, a special and maybe unique role with regard to social service delivery and interest mediation in Germany; in several areas of legislation public authorities are required to consult NPOs in economic, social and cultural matters.

As far as subsidiarity<sup>2</sup> is concerned, in Germany this principle has played an important role for volunteering activities ever since it was introduced towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to this principle, preference is given to non-profit organisations (NPOs) over public services in relation to the provision of core welfare services.<sup>3</sup> In practice this has meant that most social services are provided by free welfare organisations, which have the right to claim public financial support. Volunteering has been prominent in this framework, in particular in the early years before the NPOs started becoming more and more professionalised (in the 1970s)<sup>4</sup>.

Because of the principle of subsidiarity, the notion of volunteering has carried a different connotation in Germany than in other countries, primarily due to requests by the German state for 'politically controlled citizen participation' and voluntary labour inputs in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, the German terms from this time (see comments on definitions below), 'Ehrenamt' and 'ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit' emphasised the 'honorary component, officialdom and public legitimation' rather than voluntarism *per se*<sup>5</sup>.

Another key factor in the history and tradition of volunteering in Germany is the division of the country after World War II, which meant that during the next four decades, volunteering developed differently in the two parts of this divided country. During the Nazi regime, honorary office/work was widely propagated and employed as a means of political control and infiltration of the German society by the Nazi Party.<sup>6</sup> Following World War II subsidiarity became the corner stone of West Germany's social policy and the general principle to govern public-private relationships in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG; West Germany)<sup>7</sup>. As part of this process, six 'peak' associations<sup>8</sup> of the welfare sector were

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<sup>1</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS).

<sup>2</sup> The subsidiarity principle has been confirmed in court settlements, e.g. from 1961 and 1967. Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (1992): *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Germany. Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, no. 6.* (The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies); p.3; European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures.*  
<http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> This means that NPOs act in the first hand and the state only intervenes would there be no other alternative.

<sup>4</sup> In 1990 free welfare organisations overall provided 70% of all family services, 60% of services for the elderly, 40% of all hospital beds and 90% of employments for disabled. The associations employed 548,420 full time and 202,706 part-time staff. The number of volunteers was estimated at 1.5 million, with an average of 15.8 hours of volunteering / month (self-reported).

<sup>5</sup> Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (1992): *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Germany. Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, no. 6.* (The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies).

<sup>6</sup> Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (1992): *Defining the Non-profit Sector: Germany. Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, no. 6.* (The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies).

<sup>7</sup> The principle has, however, not been accepted without controversy. For example, in the 1960s the social democratic government of the state of Hessen challenged the constitutionality of the Youth Welfare Act.

created, which together constitute the Federal Association of the Voluntary Welfare Organisations<sup>9</sup>. Almost all NPOs in West Germany were members of one of these organisations.<sup>10</sup>

The development of the volunteering sector followed a different path in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR; East Germany). Even though the constitution guaranteed the freedom to associate, 'volunteering' was undertaken as part of mass social organisations<sup>11</sup> and all organisations (including political parties, trade unions and voluntary organisations) had to accept the supremacy of the Socialist Unity Party<sup>12</sup>. Local organisations were required to join one of the mass of social organisations (e.g. the Free German Youth). Although the local organisations operated in a similar manner to NPOs<sup>13</sup>, it is still being debated whether the term volunteering can be used in the context of the former GDR or whether the activities should really be considered as compulsory work.

As a consequence of the unification treaty between the two German states, the former GDR adopted the legal and institutional system of the FRG in October 1990. In other words, the social sector and in particular the volunteering sector were shaped by the West German 'peak' organisations. Significant public funding was allocated to these organisations to establish an infrastructure for volunteering in the new regions in order to bring them in line with the existing welfare system in Western Germany.

From 1990 there has been a change in the understanding of what volunteering means in Germany and many new organisations and structures have been created. At the same time, the traditional 'peak' organisations have become more volunteer-oriented again because of the political reforms of the 1990s, which led to greater competition between the welfare associations and other providers of welfare services to obtain state resources. For example, the organisations started developing volunteer centres and programmes within their associations.<sup>14</sup> This 'second generation' of volunteer centres is defined by greater involvement and participation by volunteers in the management and running of the organisations and the development/design of projects than what was previously the case. . More than 190 community foundations were established during the last decade and there are now more than 300 volunteer centres that are officially registered members of national umbrella organisations. It is estimated that more than 800 civil society infrastructure

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<sup>8</sup> These were: Worker's Welfare Service (Arbeiterwohlfahrt, AWO); German Caritas Association (Caritasverband); Association of Non-affiliated Charities (Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband, DPWV); German Red Cross (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, DRK); Welfare Service of the Protestant Church (Diakonisches Werk); and, Central Welfare Agency of the Jews in Germany (Zentrale Wohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland).

<sup>9</sup> Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege.

<sup>10</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> gesellschaftliche Massenorganisationen.

<sup>12</sup> Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED.

<sup>13</sup> The organisations received government funding and also operated through fees and private donations. Besides voluntary activities or campaigns related to the party ideology, volunteering also took place in the framework of the Lutheran Church. The Catholic Church was less represented due to a smaller number of members.

<sup>14</sup> The changing attitude and expectations of people towards volunteering posed a challenge to traditional volunteering organisations (welfare associations, unions and churches) who had to build up the organisational capabilities and expertise to cope with these new motives underlying the "freiwilliges Engagement" (volunteering) form of volunteering. Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS).

organisations exist in Germany, including networks and umbrella organisations, associated foundations and other organisations that contribute to civic engagement.<sup>15</sup>

Several important initiatives were introduced by the federal government towards the end of the 1990s. In 1999 a periodic survey on volunteering was launched by the federal government (the 'Freiwilligensurvey', hereafter referred to as the 'National Survey') in order to gather evidence as a basis for policy decisions in the field of volunteering<sup>16</sup>. The National Survey on Volunteering has so far been carried out on behalf of BMFSFJ in 1999 and 2004 and involved 15,000 persons each time.

The same year as the first National Survey was launched<sup>17</sup>, a 'Study Commission on the Future of Civic Activities' was established by the German Federal Parliament, which in 2002 presented a report which included a number of action points to promote volunteering in Germany and also e.g. reviewed various definitions of terms used for volunteering activities. A national strategy for volunteering is now also in the making, taking account of the results of the report. However, at the same time as volunteering is being recognised as a political priority, a recent report from the Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)<sup>18</sup> observed negative trends in terms of participation; there has been a decline in the number of persons who are members of associations, initiatives and clubs, in particular in the former socialist federal states.

An outline of recent milestones in the development of the volunteering sector in Germany is provided in Annex 1<sup>19</sup>.

## 1.2 Definition of volunteering in Germany

In Germany, several different terms are currently being used to describe volunteering activities. Some of them are used as synonyms whereas there are recognised differences between others. Distinction can be made between definitions that are used to describe the following two broad types of volunteering:

- **Traditional forms of civic engagement, exercised predominantly 'for others' and connected to permanent memberships** (e.g. 'Ehrenamt'). Such civic engagement activities often take place within the framework of large-scale organisations, e.g. churches, unions, parties, welfare associations (such as voluntary fire brigades) and sport clubs.
- **Volunteering activities exercised primarily for the individual him-/herself** (e.g. 'freiwilliges Engagement'). This type of activities, which are characterised by them being 'fun', active participation and that they involve the possibility of being able to develop personal competences and skills, are normally undertaken as part of self-

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<sup>15</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS).

<sup>16</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> The national Survey covered 15,000 respondents. In terms of survey respondents, a representative sample of the population was used for the survey and the 15,000 responses were weighed in order to achieve a representative sample (by federal state; community size class; gender; age group) that matched the population data of the federal statistics office.

<sup>18</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> In this respect, it can be underlined that in Germany, it is possible for recognised conscientious objectors (who refuse to do military service) to participate in the voluntary service programmes instead of doing civil community service / civilian service. Such civilian service is outside of the scope of the present Study, because it is compulsory.

help groups, grass roots organisations, social movement organisations, citizens groups, ecological projects and non-institutionalised political campaigns.<sup>20</sup>

The following terms are being used at present:

- *Ehrenamt* ('honorary office / work') or *ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit* ('honorary office activity'). These terms stem from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and refer to voluntary engagement in formal organisations, e.g. associations, societies or clubs. The voluntary work is either unpaid or an expense allowance is received. Literally translated the terms refer to a 'task or an office assumed on honorary basis', however, experts have considered this definition as too restrictive.<sup>21</sup>
- *Freiwilligenarbeit* ('voluntary involvement') or *freiwilliges Engagement* ('volunteering'). Today, these activities may be performed as part of formal or informal organisations and include sports and recreation, culture, self-help or neighbourhood activities and activities in civic action groups. In order to reflect this wide range of activities, the concept 'voluntary involvement' was introduced.
- *Bürgerschaftliches Engagement* (*voluntary civic activities*). In the final report of the Federal Parliament's Study Commission on the Future of Civic Activities<sup>22</sup>, the term 'voluntary civic activities' was used to emphasise the specific character of all activities assumed voluntarily.
- *Freiwilligendienste* (*volunteering services*). In Germany, volunteering services often refer to volunteering that young people carry out for a year as part of an official programme after they have finalised their upper secondary education, and before they start university studies (for example, 'Voluntary Year of Social Services' or 'Voluntary Year of Ecological Services'). Other types of volunteering services do, however, also exist, such as voluntary services abroad.<sup>23</sup>

In the First National Survey on Volunteering (from 1999) the respondents were asked to choose one of five commonly used concepts to describe activity they perform.<sup>24</sup> The most popular choice was volunteer work (48% - *Freiwilligenarbeit*) followed by honorary work (32% - *Ehrenamt*).

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<sup>20</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS).

<sup>21</sup> Abschlussbericht der Enquete-Kommission (2002): *Zukunft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements, Bd. 4: Auf dem Weg in eine zukunftsfähige Bürgergesellschaft* (English summary), p.3; European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*.  
<http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Abschlussbericht der Enquete-Kommission (2002): *Zukunft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements, Bd. 4: Auf dem Weg in eine zukunftsfähige Bürgergesellschaft* (English summary).

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn\\_26272/Navigation/zentral/Buerger/Zwischenzeit/Freiwillig/Freiwillig-Nav.html](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_26272/Navigation/zentral/Buerger/Zwischenzeit/Freiwillig/Freiwillig-Nav.html)

<sup>24</sup> The choice of terminology in the 1999 Survey referred to by Rosenblatt and Bernhard (2000) is not mentioned in the document. However, the survey "Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999 - 2004" (Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth, 2005) made distinction between the following six different terms to describe volunteering activity (see p.445, question B1-0). "In your own words, which of the following terms best describes your activity?": (a) **honorary work** (Ehrenamt); (b) **volunteer work/ volunteering** (Freiwilligenarbeit); (c) **part-time job** (Nebenberufliche Tätigkeit); (d) **self-help** (Selbsthilfe); (e) **voluntary civic activities** (Bürgerschaftliches Engagement); (f) **project work** (Initiativen- oder Projektarbeit). However, the results for this question are not mentioned in the report. Rosenblatt, Bernhard (2000): *Volunteering in Germany. Results of the 1999 Representative Survey on Volunteering and Civic Engagement* (Volume 1: General Report. Munich), pp.13 and 37.

### 1.3 Number and profile of volunteers

#### ***Total number of volunteers***

The National Survey provides some indications of the percentage of volunteers in Germany. In 1999, 34% of the people surveyed indicated that they were involved in volunteering and undertook some form of voluntary tasks.<sup>25</sup> There was a small increase of this proportion in 2004 (36%).<sup>26</sup> In 1999 and 2004 the figures for those who indicated that they were involved in some organisation were 32% and 34% respectively. However, their involvement did not include having any concrete tasks or duties. If this proportion would be representative for the entire German population, the number of volunteers would have been 22 million in 1999<sup>27</sup> and around 23.5 million in 2004<sup>28</sup>.

The intensity of voluntary activity (measured as the proportion of volunteers who are carrying out more than one activity or function) increased from 37% in 1999 to 42% in 2004.<sup>29</sup>

#### ***Trends***

The proportion of German citizens aged 14 and above who engaged in voluntary activities increased slightly from 34% in 1999 to 36% in 2004. There was a greater increase in volunteering in the Eastern regions of Germany than in their Western counter-parts (overall 3% compared to 1% increase in 2004 compared to 1999).

With regard to the level of engagement in different age groups, between 1999 and 2004 the greatest increase could be seen among citizens aged 60 and over. This age group was most active in the social and church sectors as well as in the social welfare sector. Men are increasingly active in sectors that were previously dominated by women, e.g. schools, nursing schools and the social sector.

The general readiness to volunteer also increased in this time period; from 26% in 1999 to 32% in 2004.

Finally, the intensity of voluntary activity (measured as a proportion of volunteers being involved in more than one activity or who have more than one function) increased by 5% from 1999 (37%) to 2004 (42%). At the same time, according to the National Survey, the willingness to increase the level of activity was also confirmed by the majority of those who were already engaged in volunteering.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> 15,000 persons above age 14 participated in the survey.

<sup>26</sup> According to the National Survey results, groups among whom there is an increasing level of involvement in volunteering activities are senior citizens, unemployed and citizens in the new German regions, especially women.

<sup>27</sup> Calculated on the basis of a total of 63,000,000 German citizens above the age of 14 in 1999.

<sup>28</sup> BMFSFJ National Survey.

<sup>29</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*, pp.13-15.

<sup>30</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges*

## Gender

Both the 1999 and 2004 National Surveys indicated that volunteering is more common among men than women, (38% of men compared to 30% of women in 1999; and, 39% of men compared to 32% of women in 2004). Moreover, women spent significantly less time on volunteering.

With regard to trends, according to the National Survey results, there was an increase in volunteering among women in this time period, in particular with regard to women who work (37% in 2004 compared to 32% in 1999). The increase in the proportion of women who are active as volunteers is believed to be due to the greater amount of time men spend with their small children, thereby freeing up time for women.<sup>31</sup> Around 38-39% of the men surveyed were active as volunteers both in 1999 and 2004.

Women and men also perform different types of volunteering; women primarily volunteer in activities relating to 'schools or nursery schools', 'social welfare', 'church and religious organisations' and the 'health sector', whilst men dominate all other areas. However, the 2004 National Survey showed that men are increasingly active in areas that were traditionally dominated by women, such as schools, nursing schools and social support.

Men were also more likely to occupy positions that involve responsibilities; in both National Surveys (1999 and 2004) the proportion of male volunteers involved in the management of voluntary organisations far exceeded that of women and this was also true for the sectors dominated by women.

There are also differences between young men / boys and young women / girls in terms of the areas in which activities are carried out.<sup>32</sup> Similar to the situation for adults, generally boys and young men primarily engage in voluntary activities in clubs and organisations in the fields of sports and recreation, accident, rescue and voluntary fire services. Girls and young women, on the other hand, mainly volunteer in less structured forms of organisations (for example, schools, churches and social activities), where they are responsible for pupils' committees or youth clubs.<sup>33</sup>

## Age groups

According to the National Survey on Volunteering, the proportion of volunteers in different age groups was as follows in 1999 and 2004<sup>34</sup>:

Age group	1999	2004	Difference
14-25 years	36%	35%	-1%
26-35 years	34%	34%	Unchanged
36-45 years	39%	41%	+2%
46-55 years	40%	40%	Unchanged
56-65 years	34%	40%	+6%

<sup>31</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*.

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.shell.de/home/content/deu/aboutshell/our\\_commitment/shell\\_youth\\_study/](http://www.shell.de/home/content/deu/aboutshell/our_commitment/shell_youth_study/)

<sup>33</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>



Age group	1999	2004	Difference
66-75 years	26%	31%	+5%
76+ years	16%	18%	+2%

On the basis of the survey results, generally the proportion of volunteers remained stable over the years or slightly increased (by 1 or 2%). The only two age groups which showed a greater increase were those of '56 to 65 year-olds', where 40% indicated that they were volunteering in 2004 compared to 34% in 1999, and '66-75 year-olds' (5% increase from 26% to 31%).

Table 1.2 outlines information on volunteering by age group available for 2009<sup>35</sup>, which provides an idea of the proportion of adults involved in volunteering.

Age group	Proportion volunteering
Persons aged 16 to 54	34%
Persons aged 55 to 64	36%
Persons aged 65 and above	26%

According to the same source, between 1985 and 2005 the involvement of persons aged 50 and above increased significantly; from 19% to 30%.

The Shell Survey on Young People<sup>36</sup>, which has been carried out every three years among 12 to 24 year-olds, confirms the results of the survey of the relevant age group. According to the 14<sup>th</sup> Shell Survey (2003), 35% of young people engaged in some kind of volunteering, primarily in traditional organisations. The proportion of young people who carried out volunteering activities seemed to be stable at a level of around 35%. According to the 15<sup>th</sup> Shell youth study (2006), 36% of young people regularly engaged in voluntary activities (approximately 4 million persons) and 42% 'from time to time' (about 5 million persons). Young people tended to be engaged on a short-term basis and preferred concrete projects and non-formal types of organisations.

Some figures on the different types of voluntary activities in which young people are involved are available in a study by the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy<sup>37</sup>.

According to the study, the numbers of 'young people'<sup>38</sup> involved in various activities are as follows<sup>39</sup>:

<sup>35</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*.

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.shell.de/home/content/deu/aboutshell/our\\_commitment/shell\\_youth\\_study/](http://www.shell.de/home/content/deu/aboutshell/our_commitment/shell_youth_study/)

<sup>37</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*.

<sup>38</sup> The report does not clearly specify the definition of 'young people'. It refers to the Law for Children and Youth Welfare (Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz, KJHG), which distinguishes between the following age groups for young people: (a) Youth: over 14, but not yet 18; (b) Young adult: over 18, but not yet 27; (c) Young person: those under 27. The Voluntary Year of Social Service (FSJ) or the Voluntary Year of Ecological Service (FÖJ) are open to young people from 15 to 26. In the 14th study of the German Shell surveyed more than 2,500 young people from 12 to 25 years. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*; p. 3.

<b>Table 1.3 – Number of young people involved in different types of volunteering</b>	
<b>Type of volunteering</b>	<b>Number of young people</b>
Voluntary activities	3,803,905
Voluntary service	3,000 (each year) <sup>40</sup>
Voluntary service abroad (excluding European Voluntary Service)	5,646 (in 2006) <sup>41</sup>
National voluntary civic service	35,000 (in 2006), distributed as follows <sup>42</sup> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18,100 persons carried out a Voluntary Social Year ('Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr');</li> <li>- 12,300 carried out a voluntary service that was not co-financed by the federation</li> </ul> <i>Outside the scope of this Study: 4,600 persons did a civic instead of a military service (in accordance with sec 14c Law on the Civilian Service)<sup>43</sup></i>
Carry out their service period abroad	Approx. 800 <sup>44</sup>

### **Geographical spread of volunteering**

A After WW2 Germany was split into the former German Democratic Republic (GDR; East Germany) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG; West Germany), therefore, both the nature and extent of volunteering differed between the two parts of the country.

At the time of the re-unification of the country, much of the infrastructure for volunteer work in GDR was dissolved and there was a drastic decrease in the number of volunteers. At present, there are still higher proportions of people volunteering in West Germany than East Germany (37% compared to 31% in 2004). However, according to the National Survey, there has been a greater increase in volunteering in Eastern regions, in particular in the region Berlin-Brandenburg, than in the Western counter-parts (overall 3% compared to 1% increase since 1999).<sup>45</sup>

<sup>39</sup> The report was published in 2005. It does not state explicitly the source for these numbers, although the BMFJFS National Survey is mentioned several times throughout the document (among others).

<sup>40</sup> BMFSFJ (2004): *Perspektiven für Freiwilligendienste und Zivildienst in Deutschland. Bericht der Kommission Impulse für die Zivilgesellschaft* (Berlin)

<sup>41</sup> Arbeitskreis 'Lernen und Helfen in Übersee' e.V. (2007): *Statistische Übersicht zu Personalvermittlungen 2006* (Bonn) [www.entwicklungsdienst.de](http://www.entwicklungsdienst.de)

<sup>42</sup> BMFSFJ (2007): *Für mich und für andere. Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr/Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr* (Berlin)

<sup>43</sup> Young men who refuse to do military service for conscientious reasons have to do civilian service. Like the military service the civilian service is regulated by the state and is considered as a service under public law with detailed legal regulations. While the military service encompasses nine months the civilian service lasts twelve months. It is possible to do a civic service (Voluntary Social Year or Voluntary Ecological Year) instead of a civilian service (under sec 14c Law on the Civilian Service).

<sup>44</sup> A possibility to do the 'Other Service Abroad' ('Der Andere Dienst im Ausland') also exists as an alternative to civilian service. In praxis this means that young people having carried out such a service are released from doing a civilian service – given that the service abroad lasted at least 14 months and that they did it for an organisation recognised by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

<sup>45</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*.

### Education levels

Only limited information on education levels is available in the National Survey. According to this survey, the distribution of volunteers in the age group 14-24 was as follows<sup>46</sup>:

Education level	Proportion
Low education level (secondary general school certificate / 'Hauptschulabschluss')	22%
Medium education level (secondary school level I certificate / 'Realschulabschluss' or 'Mittlere Reife')	32%
High education level (a-levels/ 'Abitur')	43%

However, in relation to the presentation of the different education levels, it must be highlighted that 'high education level' is not the same as 'higher education'; the category did not involve any university studies, but only went up to the finish of secondary education. Hence, the figures need to be considered with caution.

### Volunteer involvement by sectors

The National Survey also investigates the sectors in which volunteering is performed; 14 different sectors have been identified. Table 1.5 shows the proportion by sector. The largest proportion of volunteers was engaged in 'sports and mobility' (11% in 1999 as well as in 2004), followed by 'schools and nursery schools' (6% in 1999 and 7% in 2004).<sup>47</sup>

Sector	1999	2004	Difference
Sport and physical activity	11%	11%	<i>Unchanged</i>
Schools and nursery schools	6%	7%	+1%
Church and religious organisations	5.5%	6%	+0.5%
Leisure and social activities	5.5%	5%	-0.5%
Culture and music	5%	5.5%	+0.5%
Social welfare	4%	5.5%	+1.5%
Accident, rescue and voluntary fire services	2.5%	3%	+0.5%
Professional advocacy outside the workplace	2.5%	2.5%	<i>Unchanged</i>
Politics and political advocacy	2.5%	2.5%	<i>Unchanged</i>
Environment, nature conservation and animal welfare	2%	2.5%	+0.5%
Youth work outside school and adult education	1.5%	2.5%	+1%
'Other' local civic activities	1.5%	2%	+0.5%
Health care sector	1%	1%	<i>Unchanged</i>
Justice and criminal sector	0.5%	0%	-0.5%

<sup>46</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*, p. 224

<sup>47</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*, pp. 72-73.

**Profile of volunteers by employment status**

According to the Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth<sup>48</sup>, 23% of all volunteering activity undertaken in Germany is in some way related to the volunteers' present work (or former employment in the case of retired volunteers).

With regard to the employment status of German volunteers, persons in some kind of employment activity or with a higher education degree generally engage in volunteering to a greater degree than those who do not. Participation rates are 37-38% for the two categories 'gainfully employed' and 'pupils, students and trainees'. A similar proportion was reported for the category 'women / men at home'. However, whereas participation rates for persons who are not employed or studying are lower, there has been a clear increase for both registered unemployed and retired persons. In 1999, 'only' 23% and 24% respectively did some form of volunteering. In 2004 the proportion had increased to 27% and 28%. According to BMFSFJ, the increase among the unemployed can be attributed to higher participation rates in Eastern Germany and of women. Finally, a rather high proportion: 35% (1999) and 37% (2004) of persons belonging to an undefined 'other' category engaged in volunteering.<sup>49</sup>

<b>Employment status</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Gainful employment	38%	40%	+2%
Registered unemployed	23%	27%	+4%
Pupils, students, trainees	37%	38%	+1%
Women / men at home	37%	38%	+1%
Retired persons	24%	28%	+4%
Other	35%	37%	+2%

According to the report 'Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and Figures' by CEV, the willingness to engage in voluntary work seems to be linked with the individual's level of social capital ('social inclusion' and employment / education status). Such aspects include, for example:

- A large circle of friends and acquaintances;
- Close links to church;
- Gainful employment;
- Higher education; and,
- A high professional position.

<sup>48</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p.32; p.169

<sup>49</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>.

### ***Time dedicated to volunteering***

As far as the frequency of volunteering is concerned, it largely remained the same between 1999 and 2004<sup>50</sup>. Overall, both in 1999 and 2004, 72% of the volunteers engaged in voluntary activities several times per month, of which 48% in 1999 and 49% in 2004 reported that they volunteered once a week.

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Daily	3%	4%	+1%
Several times per week	23%	23%	Same
Once a week	22%	21%	-1%
Several times each month	24%	23%	-1%
Once a month	15%	15%	Same
Less frequent	13%	13%	Same

In a Study from 2009<sup>51</sup>, it was estimated that overall, 34.3% of Germans over 16 engage in voluntary activities. The persons engaged in voluntary activities in Germany spend on average 16.2 hours per month volunteering. The time spent on voluntary activities differs across the German regions, from 14 hours per month in Hamburg and Saarland to 24 hours per month in Bremen. Taking these factors into account it was estimated that on a yearly basis 4.6 billion hours is spent on voluntary activities in Germany.

It was also estimated that socially active persons spent 7.5% of their total working time on voluntary work in Germany. Again, there were differences between the German regions; while in Schleswig-Holstein 9.5% of the working time was spent on voluntary work, the corresponding figure in Hamburg was merely 4.3%. Other regions where voluntary engagement in terms of the proportion of working time allocated was high are: Rheinland-Pfalz, Niedersachsen, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Sachsen.

## **1.4 Number and type of organisations engaging volunteers**

### ***Definition of voluntary organisations in Germany***

No category 'voluntary organisation' as such exists in Germany.

Some information on the types of organisations that engage volunteers has been identified in the paper '*Defining the Non-profit Sector: Germany*<sup>52</sup>', However, it can be emphasised that the terminology used in this paper is not consistent with terminology used in other sources. Hence, the extent to which this paper sheds light on the current definition(s) of voluntary organisations can be debated.

<sup>50</sup> BMFSFJ National Survey – long version, p. 114.

<sup>51</sup> AMB Generali Holding AG: *Engagementatlas 2009*, p.13.

<sup>52</sup> **Information stems from 1992.** Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (1992): *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Germany. Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, no. 6.* (The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies); p. 9.

According to the paper, the voluntary sector in Germany can best be described by its heterogeneity. The following four main types of organisations make up the non-profit sector (however, these, for example, do not seem to include 'foundations' - Stiftungen)<sup>53</sup>:

- Associations ('Vereine' and 'Verbände');
- Public benefit organisations ('gemeinnützige Organisationen'; i.e. organisations that promote the public good), including 'free welfare associations'<sup>54</sup>;
- Communal economic corporations ('gemeinwirtschaftliche Unternehmen'); and,
- Organisations with non-commercial character ('Organisationen ohne Erwerbszweck').

Different legal forms are available to these types of organisations, which means that organisations belonging to the same category of organisation may, or may not, be non-profit making. For example, registered associations may or may not be non-profit making or have charity status. Hence, the legal definitions have limited use in describing the full scope of the German non-profit sector.

Furthermore, organisations clustered under one category can be very different in character. For example, 'associations' includes a great variety of organisational forms, ranging from village improvement associations to singing clubs, amateur theatres, sports clubs, professional and business associations and foundations<sup>55</sup>. In general political and civic organisations and local voters' groups, as well as compulsory economic associations, such as chambers of commerce and craft unions are also considered to be associations. However, religious organisation, co-operatives, and political parties are generally excluded.

The German legal system further distinguishes between 'member-based' and 'non-member-based' organisations. Among member-based forms, distinction is made between:

- Private law associations (e.g. a sports club) and public law co-operatives (e.g. local savings and loan associations)
- Commercial-law bodies, businesses and co-operatives (partnerships, limited liability companies, stock corporations)
- Public law corporations such as (some) professional and business associations (notary chambers, chambers of commerce)<sup>56</sup>,
- (Some) religious organisations.

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<sup>53</sup> **Information stems from 1992.** Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (1992): *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Germany. Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, no. 6.* (The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies); p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> The parts of the non-profit sector which are regulated by the principle of subsidiarity (see section 1.2) are normally referred to as 'free welfare associations.' These associations are made up of numerous establishments with different legal status. For example, the Protestant Diakonie, an umbrella for thousands of separate legal entities, consisted, in the 1970s, of registered associations (43.2%), foundations (23.4%), public law foundations and corporations (29.4%), limited liability companies (5%), and other legal forms.

<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the term 'Verein' (associations) has several different meanings in the German context. It generally refers to any social group outside family, business and public administration. 'Verband' is similar to 'Verein', but tends to be used in relation to formal, means-oriented associations that combine common or mutual interests (e.g. a business association). Other terms used are 'Vereinigung', which is similar to 'Verband' and is primarily used to describe mutual interest associations among businesses in the same branch of the economy and 'Gesellschaft', which is often used in relation to scholarly associations and learned societies. Finally, 'Innung' or 'Kammer' (chamber) tend to refer to modernised versions of guilds among local businesses and professions, often with compulsory membership.

<sup>56</sup> Public law organisations include a wide variety of organisations, from government agencies to largely independent institutions (e.g. public television stations, the Bavarian Red Cross Society, the Jewish Welfare Agency, the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches etc.). Public benefit organisations include, for example, mutual benefit societies, political parties etc, whilst excluding churches.

On the other hand, among the non-member-based forms, distinction is made between foundations and trusts as 'endowed institutions' and public law corporations as operating agencies (such as universities, schools, public insurance funds, the Federal Post, and most radio and television stations). Indeed, the notion of a non-profit organisation cuts across all the different types of legal institutions that German associational and corporate law treats as separate. Thus, the non-profit sector includes organisations that vary greatly in terms of legal status (public versus private), taxation (commercial versus non-commercial), or financial structure (stock corporations versus tax-financed institutions versus endowments).

The parts of the German non-profit sector that are close to the principle of self-administration include civil law associations, public law corporations and foundations. These are dependent on the government to a different degree. Consequently, they include organisations that operate on behalf of a federal or regional Ministry, as well as chambers of commerce and industry, radio and television stations, and institutions of higher education. Not all, however, qualify as non-profit organisations under the structural/operational definition (e.g. public radio and television corporations and the German Association for Technical Corporation)<sup>57</sup>.

### **Number of voluntary organisations and distribution per sector**

Overall, in Germany, there are more than 500,000 non-profit organisations and almost 15,000 non-profit foundations.<sup>58</sup>

However, only limited information has been identified on the number and proportion of voluntary organisations by sector. Some information has been identified for 1995 (on the non-profit sector in general, including employment)<sup>59</sup>:

**Table 1.8 – The civil society sector in Germany (1995)**

#### **The civil society sector at a glance: Germany, 1995**

Field	Employment	Volunteers	Expenditures	Revenue from:			Total revenue millions*
				Government	Philanthropy	Fees	
Culture and recreation	5%	33%	9%	20%	13%	66%	12,232
Education and research	11%	1%	9%	75%	2%	23%	12,281
Health	30%	7%	35%	94%	0%	6%	47,566
Social services	38%	8%	26%	65%	5%	30%	35,929
Environment	1%	5%	1%	22%	16%	62%	1,031
Development and housing	6%	2%	5%	57%	0%	43%	7,545
Civic and advocacy	2%	5%	1%	58%	7%	36%	2,036
Philanthropy	0%	2%	7%	10%	3%	86%	8,972
International activities	1%	2%	1%	51%	41%	8%	837
Religious worship	3%	19%	2%	95%	0%	5%	2,167
Professional and unions	4%	4%	5%	2%	1%	97%	6,972
Not elsewhere classified	-	13%	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>137,567</b>
	FTE	FTE	millions*				
	<b>1,480,850</b>	<b>1,211,474</b>	<b>137,547</b>				
<b>Totals as a percent of:</b>							
Economically active population	3.6%	3.0%					
Gross domestic product			4.0%				

updated: 1/18/2005

Information on types of voluntary organisations that are active in different fields of activity is available for 2004 (see Figure 1.1).

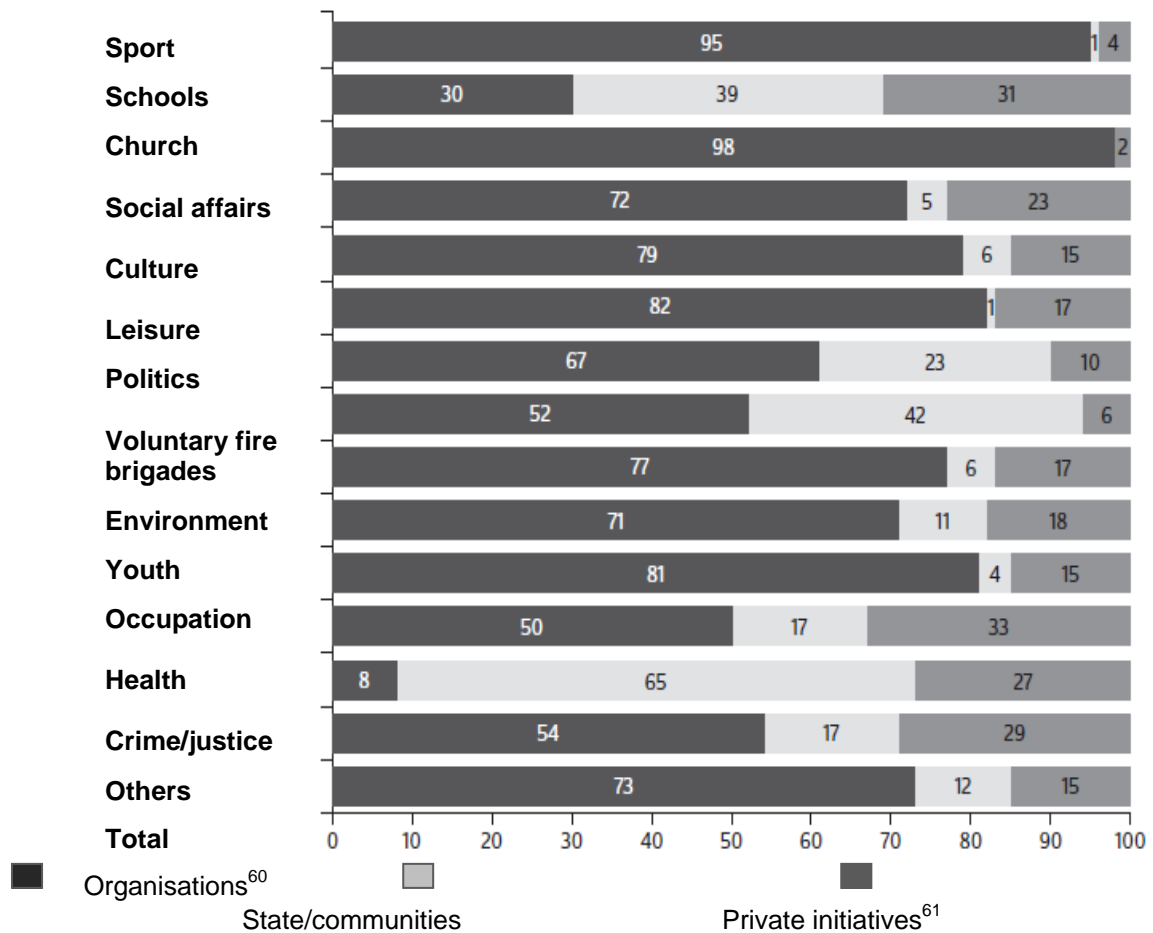
<sup>57</sup> so-called 'Freiwilligenagenturen'.

<sup>58</sup>

[http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/nr\\_324/DE/BMF\\_Startseite/Aktuelles/Monatsbericht\\_des\\_BMF/2007/11/071120agmb007.html](http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/nr_324/DE/BMF_Startseite/Aktuelles/Monatsbericht_des_BMF/2007/11/071120agmb007.html)

<sup>59</sup> John Hopkins: [http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/pdfs/CNP/CNP\\_GCS1\\_Germany.PDF](http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/pdfs/CNP/CNP_GCS1_Germany.PDF)

**Figure 1.1 – Proportion of organisational forms that are active in different fields of activity (2004)**



Source: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, 2009.

### Trends

In the last 50 years, the number of registered associations in Germany increased almost six times, from about 86,000 in 1960 (West German regions only) to 554,000 in 2008 (East and West German regions). The number of associations per 100,000 inhabitants increased from 160 in 1960 to 674 in 2008. As another example, one of the peak associations increased its membership from 15 member organisations in 1972 to about 1,000 by the mid-1980s, representing between 300,000 and 500,000 individual members.<sup>62</sup> This trend points not only to a very dynamic development of associations in Germany, but also shows that many associations are very young and have limited experience in voluntary activities.

Between 2005 and 2008, the increase in the number of associations was particularly high in the fields of culture, interest representation and leisure, whereas the number of environmental associations diminished.

The number of registered voluntary associations was estimated at around 286,000 in 1990, which, relative to population size, is considerably less than in other countries of comparable economic development, such as France (500,000-700,000). However, a Commission poll from 1987 showed that 45% of the German adult population were members of associations,

<sup>60</sup> Included: associations (Verbände, Vereine), trade unions, parties, churches, foundations.

<sup>61</sup> Included: initiatives, projects, supporting groups, other forms of organisations.

<sup>62</sup> Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (1992): *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Germany. Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, no. 6.* (The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies).



which was higher than the proportion for France (43.9%). This suggests that German associations tend to be, on average, larger than the French counter-parts<sup>63</sup>. No comparable information has been identified for subsequent years.

More than 190 community foundations were established in the last decade and in 2008 over 300 volunteer centres<sup>64</sup> were officially registered members of national umbrella organisations (total number not available); there were a similar number of volunteer centres for elderly people. It is estimated that more than 800 civil society infrastructure organisations exist in Germany, including networks and umbrella organisations, associated foundations and other organisations that contribute to civic engagement.<sup>65</sup>

With regard to foundations, in 2009 there were 16,406 registered foundations in Germany, 6% more than the previous year. There are vast differences between the proportion of foundations in old and new regions. In 2008 in new regions there were 1,042 active foundations, whereas in the old regions the corresponding figure was 15,364.

With regard to the establishment of new foundations: in 1990 there were merely 181 new-funded foundations<sup>66</sup> while in 2008 around 1,000 foundations were funded and in 2007 1,134 were funded. In 2009 foundations were particularly active in the field of social affairs (32%), education (15%), culture and art (15%), science and research (15%) and environment (4%). The same trend could be observed for civic foundations (Bürgerstiftungen) with one new foundation in 1996 and 52 in 2006. However, the dynamic increase of new-founded civic foundations in Germany slowed down recently with only 12 being founded in 2008.

### **Types of organisations engaging volunteers**

In Germany, different types of organisations perform diverse tasks and functions within the civil society infrastructure. These can be broadly categorised as follows<sup>67</sup>:

- **Volunteer centres / agencies.** In brief, their purpose is to promote and foster the involvement in volunteering and to contribute to the development of social capital within the city or region where they operate. Specific areas of activity include brokerage of volunteers, leadership training for the third sector organisations concerning management of volunteers and promoting volunteering (e.g. through public relations work)<sup>68</sup>. Approximately 30% of the volunteer centres are run by independent associations, 15% are owned by local governments and 6% receive support from more than one organisation (including churches). Although they are

<sup>63</sup> Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (1992): *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Germany. Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, no. 6.* (The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies).

<sup>64</sup> Indeed, there has been 'a boom' in terms of establishing volunteer agencies across Germany since 1997. Whereas the first pilot projects with 16 volunteer centres across Germany were only launched as late as in 1996 (by Caritas), the number has since increased to around 300.

<sup>65</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS).

<sup>66</sup> Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Bericht zur Lage und zur Perspektiven des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements in Deutschland, 2009.

<sup>67</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS); p.13.

<sup>68</sup> According to a survey comprised 80 volunteer agencies in Germany there are three main characteristics regarding tasks and objectives of volunteer agencies: (1) They aim to be a bridge between potential volunteers and volunteer involving organisations; they try to match individuals who wish to volunteer with organisations that offer suitable opportunities; (2) They offer training programmes and seminars for volunteers as well as support for organisations to improve on a volunteer friendly infrastructure; and, (3) They promote volunteering to the general public. European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures.* <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>

supposedly independent from public authorities, they rely on public funding and focus on delivering services for public bodies; more than 60% of the volunteer centres receive some public funding, largely from the local and regional levels. According to a survey carried out among 80 volunteer agencies, there is a great diversity between the agencies due to different resources and capacities. Whilst some agencies are organised completely by volunteers, others are run by paid staff.

- **Volunteer centres affiliated to welfare associations.** This refers to volunteer centres which are focused on the recruitment of volunteers for member organisations of their association. This type of volunteer centre makes up an estimated 30% to 50% of all the volunteer centres. According a survey carried out among 80 volunteer agencies, 34% of the agencies are directly hosted by a 'peak' welfare organisation, 30% belong to an independent association or club, another 15% are within a compound structure<sup>69</sup> and local communities host 14% of the volunteer agencies. In this respect, the survey also showed that an 'independent' organisation established specifically to run a volunteer agency may in the end be connected to a 'peak' welfare organisation anyhow, thus, the welfare organisations have a very dominant position in hosting and running volunteer agencies.
- **Volunteer centres for elderly people (also referred to as 'senior offices'; Seniorenbüros).** This type of volunteer centre is focused on promoting volunteering among elderly people and aims to empower the elderly to play an active part in society. The development of volunteer centres for elderly people was triggered through a top-down process by means of a federal government programme. Subsequently, the local government authorities took over ownership of these types of organisations and integrated them into their local administrations. Now, there are more than 250 volunteer centres for the elderly, of which around 80% are funded by local authorities. A small proportion of these volunteer centres are run by welfare associations or independent associations.
- **Community foundations.** These foundations, which emerged in the 1990s, provide financial support in order to promote social capital and to foster volunteering activities in non-profit organisations and within municipalities. Hence, community foundations also provide funding to volunteer centres. They are privately funded and conceptually separate and independent from local governments. Their number is rapidly increasing, with around 190 across Germany in 2007. The 'Initiative of Community Foundations' ('Initiative Buergerstiftungen') is the umbrella organisation of community foundations, and it was founded in 2001. Some of the more prominent ones are the 'Bertelsmann Foundation', the 'Robert Bosch Stiftung' and the 'Koerber Stiftung'.
- **Foundations,** for example, the foundation 'Citizens for Citizens' ('Buerger fuer Buerger').
- **Umbrella organisations,** for example, the federal association of volunteer centres, BAGFA (the 'Federal Working Group of Volunteer Agencies'<sup>70</sup>), and the regional associations, LAGFAS. Founded in 1997, BAGFA was the first umbrella organisation for volunteer centres. BAGFA was assigned the responsibility of representing the needs and interests of the volunteer centres at the federal political level. The following years saw the emergence of umbrella associations at the regional level, so-called 'Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften der Freiwilligenagenturen und -zentren' (LAGFAS).

<sup>69</sup> No explanation of the definition of 'compound structure' is provided in the source.  
<http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf> (p. 7)

<sup>70</sup> 'Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen e.V.'

- **Networks.** In 2002, the network organisation 'Federal Network for Civic Engagement' (BBE) was set up with the financial support of the federal government, marking yet another step in the evolution of the civil society infrastructure in Germany.

To sum up, since 1997 there has been a continual expansion of the civil society infrastructure which has continued to the present time, with a growing number of volunteer centres, volunteer centres for elderly people, volunteering centres of the welfare associations, and community foundations.

Traditionally, volunteering mainly took place within the framework of the 'peak' organisations. However, since the 1990s, there has been a change in the understanding of what volunteering means. Consequently, many new organisations and structures have been founded, and at the same time the traditional 'peak' organisations have become more volunteer-oriented once again.<sup>71</sup>

## 1.5 Main voluntary activities

The National Survey provides some examples of areas of voluntary activity: youth coaching, auxiliary fire brigade, parents involved with nursery schools and schools, the social and church sector, culture and leisure clubs, environmental protection and animal welfare, political and vocational interest representation, local community groups etc.<sup>72</sup>

The activities performed by volunteers vary between the sectors. In the areas of leisure time activities (e.g. sports and recreation, leisure and social activities, culture and music) the activities generally relate to management and organisational aspects (organising and holding meetings, tasks as honorary board member or treasurer) and leading various activities for beneficiaries (being a trainer in a football club, organising theatre events etc.). The main tasks related to social and political engagement consist of providing information and lobbying. Personal care (assisting senior citizens and disabled) is the key task in the health care and social welfare sectors.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>; p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; pp. 24, 72-73.

<sup>73</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>, p. 9.

## 2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Main public bodies and other organisations involved in volunteering

#### *Main public body responsible for volunteering*

The responsibilities for issues relating to voluntary civic engagement are split between the federal and regional levels. At the federal level the main responsibility for volunteering in general lies with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ); and since 1999 a specific department in the Ministry has been in charge of volunteering.

The Ministry is in charge of a significant number of model programmes and ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening volunteering in civil society.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the Ministry co-ordinates the government's efforts in promoting volunteering and in providing an adequate regulatory framework, infrastructure and recognition for greater civic involvement. The aim of the Ministry is to systematise and co-ordinate these efforts in order to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of the various initiatives and programmes.

The work of the Ministry is being organised / co-ordinated through the 'Initiative for Civic Involvement 'Together – for one another' – an umbrella for civic engagement'. This initiative is the central pillar for volunteering-related projects co-ordinated by the Federal Ministry for Family, but not for the government as a whole. The initiative is made up of different programmes and focuses on:

- Providing greater clarity and structure in volunteering-related information and offerings through the internet portal <http://www.engagiert-in-deutschland.de/>
- Promoting the 500 multi-generation houses ('Mehrgenerationenhäuser'), volunteering centres ('Freiwilligenagenturen'), and 250 centres for elderly people ('Seniorenbüros') as places that provide the opportunity for people of different generations to meet
- Promoting the involvement of private sector partners in volunteering and supporting the creation of an information platform to help businesses get involved.
- Supporting the creation of civic associations ('Bürgerstiftungen') as well as networking and the exchange of best practice, with the aim of establishing at least one such association in every municipality across the country.
- Broadening the scope and number of youth volunteering services in order to encourage young people (in particular socially disadvantaged young people and those with a migrant background) to get involved in volunteering.

The Federal Ministry of Interior is responsible for sport, which makes up the main pillar of volunteering in Germany<sup>75</sup>. As part of its duties, the Ministry is responsible for the promotion of sport; the main volunteering sector in Germany with approximately 2.1 million volunteers in sport organisations. The Ministry supports public recognition of volunteering in sport through numerous awards. Similarly, the Ministry has initiated several annual awards for volunteering in the field of civic protection and disaster assistance.

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<sup>74</sup> A summary of such programmes/ initiatives and supportive measures can be found in the recent report "Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementförderung in den Bundesressorts" published by Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (BBE, 2009).

<sup>75</sup> Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (BBE): *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementförderung in den Bundesressorts*; p. 7-10.

At the regional level the Social Ministry or the Ministry of Internal Affairs have usually been given competence in this area; it is up to the individual regions to decide what Ministry should be in charge of these questions.<sup>76</sup>

Several other Ministries are also active in the field of volunteering:

- **Foreign Office** – The Foreign Office has initiated the volunteering programme 'kulturweit' in the context of its external cultural policy. Its objective is to enable young people aged 18-26 to participate in the activities of international organisations associated with the Ministry over a period of 6 to 12 months. The scheme, which focuses on external cultural and education policy, received 4 million euro in funding in 2009. 'Kulturweit' is governed by the Law for the Promotion of Youth Voluntary Services which came into force on 1 June 2008. The law makes provisions for the payment of social security contributions. The programme offers 265 places in 60 countries worldwide.
- **Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs** – The Ministry has initiated several recent amendments to existing labour laws in order to enhance the framework for volunteering with respect to social insurance regulations for voluntary activities. In addition to these measures, the Ministry supports several projects in the framework of the federal government programme XENOS (funded by the European Social Fund) which is aimed at strengthening citizens' involvement in the fight against xenophobia, intolerance and racism.
- **Federal Ministry of Education and Research** – The Ministry provides funding to several research institutions and volunteering associations for different scientific studies on aspects of volunteering.
- **Federal Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection** – The Ministry does not provide precise information about relevant activities in the field of volunteering, but highlights the general importance of volunteering for social cohesion in rural areas. It also emphasises the crucial role of volunteering in the wide range of government funded programmes and activities aimed at strengthening rural communities.
- **Federal Ministry of Finance** – The Ministry highlights a number of tax relief measures which were passed in 2008 as part of the Act for the Further Strengthening of Volunteering, bringing the total tax relief for volunteers and volunteering organisations to €2,262 billion in 2009. The law amends several existing tax laws and aims to strengthen the overall framework for volunteering in Germany. It was applied retroactively as of 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007.
- **Federal Ministry of Health** – The Ministry emphasises the importance of volunteering for the public health sector, in particular the provision of ambulant care in the community.
- **Federal Minister of Justice** – The Ministry is working towards the modernisation of the legal rules governing foundations and it has already clarified the legal insurance coverage status of volunteers.
- **Minister of State for Cultural and Media Affairs** – The Minister of State highlights the importance of the various programmes and initiatives within its responsibilities that have a direct bearing for the strengthening of civil society and the promotion of volunteering in Germany. No further details are provided, however, the Minister considers its role to be that of a facilitator by providing the network infrastructure within which various civil society initiatives can develop.

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<sup>76</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*.  
<http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>; p. 6.

- **Minister of State for Migration, Refugees and Integration** – The key initiative by the Minister of State is the so-called 'action growing together' (Aktion zusammen wachsen), an information and networking platform which is intended to provide information to citizens in order to encourage them to volunteer to support migrants in their community.
- **Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety** – The Ministry provides 450,000 euro in annual funding to the 'German League for Nature and Environment' ('Deutscher Naturschutzring, DNR'), which is the umbrella association for environmental protection associations. The Ministry's annual budget includes an additional 4.45 million euro in funding for various environmental protection and nature conservation civic initiatives. Furthermore, the Ministry is supporting a series of measures for the strengthening of associations and civic initiatives in the field of environmental protection.
- **Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs** – The Ministry supports a number of research projects and model initiatives in the field of demographic development and urban and rural transformation that also take into account the importance of volunteering.
- **Federal Ministry of Defence** – The Ministry lists a number of voluntary initiatives aimed at supporting servicemen and their families. These initiatives are bundled in the so-called 'network for aid' (Netzwerk für Hilfe).
- **Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology** – No specific volunteering related measures, initiatives or programmes are mentioned.
- **Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development** – The Ministry stresses the importance of volunteering in international development initiatives, in particular in the context of information and educational programmes (both in Germany and abroad). The Ministry is responsible for the new 'weltwärts voluntary programme' targeted at young people aged between 18 and 28. The programme was launched in January 2008 and will gradually be expanded to allow up to 10,000 young people to participate every year. The project is funded with 70 million euro per annum. A central criterion in selecting participants is their willingness to engage in volunteering initiatives upon their return to Germany.

In addition, through the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge) the Ministry of Interior currently supports several dozen programmes and pilot projects promoting volunteering for, with and by migrants.

#### ***Other public bodies involved in volunteering***

Only scarce information has been identified on other public bodies that are systematically involved in volunteering

At federal level a 'sub-committee on civic engagement'<sup>77</sup> was established for the 15<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term of the German Parliament. This sub-committee has been designated the task of implementing the recommendations that resulted from the report of the Study Committee on Volunteering. The sub-committee collaborates closely with the Federal Network on Civic Engagement (the BBE) on volunteering matters as well as other organisations and civic groups that are active in the field.<sup>78</sup>

Moreover, at the federal level several bodies operate under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Interior:

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<sup>77</sup> Unterausschuss Bürgerschaftliches Engagement:  
[http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/ausschuesse/a13/buerger\\_eng/index.jsp](http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/ausschuesse/a13/buerger_eng/index.jsp)

<sup>78</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*, p. 24.

- The Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) supports civic engagement in the civil protection and disaster assistance fields.
- The Federal Agency for Technical Relief (BA THW) is an agency engaged in voluntary youth work in the field of civil protection.
- The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) supports civic initiatives for better integration of immigrants.
- The Federal Agency for Civic Education aims at supporting civic engagement in different areas, for example, through the 'School Without Racism' project.
- The 'Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance – Against Extremism and Violence' (established by the Federal Ministry of Interior together with the Federal Ministry of Justice), aims at supporting, developing and promoting civic engagement for democracy and tolerance.
- Finally, the 'Foundation Assistance', funded by the Federal Ministry of Interior, is a service point for smaller and non-political voluntary organisations. It provides information on events and publications, and offers start-up help and counselling for voluntary organisations.

One source<sup>79</sup> has been identified that outlines public bodies systematically involved in volunteering in relation to youth at the local and regional levels.

At regional level, the 'Conference of Youth and Family Ministers' is an expert body consisting of the ministers and senators in charge of child, youth and family policy in the German regions.<sup>80</sup> This body, which is supported by the 'Working Party of the Highest Youth and Family Authorities of the Federal States'<sup>81</sup>, amongst others passes resolutions and decides on policy and legal questions concerning youth services. It also supports the development of institutions and programmes, and promotes statutory and voluntary youth service organisations, including the further development of youth services in the areas of youth work, the work of youth associations, etc.<sup>82</sup> The chair represents the Conference at the European level (European Union and Council of Europe).

Another Working Party, namely the 'Working Party of the Youth Offices of the Federal States'<sup>83</sup> also exists. This Working Party brings together the 17 youth offices of the federal states which carry out cross-sector work in their respective areas, such as counselling assistance for the local youth offices and the organisations of voluntary youth services.

At the local level, the Municipal Youth Office is the central institution for child/youth services. As part of this office, the 'Committee for Youth Services' ('Jugendhilfeausschuss') steers child and youth services at the local level, and, for example, promotes voluntary youth services.

### ***Organisations that promote volunteering, facilitate cooperation and exchange of information***

Several different network and umbrella organisations promote volunteering and facilitate co-operation and exchange of information in Germany, including the 'Federal Network on Civic

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<sup>79</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2009): *Country Sheet on Youth Policy in Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe); p.6.

<sup>80</sup> Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz.

<sup>81</sup> Arbeitsgemeinschaft der obersten Landesjugend- und Familienbehörden, <http://www.jfmk.brandenburg.de/sixcms/detail.php/lbm1.c.385583.de>

<sup>82</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2009): *Country Sheet on Youth Policy in Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe); p.6.

<sup>83</sup> Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Landesjugendämter, <http://www.bagljae.de>

Engagement' (the BBE Network) and the national organisation for volunteer agencies (BAGFA).

The creation, in 2002, of the '**Federal Network on Civic Engagement' (the BBE)**<sup>84</sup> was an important milestone in the history of volunteering in Germany. Established on the basis of the Study Commission's recommendations and the momentum brought about by the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001, it brings together a vast number of different types of actors; anyone who is acting in the field of voluntary civic engagement or supporting it can become a member. Distinction is made between 'full' members (organisations, foundations, federal and local governmental institutions as well as business representatives) and co-operating members (institutions without national relevance, sponsors and individuals).

In terms of the tasks of the network, the BBE organises conferences and contributes to the public discourse on voluntary civic engagement. Furthermore, it publishes various materials on voluntary civic engagement and serves as a forum for the exchange of best practices.

To manage its work, the BBE has established eight working groups on the following themes:

- Legal framework;
- Qualification and education;
- Voluntary services;
- Perspectives of engagement on local level;
- Migration / integration;
- Corporate Citizenship;
- Civic engagement and social welfare system; and,
- European civil society and civil dialogue.

The BBE is a relatively new network and receives no public funding besides the financing of its coordination office.

Most German volunteer agencies are gathered under the roof of the '**National Organisation for Volunteer Agencies'** (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen e.V., **BAGFA**). BAGFA was founded in 1999 and it is a forum for local and regional volunteer centres or volunteer agencies. BAGFA, for example, organises an annual conference which provides a networking opportunity for its member organisations, comprising numerous workshops and discussion groups. There is also a network of volunteer centres at the regional level, working under the umbrella of the BAGFA, namely the 'LAGFA' (Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften), which serves as first contact point for e.g. politicians<sup>85</sup>.

The key task of the BAGFA network is to support the expansion of volunteer centres across Germany by promoting the social acceptance of voluntary work, and to develop standards for volunteering. In this purpose, it channels information, provides advice and gives professional opinions to the public discourse. Members meet twice a year to discuss the strategic policy of the BAGFA as well as for the exchange of best practices.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement, BBE - <http://www.b-b-e.de/> ; European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>.

<sup>85</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*.

<sup>86</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*.



In addition to the volunteer agencies, there are around 250 agencies that focus on active senior citizens, so-called '**Senior Offices**' (Seniorenbüros). Whilst the volunteer centres are broader, the senior offices concentrate on a specific target group (retired people), but their aims are very similar. The senior offices also have a national umbrella organisation (the '**German National Association of Senior Citizens Organisations**'), established in 1995, and it functions as a platform for the senior offices.

NAKOS, the '**National Clearing House for the Encouragement and Support of Self-Help Groups**', is a nationwide institution for information, service, and networking in the field of self-help. The main objective of NAKOS is to inform self-help groups and citizens that are interested in self-help and to foster contacts among interested parties, including co-operation among self-help associations and institutions providing professional care.

#### ***Affiliation with European umbrella organisations/networks***

Many voluntary organisations as well as networks and umbrella organisations in Germany are affiliated with EU level umbrella organisations and networks. For example, the 'German National Association of Senior Citizens Organisations' is a member of AGE – the European Older People's Platform, and BAGFA and BBE are members of the European Voluntary Centre (CEV). NAKOS, the 'National Clearing House for the Encouragement and Support of Self-Help Groups' is on the other hand not part of any EU umbrella organisations or networks.

A large number of individual organisations that are members of these national networks are also members of EU level platforms and networks.

## **2.2 Policies**

### **2.2.1 National framework / strategy**

In particular during the last decade, volunteering has become recognised as a political priority. 1999 saw two important developments, one being the introduction of the National Survey involving 15,000 German citizens and its purpose is to inform policy-making, the other being the establishment of the 'Study Commission on the Future of Civic Activities' by the German Federal Parliament.

A report was presented by the Study Commission in 2002, which included a number of action points to promote volunteering in Germany. Several of these action points have been implemented, including the establishment of the 'Federal Network for Civic Engagement' (BBE) and the current development of a national strategy for volunteering.

The Study Committee<sup>87</sup>, which was set up in 1999 and presented its results in 2002, put forward recommendations for strategies to achieve greater civic involvement and to increase volunteering.

Despite this work, no national strategy (white paper) on volunteering exists at present. Its preparation is, however, being considered by the Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth. The Ministry has designated the task to the 'Federal Network for Civic Engagement' (BBE) of preparing an initial discussion paper.<sup>88</sup>

Volunteering, for example, also forms part of other government policies, including the government's wider sustainable development strategy<sup>89</sup>. In this strategy, volunteering is

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<sup>87</sup> Enquête-Kommission - Zukunft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements.

<sup>88</sup> Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (BBE): *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementförderung in den Bundesressorts*.

<sup>89</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*.

seen as a tool for ensuring social cohesion in the context of demographic change<sup>90</sup>, on the one hand by mobilising young people to get involved in societal issues and, on the other hand, to draw on the experience and knowledge of elderly people.<sup>91</sup>

### **2.2.2 National targets and reporting arrangements for volunteering**

In Germany, volunteering is handled at all different levels: national, regional and local level. This is defined at each level. No overview exists at the moment

Volunteering activity in Germany is regularly monitored by the 'National Volunteering Survey'. The survey, initiated in 1999, takes place every five years (the next one was in 2004) and it delivers quantitative information on the number of volunteers, their engagement and motivations.

Representatives for voluntary organisations who were interviewed as part of the preparation of the present national report indicated that when funding is received then reporting concerning how the funding is used is required (for example, number of beneficiaries broken down by gender, budget, travel and subsistence costs etc.). For activities which are not funded, no such reporting is required.

### **2.2.3 International policies**

As indicated above, a national strategy is currently being elaborated; a decision was taken by the cabinet in July 2009 that a national strategy on volunteering should be developed. The impetus to develop this strategy does, however, not come from the EU (or international level), but from within the country. It is considered very important to create a common strategy in order for all levels (location, regional and national) to work together and coordinate their efforts in Germany.

The European Year 2011 however of course supports this work.

## **2.3 Programmes**

### **2.3.1 Key national programmes that stimulate volunteering at national level**

The Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth lists more than 50 different volunteering-related initiatives, projects and programmes under its supervision, most of which are still ongoing<sup>92</sup>.

With regard to the key programmes that stimulate volunteering, the 'Voluntary Year of Social Service (FSJ)/Voluntary Year of Ecological Service (FÖJ)' can be mentioned. FSJ/FÖJ is open to everyone who has finished his/her compulsory schooling, is under the age of 27 and would like to volunteer for 6 to 18 months in Germany or abroad. FSJ and FÖJ are supported by legislation and by the federal government<sup>93</sup>. In January 2009, the federal government launched the initiative 'voluntary services for all generations', which receives 24.75 million euro funding. Its aim is to show all the opportunities to volunteer

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<sup>90</sup> Volunteering is seen as a means to address the challenges posed by demographical change in rural communities; For example, in terms of raising the quality of public services and strengthen the 'social infrastructure' in rural communities. Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*, p.17.

<sup>91</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*, p. 6.

<sup>92</sup> Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (BBE): *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementförderung in den Bundesressorts*; p. 7-10.

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/Politikbereiche/Freiwilliges-Engagement/fsjfoejid=12150.html>; The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe); The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*.

within a pre-defined structure for people of all age groups (not only young people who traditionally take part in such voluntary services).<sup>94</sup>

In 2008 the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development together with its partners started a new kind of voluntary service called 'weltwärts' (*towards the world*). Young people between 18 and 28 years of age are invited to work between 6 and 24 months as volunteers in projects in developing countries. During this time they are financially supported by the Development Ministry which covers the costs for accommodation, travel, training and a small allowance. Overall, the government will provide funding of some 70 million euro per year for this voluntary service<sup>95</sup>.

Other initiatives with federal level involvement include, for example, the project 'Initiative 'for Me, for Us, for Everyone'<sup>96</sup> and the 'StartSocial' project, which was launched in 2001 as a public-private joint venture with the aim of transferring business management skills and know-how on to the administration and running of volunteering projects.

### **Awareness raising initiatives**

Examples of events that are arranged to encourage engagement in volunteering include:

- The 'Week of Civic Engagement' ('Woche des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements') takes place on an annual basis in the framework of the campaign 'Engagement macht stark' ([www.engagementmacht-stark.de](http://www.engagementmacht-stark.de)). This initiative, which was first launched in 2004, helps to draw the attention of the public and the media to voluntary activities through different events and local actions in order to promote voluntary activities.<sup>97</sup>
- The 'Day of Voluntary Activity' ('Tag des Ehrenamts') is celebrated in Germany on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December every year. On this day, the prize 'Pro Ehrenamt' (see below) is also awarded.
- The concept of a 'Social Day' (Sozialer Tag) was introduced in 2007; in June 2007 200,000 German pupils went to work for one day on an enterprise instead of going to school. Their wages were donated to education projects for children in Africa (2.1 million euro). This initiative was supported by several Minister Presidents of the German regions and the Federal President. The aim of the action was to encourage young people to get engaged in voluntary activities and to learn about social responsibility. Another 'social day' was scheduled for July 2008.<sup>98</sup>

Various awards have also been introduced to encourage the involvement in volunteering, including:

- The 'Pro Ehrenamt' award, launched by the German Olympic Sports Federation (DOSB) and Commerzbank, was awarded for the first time in 2006 in co-operation with the national network BBE<sup>99</sup>. This prize is awarded to persons and institutions

<sup>94</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*, p.13.

<sup>95</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe) More information: [www.weltwaerts.de](http://www.weltwaerts.de)

<sup>96</sup> This initiative (Initiative „für mich, für uns, für alle“) was launched by Members of the Parliament, municipal authorities and the savings banks with the aim to support volunteering at grassroots level. It represents a unique form of cooperation between the public and the private sectors in the volunteering field in Germany.

<sup>97</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS).

<sup>98</sup> [www.sozialertag.de](http://www.sozialertag.de)

<sup>99</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS); p. 8.

from the media, policy and economy fields that have proven sustainable involvement in voluntary activities in sports.

- The Heinz Westphal Preis (<http://heinz-westphal-preis.de>) has been introduced to encourage young people to get involved in voluntary work. Every two years this award, worth 15,000 euro, is announced by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth & the German Federal Youth Council.<sup>100</sup>
- JUGEND HILFT! (Youth helps) is a national level competition directed at children and young people who are engaged in social voluntary activities.<sup>101</sup>
- The federal competition 'Young People Shape Rural Spaces' (*Bundeswettbewerb Junge Menschen gestalten die ländlichen Räume*), which was launched in 2009, is aimed at motivating young people in rural areas to develop and present concrete ideas, innovative and well planned projects for securing the future of their region and to improve the quality of life. The intention is to motivate people to take the initiative and get involved in local politics and volunteering projects.<sup>102</sup>
- Another federal competition, 'Our Village has a Future' (Bundeswettbewerb 'Unser Dorf hat Zukunft'), takes place every three years. Its aim is to motivate participants to develop new perspectives for their village and to implement these ideas. In 2007, the competition had 34 participants from across the country, who had qualified from approximately 4,000 villages and municipal communities.<sup>103</sup>
- A report on volunteering initiatives ('Deutschland Aktiv') was published in 2004 and presents the challenges/obstacles faced by volunteers as well as the opportunities and solutions. The initiative also acknowledges the work of volunteers through an award too with the aim of motivating more people to volunteer. Finally, the initiative also comprises a periodic newsletter which keeps Members of Parliament and interested representatives of public bodies up to date on current developments and trends in the volunteering sector and local volunteering initiatives.
- The Federal Working Committee of Volunteers' Agencies awards an innovation prize worth 13,000 euro to innovative project ideas of volunteers' agencies aiming at solving social problems by voluntary commitment.<sup>104</sup>

Other ways of making people aware of and engage in volunteering activities include campaigns<sup>105</sup>, promotion via radio spots<sup>106</sup> and films<sup>107</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS).

<sup>101</sup> [www.jugendhilft.de](http://www.jugendhilft.de)

<sup>102</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*.

<sup>103</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*.

<sup>104</sup> [www.baqfa.de](http://www.baqfa.de)

<sup>105</sup> For example, in June 2007 the Campaign "Role models educate" (Vorbilder bilden) was launched by the Bertelsmann Foundation to encourage young people to become active as volunteers and become a role model for others. At the same time politicians were asked to provide the conditions young people need to volunteer. [www.vorbilder-bilden.de](http://www.vorbilder-bilden.de).

<sup>106</sup> The German Federal Youth Councils published radio spots of 51 prominent Germans (musicians, comedians, footballers etc.) calling for young people to get engaged. <http://www.dbjr.de/index.php?m=12&id=308>

<sup>107</sup> The Regional Youth Council of Hessen, supported by the Hessian government, produced a short film to draw the attention to the voluntary activities of young people. The film focused in particular on the qualifications and competences young people acquire through their commitment. <http://www.hessischerjugendring.de/infos/allginfo/ehrenamt/ehrenamt.htm>

### 2.3.2 Programmes promoting/supporting volunteering at regional and local levels

In addition to the above programmes and projects at federal level, there are also a large number of programmes at the regional and local levels. The key initiatives are summarised by region in Table 3.1 (examples of initiatives at regional as well as local level are provided)<sup>108</sup>:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Summary description of key initiatives</b>	<b>Link</b>
Baden-Württemberg	In Baden-Wuerttemberg a yearly competition entitled 'Really Good' ('Echt gut') has taken place since 2003. The competition is open to groups, associations and individuals who are volunteering. The inhabitants of Baden-Wuerttemberg vote for their favourites.	<a href="http://www.ehrenamt-bw.de">www.ehrenamt-bw.de</a> <a href="http://www.buergerengagement.de">www.buergerengagement.de</a>
Bavaria	Bavaria has supported, since 2002, the 'Landesnetzwerk BE'. This is a non-governmental network of voluntary agencies, mothers' and family centres and senior offices aimed at supporting joint voluntary actions. The Landesnetzwerk, for example, carried out a project 'Together engaged for common future – BE in the field of integration'.	<a href="http://www.wir-fuer-uns.net">www.wir-fuer-uns.net</a> <a href="http://www.wir-fuer-uns.bayern.de">www.wir-fuer-uns.bayern.de</a>
Berlin	The 'Kiezkicker' initiative ('Football in Your Neighbourhood') was launched by the Berlin Friends' ('Berliner Freunde') association with the support of the football club Hertha BSC and the Municipality of Berlin. Its aim was to make more opportunities available for young children to play football in their neighbourhood. In practice, the initiative was to strengthen local street work and youth coaching by funding a youth trainer in each of the city councils. The wider goal of the programme was to expand the coverage of youth coaches and thereby broaden the prospects of young children and help them to develop their potential. The initiative is under the patronage of the mayor of Berlin.	<a href="http://www.berlin.de/buergeraktiv">www.berlin.de/buergeraktiv</a> <a href="http://www.aktiv-in-berlin.info">www.aktiv-in-berlin.info</a>
Brandenburg	Since 2007 the title 'Volunteer of the Month' is awarded.	<a href="http://www.ehrenamt.brandenburg.de">www.ehrenamt.brandenburg.de</a>
Bremen	Bremen undertakes several initiatives: 'Change of Scene' (possibility for pupils to engage in a social field), lectures on civic engagement, 'Azubivolunteering – honestly – officially – volunteer' (volunteer work of senators), 'Day of Caring', 'Aktivoli' (exchange of information on voluntary activities) and 'Voluntary Week'. The regional authorities also organise several competitions, such as: 'Sport brings ideas forward' (volunteers in sport), 'Generations together', 'Adolf-Hilde-Price' and 'Youth ideas makes school'.	<a href="http://www.buergerengagement.bremen.de">www.buergerengagement.bremen.de</a> <a href="http://www.buergerstiftung-bremen.de">www.buergerstiftung-bremen.de</a>
Hamburg	The region has two priorities with regard to support of civic engagement: supporting engagement of people with migration origins (initiatives: annual Integration Award, service point 'Boosting Action Together –promoting integration', network of migrant organisations, lectures) and supporting engagement of seniors (support for 'Self-organisation of Senior Trainers'). Apart from this, Hamburg's authorities award the 'Hamburg Evidence of Civic Engagement'. This document, confirming voluntary activity, can be used in job applications.	<a href="http://www.engagement.hamburg.de">www.engagement.hamburg.de</a> <a href="http://www.aktivoli.de">www.aktivoli.de</a>
Hessen	The 'Card of Voluntary Activities' ('Ehrenamtscard') is offered by the Hessen region to persons who volunteer at least 5 hours each week. The Card gives the right to reductions for public and private offers, and is provided to all age groups.  The 'Network Promoting Senior Engagement' aims at increasing the civic engagement of older people.	<a href="http://www.gemeinsam-aktiv.de">www.gemeinsam-aktiv.de</a>

<sup>108</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*.

**Table 2.1 – Key programmes promoting volunteering at regional level**

Region	Summary description of key initiatives	Link
Mecklenburg-Western-Pomerania:	The region especially supports voluntary activities in three areas: youth, seniors and rural. The 'Region is my and your living space' is an initiative to support youth engagement in rural regions.	<a href="http://www.netzwerk-mv.net">www.netzwerk-mv.net</a>
Lower Saxony	The 'Integration pilot' aims at better integration of immigrants. The 'Engagement-lotsen for Volunteering in Niedersachsen' supports different volunteering projects and initiatives in the region. The 'Corporate Volunteering in Niedersachsen' is a form of co-operation between private companies and non-profit organisations.  The region also supports voluntary services of women and elderly people (Voluntary Year of Seniors, Senior Service Office) and finances competitions ('Niedersachsen Family Price' and 'Free of Charge and Voluntarily – price for Civic Engagement').	<a href="http://www.freiwilligenserver.de">www.freiwilligenserver.de</a>
North Rhine Westphalia	The voluntary action day 'Your Day for Africa' was launched by the initiative Aktion Tagwerk in 2003 and since then has taken place on an annual basis in North Rhine Westphalia (NRW). The initiative is targeted at pupils in primary and secondary schools. 78,000 pupils from 247 schools across the state took part on the action day of 23rd of June 2009. The children spent one day working or participating in local services; donating their remuneration to educational projects, run by the NGO 'Human Help Network', indifferent African countries. In 2009, for the first time, part of the proceeds of the action day was used to finance a vocational training project in Ghana, one of NRW's partner countries. This initiative is under the patronage of the Schools Minister and the Minister for Youth of NRW. Since it was launched in 2003, more than 1.1 million school pupils have participated in the Action Day initiative. In 2009, twelve pupils were working at different state ministries and the state chancellor. <sup>109</sup>	<a href="http://www.engagiert-in-nrw.de">www.engagiert-in-nrw.de</a>
Rhineland-Palatine	The initiative 'Wir tun was...' supports associations, institutions and both denominational and non-denominational groups of a charitable nature whose objective is to foster tolerance, charity and community spirit.	<a href="http://www.wir-tun-was.de">www.wir-tun-was.de</a>
Saarland	The region has introduced volunteer holidays and a volunteer card.	<a href="http://www.pro-ehrenamt.de">www.pro-ehrenamt.de</a>
Saxony	The 'Genialsozial – Social Day in Saxony' is organised in this region. This is a regular event where individuals, associations and companies meet. The 'Network Neighbourhood' is another initiative aimed at supporting small community initiatives.	<a href="http://www.wir-fuer-sachsen.de">www.wir-fuer-sachsen.de</a>
Saxony-Anhalt	The network 'Learn by Engagement' is aimed at supporting youth volunteering.	<a href="http://www.engagiert-in-sachsen-anhalt.de">www.engagiert-in-sachsen-anhalt.de</a> , <a href="http://www.freistil-lsa.de">www.freistil-lsa.de</a>
Schleswig-Holstein	The yearly award 'Ich mach' mich stark! Für uns in Schleswig-Holstein' (I make myself strong – for us in Schleswig-Holstein) was initiated by the regional government in Schleswig-Holstein together with various large associations and organisations. The aim of the award is to encourage young people to get involved in voluntary activities. From 2006 on, not only are five youth groups awarded the prize but two individuals are also awarded it.	<a href="http://www.ehrenamt-sh.de">www.ehrenamt-sh.de</a>
Thuringia	The initiatives in this region include: voluntary certificates for volunteers, a voluntary card which grant particularly active volunteers some privileges (entry to museums, libraries, cinemas, etc.), certificate of competences in volunteering, volunteer day and Thuringer of the month. The region in particular supports volunteering of youth and seniors and co-operative	<a href="http://www.thueringer-ehrenamtsstiftung.de">www.thueringer-ehrenamtsstiftung.de</a>

<sup>109</sup> [http://www.engagiert-in-nrw.de/aktuelles/meldungen/090702\\_aktion\\_tagwerk/index.php](http://www.engagiert-in-nrw.de/aktuelles/meldungen/090702_aktion_tagwerk/index.php)

**Table 2.1 – Key programmes promoting volunteering at regional level**

Region	Summary description of key initiatives	Link
	initiatives.	

Information on competitions and awards regarding voluntary activities can, for example, be found at the web pages of 'Active Citizenship'<sup>110</sup> and the Federal Network of Civic Engagement.<sup>111</sup>

### 3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 General legal framework

##### 3.1.1 *Specific legal framework which exists with respect to volunteering*

The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs lists a number of legal provisions that are relevant to volunteering<sup>112</sup>, most of which refer to insurance (see above). The Legal provision (Social Security Code III, art. 119, para. 2) establishes the right for unemployed persons to become (or to remain) active as volunteers without compromising their legal entitlement to unemployment benefits<sup>113</sup>, provided the voluntary activities do not interfere with the individual's efforts to re-integrate in the labour market.

Recently, the federal government has adopted several new regulations on civic services in Germany. For example, the tax-free amount on donations for voluntary activities has been increased to 500 euro. With regard to voluntary work, the time structure was made more flexible and volunteers were allowed to carry out a combined service in Germany and abroad<sup>114</sup>.

##### 3.1.2 *Self-regulation in relation to volunteering*

*No information has been identified.*

#### 3.2 Legal framework for individuals

##### 3.2.1 *Provisions for specific categories*

No specific legal status for volunteers 'generally' exists in Germany; volunteers have to act along the general legal conditions which partly regulate voluntary work with the aim to protect volunteers from specific risks, to compensate for disadvantages resulting from volunteering, to promote volunteering through qualifications or counselling, to create individual incentives for volunteers and to make volunteering possible.<sup>115</sup>

However, a legal framework (and a specific legal status) exists for civic services performed as part of the 'Voluntary Year of Social Service' and the 'Voluntary Year of Ecological

<sup>110</sup> [www.aktive-buergerschaft.de](http://www.aktive-buergerschaft.de)

<sup>111</sup> [www.freiwillig.de](http://www.freiwillig.de)

<sup>112</sup> Bundesnetzwerk Buergerschaftliches Engagement (BBE): *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementfoerderung in den Bundesressorts*; p. 3

<sup>113</sup> Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch vom 24. Maerz 2007 (BGBl. I. S.594)

<sup>114</sup> WZB: Bericht zur Lage und zu den Perspektiven des buergerschaftliches Engagements in Deutschland, Juni 2009.

<sup>115</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*; p. 8.

Service'. Although the relationship between volunteers and the host organisations and/or assignment locations is not considered as employment, it is treated as equivalent to employment under public law protection regulations. As a consequence, the relevant employee protection regulations apply, such as the Employee Act, Workplace Ordinance, Youth Work Protection Act and Maternity Protection Act. Furthermore, participants in the 'Voluntary Year of Social Service' and the 'Voluntary Year on Ecological Service' are covered by social insurance and receive pension, accident, health care and rehabilitation as well as unemployment insurance.<sup>116</sup> For other voluntary activities this does not exist, which in some cases, according to a representative of a German voluntary organisation, leads to problems that are linked to the fact that parents do not obtain any child allowances when no legal status exists; if you have the legal status of being volunteer, child allowance is received. In a recent example, a young person wanted to do volunteering in India for three months, but as no legal status existed, the parents would not receive any child allowance during this time and therefore could not afford it.

Unemployed persons may participate in voluntary activities without any reductions of their unemployment benefits. This is established in the 'JobAQTIV' law, which stipulates that voluntary work is irrelevant for the reception of earning-related benefits as long as 'the professional integration' is not affected. If the activities take more than **15 hours** a week it has to be reported to the job centres<sup>117</sup>. No information concerning what happens after the 15 hours are exceeded has been identified.

Unemployed persons must inform the relevant service and receive permission to engage in volunteering activities. According to one respondent interviewed as part of the present study, such permission is, however, given on a subjective basis, which makes it seem like there are no common regulations or framework.

In some of the German regions (e.g. Hessen, Rhineland-Palatinate) it is even possible for full-time employees to get time off from work for some time to do voluntary work in the field of youth work.

Some programmes have an upper age limit, such as 26 years.

### **3.2.2 Support schemes and incentives**

The federal government is providing material support for volunteering, e.g. by granting specific tax relief measures or by providing publicly funded insurance coverage.<sup>118</sup> According to stakeholders, the existence of the support schemes varies between different programmes. For example, for the voluntary ecological year, there are support schemes in place which involve insurance, tax free allowances, child allowances etc., whereas for other programmes no such support schemes exist.

A new law on insurance entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2005, which broadened the scope of accident insurance coverage for volunteers involved in different types of activity. Persons who are involved in volunteering through associations or clubs with the agreement of local authorities or church bodies have since then been covered by state insurance.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Detailed information about the legal basis of the civic service is provided by the following two acts: (a) Gesetz zur Foerderung eines freiwilligen sozialen Jahres; and, (b) Gesetz zur Foerderung eines freiwilligen oekologischen Jahres ([www.bmfsfj.de/Kategorien/gesetze/did=5644.html](http://www.bmfsfj.de/Kategorien/gesetze/did=5644.html)). The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*; p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*; p. 7.

<sup>118</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 35.

<sup>119</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*; p. 23.



Two and a half years later, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2007, a new milestone piece of legislation on volunteering entered into force in Germany. The legislation 'Hilfen für Helfer' ('Help for Helpers')<sup>120</sup> strengthened the taxation framework for volunteering. Many persons, who personally or financially support and engage in the more than 500,000 non-profit organisations and almost 15,000 non-profit foundations in Germany, thereby received additional acknowledgement. In addition to increased funding, non-profit and private donation provisions were simplified, and the administrative burden reduced.<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, the Law for the Modernisation of Accident Insurance, which entered into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2008<sup>122</sup>, made it possible for volunteers to join voluntary insurance if they are<sup>123</sup>:

- a) 'Assigned' honorary officials in non-profit organisations given the particular responsibilities they are entrusted with; or
- b) Active in political parties (as defined by the Law on Political Parties) or participate in further training courses for this purpose.

Detailed information on the tax exemption schemes introduced through the new law for the promotion of volunteering (2008) can be found in a summary note by the Federal Ministry of Finance<sup>124</sup> These provisions include, among others:

- An increase in the tax allowance for income derived from trainer activities from 1,848 to 2,100 euro.
- Income of up to 500 euro per year from part time jobs / activities for a public corporation or public benefit corporation is exempt from taxation

Membership fees for associations are tax deductible as special expenses. In the same year, another relevant piece of legislation was adopted, namely the Act for the improvement of the framework for flexible working time regulations and for the amendment of other laws on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2008<sup>125</sup>. This law, which entered into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2009, expanded the insurance coverage for all people taking part in the 'Civic Services for All Generations' initiative ('Freiwilligendienst aller Generationen'). While the vast majority of participants were already insured under the previous law, the insurance coverage now also applies to volunteers who engage in different types of activities beyond the typical scope of duties envisaged.

In one German region, Baden-Wuerttemberg, one respondent consulted as part of the present study indicated that since 2007/08 there are provisions in place on subsidiary insurance to ensure coverage in all situations. First, the volunteer's own insurance comes into play, secondly the organisation's insurance and thirdly, the region's insurance. This system was put into place as problems had arisen with regard to whether volunteers were

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[http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/nr\\_324/DE/BMF\\_Startseite/Aktuelles/Monatsbericht\\_des\\_BMF/2007/11/071121agmb007.templateld=raw.property=publicationFile.pdf](http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/nr_324/DE/BMF_Startseite/Aktuelles/Monatsbericht_des_BMF/2007/11/071121agmb007.templateld=raw.property=publicationFile.pdf)

<sup>121</sup>

[http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/nr\\_324/DE/BMF\\_Startseite/Aktuelles/Monatsbericht\\_des\\_BMF/2007/11/071120agmb007.html](http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/nr_324/DE/BMF_Startseite/Aktuelles/Monatsbericht_des_BMF/2007/11/071120agmb007.html)

<sup>122</sup> This law is retroactive for 2007. Unfallversicherungsmodernisierungsgesetz vom 30. Oktober 2008, BGBl. I S.2130

<sup>123</sup> BBE *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementsförderung in den Bundesressorts – Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs*, p.3

<sup>124</sup> Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (BBE): *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementförderung in den Bundesressorts*: p. 10.

<sup>125</sup> Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Rahmenbedingungen fuer die Absicherung flexibler Arbeitszeitregelungen und zur Aenderung anderer Gesetze vom 21. Dezember 2008 (BGBl. I S.2940)

doing activities at the time something happened or not. This made citizens scared of getting involved in volunteering activities.

In the same region trainers who are involved in youth activities can obtain limited tax exemptions. They receive a certain amount (the respondent believes approximately 3,000 euro per year, but this needs to be checked) tax free.

Stakeholders interviewed as part of the present assignment did not hold the view that citizens are penalised for taking part in volunteering.

Both the federal and regional governments have put in place different measures whereby volunteers can be reimbursed by the government for expenses related to their volunteering involvement. This most frequently relates to transport costs, fuel, etc.<sup>126</sup>

One interviewee explained that in some cases (or regions) it is possible to get a temporary release from work for a couple of weeks to do voluntary services. In this respondent's view, this should become a general right; at present many volunteers have to use their annual leave to do volunteering. It is advantageous also for employers that staff engages in volunteering, as it for example increases their social competences. For volunteering organisations it is important that they do not lose experienced volunteers once they start working.

According to the National Survey, some employers support their staff in undertaking voluntary activities. Close to one third (29%) of all volunteers stated that they receive support from their employer, for example, in the form of flexible working time arrangements, using the office infrastructure (telephone, fax, internet, copy machine), or leave of absence.

### **3.2.3 Tax exemptions for volunteers**

#### ***Taxation rules on reimbursement of expenses for individual volunteers***

The costs for voluntary activities depend on the specific programmes. Subsistence allowances and travel is reimbursed for some.

As far as the reimbursement of expenses to volunteers is concerned, this depends on the type of volunteering activity. Both the federal government and the regional governments have put in place different measures whereby volunteers can be reimbursed by the government for expenses related to their volunteering involvement. This is most frequently related to transport costs, fuel, etc. One respondent from a voluntary organisation also referred to costs related to postage, phone calls, stationery etc. According to the National Survey, in 2004 only 12% of all volunteers did not incur any costs at all while engaging in voluntary activities. Nevertheless, only 24% of volunteers made regular use of reimbursement options for the expenses they incurred in the context of their volunteering, while 23% made no use of reimbursement options at all.<sup>127</sup>

One respondent indicated that their organisation's ability to reimburse expenses varied. When the organisation had money, they reimbursed the volunteers and even in some cases gave them pocket money, however, this was not always the case. Recently, however, there was a positive change in the funding system; the organisations now receive an overall amount which means that they have greater flexibility in deciding what to do with the funding.

One interviewee stated that there is no coverage for the care of dependants, including children, while volunteering in the region where this relevant volunteering organisation operates. This issue has raised heated discussions, as it may prevent parents from

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<sup>126</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 179.

<sup>127</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 179.

participating in meetings/activities. In some cases this is problematic, e.g. if the person is a member of a Steering Group, and is unable to participate and there is no one who can replace him / her because he/she possesses specific knowledge.

### **Taxation rules on rewards or remuneration for individual volunteers**

The new accident insurance law from 2008 (the Law for the Modernisation of Accident Insurance – which has been made retroactive to January 2007) supports volunteering through tax reductions. Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007 persons who volunteer and receive a small allowance for their commitment do not have to pay taxes on it up to an amount of 500 euro per year. Furthermore, the tax-exempt amount for trainers was raised to 2,100 euro.<sup>128</sup>

As indicated above, the law for the promotion of volunteering ('Gesetz zur Staerkung des buergerschaftlichen Engagements') includes a number of tax relief provisions for volunteers<sup>129</sup>:

- An increase in the tax allowance for income from trainer activities from 1,848 to 2,100 euro. (Anhebung des Freibetrags nach para.3 Nr.26 EstG)
- Income from part-time jobs / activities for a public corporation or public benefit corporation of up to 500 euro per year remains exempt from taxation. (Steuerfreie Aufwandspauschale gem para.3 Nr.26a EstG)
- Membership fees for associations are tax deductible as special expenses (Anhebung der Hoechstgrenzen fuer den Spendenabzug gem para.10b Abs.1 EStG, para.9 Abs.1 Nr.2 KStG und para.9 Nr.5 GewStG)

The cost of these tax relief measures totals 2,262 million euro. This amount, however, does not only involve tax relief measures for individuals, but is the total for individuals and for associations / organisations (resulting from the above three provisions in bullet points). Prior to these legal changes, tax relief measures totalled 1,777 million euro.

### **3.3 Legal Framework for organisations engaging volunteers**

According to interviews undertaken as part of the present study, statistical information has been gathered, but the personal details of the volunteers are not provided. One interviewee emphasised that this is not desirable.

With regard to how voluntary organisations are taxed, distinction needs to be made between tax exempt activities and non-profit (public benefit) activities.<sup>130</sup>

Tax exemptions for non-profit organisations do exist. According to one respondent, non-profit organisations do not have to pay VAT on their income as they are non-profit. However, when the organisations buy materials they have to pay VAT.

<sup>128</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe); p. 9.

<sup>129</sup> Bundesnetzwerk Buergerschaftliches Engagement (BBE): *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementfoerderung in den Bundesressorts*; p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> Both a regional water works association and a cultural foundation are, as public law bodies, tax exempt but only the latter can achieve the non-profit status, and receive tax deductible donations and exemption from many forms of taxation. While the Abgabenordnung (AO) foresees a category for the support of culture, no such stipulations are made for water treatment. Similarly, churches are tax-exempt, privately-governed public law corporations which are non-profit because religious objectives are classified as such in the AO. By implication, the public benefit status of the churches, as granted in the AO, refers only to religious activities, and does not necessarily extend to nonreligious objectives, like science or education, even though the latter are classified as non-profit. In such cases, religious organisations must set up legally separate branches or institutions. Finally, the tax law recognises a number of special cases that regulate the non-profit status of municipalities, universities or chambers of commerce in the support of certain activities. Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (1992): *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Germany. Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, no. 6.* (The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies).

Tax-exemption on the basis of 'Gemeinnützigkeit', i.e., whether or not an association meets the criteria of public benefit<sup>131</sup>, is generally regulated in the German Fiscal Code. The following types of activities are mentioned as examples in the relevant legislation:

- Support of science and research, education and instruction, art and culture, religion, international understanding and exchange, development aid, environmental protection, historical preservation, and local customs;
- Support of youth welfare, the elderly, public health, welfare, and sport;
- The general support of a democratic state and community; and,
- The support of animal husbandry, plant cultivation and gardening (all non-commercial), traditional customs, veterans' affairs, amateur radios, model aero-planes clubs, and dog shows.

In this piece of legislation, it is also stipulated that public service activities categorised as 'for public benefit' must be:

- 'Selfless' in the sense of altruism; members of the organisation are neither allowed to receive profits nor other profit-like compensations. This strict constraint excludes many mutual membership associations, as well as business and professional associations. Salaries and fringe benefits must be reasonable.
- Exclusive in the sense that the organisation only pursues purposes that are defined as 'gemeinnützig' (for the public benefit) in the relevant legislation. If an organisation carries out other activities, it may lose the non-profit tax status. In practice, the organisation may declare some of its activities as for 'public benefit' and others as 'commercial'. As a consequence, activities classified as 'public benefit' receive preferential tax treatment, whereas commercial activities may be subject to taxation.
- Direct in the sense that the charitable purpose has to be served by the organisation itself rather than by third parties. This provision contains many exceptions which basically relate to inter-organisational structures (peak associations), financing (transfers to developing countries) and special institutions (foundations), whereby a third party may provide services on behalf of a tax-exempt organisation.

Generally donations to non-profit organisations are exempt of tax. The tax regulations on donations and deductions to a large extent follow the same logic. . According to the income tax law, only donations to legal entities under public law (e.g., municipal administration churches), and organisations with public benefit status can be exempted from taxable income.

One organisation stated that they receive 'subsidies' in the form of infrastructure (rooms, electricity, cleaning etc.). Support has also been provided e.g. in the form of the production of flyers.

### **3.4 Legal framework for profit-making organisations**

According to the National Survey, some employers support their staff in undertaking voluntary activities. Close to one third (29%) of all volunteers stated that they receive support from their employer, for example, in the form of flexible working time arrangements, use of the office infrastructure (telephone, fax, internet, copy machine), or leave of absence.

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<sup>131</sup> The promotion of the following objectives are covered by the definition of Gemeinnützigkeit: public well-being in material, spiritual and moral spheres; charitable and benevolent activities to support persons in need and unable to care for themselves; church-related activities including the construction, maintenance and administration of churches and church property, religious instruction, religious services, and training of the clergy.

### 3.5 Insurance and protection of volunteers

Most persons that are engaged in voluntary activities have accident insurance and a causality insurance which is paid by the organisation/association where the volunteer is active. Each volunteer can protect himself with personal liability insurance, but not all voluntary activities are included in these private insurances. In this case the organisation, where they work, is responsible for the insurance. In cases in which such insurances do not exist the insurance coverage is covered by special insurances provided by the federal states.<sup>132</sup> One respondent from a voluntary organisation indicated that when this is not the case, they recommend their volunteers to obtain relevant insurance for themselves etc.

As far as voluntary services are concerned, volunteers have to concern themselves about their insurances.. Often, the organisation offering the places also helps to obtain the necessary insurances. For those who carry out voluntary services abroad, additional insurances and measures for their social welfare are necessary, depending on the conditions in the host country.<sup>133</sup>

Participants carrying out civic services ('Voluntary Year of Social Service' - FSJ; 'Voluntary Year of Ecological Service' - FOEJ) are generally insured as independent members in the government insurance plan. In particular with regard to social security, young people who sign up for a civic service are more or less on par with other young people who are doing vocational training. The host organisations provide pocket money, accommodation, meals, working clothes or can pay a lump sum to cover these expenses. Volunteers have complete social security coverage (statutory pension, accident, health care, long-term nursing care and unemployment insurance). Their parents receive family benefits and the volunteers are given travel cost reductions on the German railways and on public transport. The 'Voluntary Social Year' and the 'Voluntary Ecological Year' are both recognised by the 'Central Office for the Allocation of Places in Higher Education' as waiting time for such a place. For participants who carry out their service abroad the sending organisations are obliged to take care of the necessary social insurance. Those who carry out the FSJ or the FOEJ abroad the sending organisations are obliged to take care of the necessary social insurances and guarantee other necessary protection in the foreign country. Child allowance is also paid for those who do their civic service abroad.<sup>134</sup>

One interviewee emphasised that health and safety are more important than legal implications. In the region where this organisation operates persons with a criminal record are not allowed to work with pupils. Furthermore, with regard to health and safety, for example, if parents work as volunteers in school canteens, there was a rule that they had to have X-rays every year. However, because this was not practically possible (no one would volunteer anymore) exceptions to the rule have been introduced.

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<sup>132</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*; p. 7. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe)

<sup>133</sup> [www.ageh.de/fid/grundl\\_recht.htm](http://www.ageh.de/fid/grundl_recht.htm)

<sup>134</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe)

## 4 ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF VOLUNTEERING

### 4.1 Funding arrangements for volunteering

#### ***National budget allocated to volunteering***

Information is only available for some civic services (the ‘Voluntary Years of Social Service and Ecological Service’). In 2007 the federal government supported both services with approximately 19 million euro, which was an increase of one million euro over previous years. In this respect, it can be emphasised that the civic services are funded by a variety of sources, including the host organisation/association, the German regions, third parties and federal funds (see further details below). Another 20 million euro was devoted from federal funds to those persons who carry out a civic instead of a civilian service.<sup>135</sup>

#### ***Sources of funding for voluntary organisations***

In addition to national funding, sources for funding of voluntary organisations generally include funding from voluntary workers and their parents, private organisations and associations, churches (for voluntary services abroad), lottery income, foundations as co-financing partners (increasingly) etc.<sup>136</sup>

The proportion of funding provided by different actors varies between different programmes, organisations, regions and years. For example, as far as civic services are concerned, the financing of the ‘Voluntary Years of Social Service/Ecological Service’ (FSJ/FOEJ) is normally ensured by the host organisation and German regions (approximately 90%), but funding is also provided by third parties and federal funds (e.g. the ‘Child & Youth Plan of the Federation’, civilian service).<sup>137</sup>

According to a survey comprising 80 volunteer agencies in Germany there is diversity amongst the agencies due to different resources and capacities.<sup>138</sup> Generally, funding is obtained from a mix of the following sources<sup>139</sup>:

<b>Type of funding</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
Funding within public employment incentive measures	31%
Funding from municipalities	26%
‘Other funding’	24%
Funding from the German regions	19%
Funding from foundations	5%
Donations	5%
Membership fees	4%

<sup>135</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe)

<sup>136</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe)

<sup>137</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy: *Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities*; p. 4.

<sup>138</sup> Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, ed. (2002): *Freiwilligenagenturen in Deutschland – Ergebnisse einer Erhebung der Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen*.

<sup>139</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*.  
<http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>.

<b>Type of funding</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
Funding from lottery agencies	2%
Corporate Sponsorship	1%
Provision of services, fees	1%

According to interviewees, there is no federal legislation concerning funding arrangements. One of the respondents did not find funding arrangements in Germany as transparent as at EU level. On the other hand, the financing of structures was viewed as more transparent.

## 4.2 Economic value of volunteering

### *Income generated through volunteering*

*No information has been identified.*

### *Economic value of volunteering*

In 1995, volunteers in the civil society represented 1,211,474 FTE. Employment in the sector represented 1,480,850 FTE)<sup>140</sup>.

It should be possible to translate this figure into a monetary value (most countries use the FTE figure and then multiply by the average wage of the sector, or by the minimum wage. However, no such figures have been identified for Germany.

### *Issues of service substitution and job substitution*

Legally, **service substitution** is not allowed in Germany; provisions exist which establish that volunteering cannot replace services that should be provided by the state. Whereas, one stakeholder suggested that in practice service substitution does sometimes occur, the interviewee emphasised that this only happens in individual cases and is not wide-spread. Another respondent did not consider that service substitution takes place at all; in this respondent's view volunteering activities are additional services, which otherwise would not be provided (for example, painting a room in a youth club).

Finally, one interviewee felt that it is difficult to draw clear-cut boundaries, and provided an example to illustrate the current debate. In this respondent's region, discussions have arisen because of the existence of more and more wide-spread use of 'Ganz-Tagsschulen' ('full day schools'). Within the framework of these 'full day schools', after school has finished, supervised activities are provided for the pupils, such as table-tennis, music, knitting, dance etc. In this region, the concept of youth 'Begleiter' (youth leader) has been introduced, which refers to volunteers who teach something to small groups of children, for example, knitting. Each school decides how much each individual who acts as a youth leader will receive per hour, e.g. 7 or 3 euro, or no money at all. This has, on the one hand, led to discussions as to whether it is replacing services that should be provided by the state, and on the other hand as to whether volunteer activities are indeed provided when the volunteer receives an hourly rate for the activities provided.

The National Survey indicates that there are many cases where there is a **potential overlap between volunteering and remunerated work**, however, these overlaps seem to be decreasing. Indeed, according to the National Survey, the overlap between volunteering and salaried work decreased from 26% to 22% between 1999 and 2004, thereby reducing the potential for 'job-substitution effects' of volunteering.

<sup>140</sup> John Hopkins study.

The effects of potential substitution vary significantly between different areas of volunteering. The strongest proximity between salaried employment and volunteering exists in the areas of 'justice and crime problems', 'health care', and 'youth work and adult education'.

Stakeholders confirmed that no debate concerning this issue has arisen because of the economic crisis.

## 5 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSION OF VOLUNTEERING

### 5.1 Key benefits for volunteers, the community and direct beneficiaries

According to the National Survey, from the **individual volunteer's perspective**, volunteering is perceived to offer opportunities for informal learning and is thought to benefit young volunteers in particular by improving their resilience, commitment and organisational skills.<sup>141</sup>

Indeed, volunteering is seen to benefit individuals by providing opportunities for informal learning, and this can refer both to specialised knowledge and to social and organisational competencies, especially for young people. As much as 44% of all volunteers report that their involvement in volunteering provides them with "important" or "very important" personal learning opportunities.<sup>142</sup>

The stakeholders interviewed thought s that volunteering brings about the following added value for the individuals volunteering:

- Learning or developing new skills (this was emphasised as being particularly important by one stakeholder)
- Motivation and a sense of achievement
- Raising career and employment options (one respondent suggested the added value is, however, not very high with regard to entering a career / employment; the grades are always more important. Only if there are two students with similar grades is volunteering taken into account )
- Encouraging further training and education (one respondent explained that she was herself an example of this; without the opportunities provided by her volunteering she would never have learnt how to use a computer)
- Developing new interests and hobbies
- Gaining new experiences
- Build self-confidence
- Meeting a wide variety of people; volunteering provides a good place to meet likeminded individuals

Other benefits mentioned include learning new languages and gaining better health (in particular for the elderly who no longer work).

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<sup>141</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 18.

<sup>142</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 32.



Finally, in the National Survey, volunteers report that their involvement in volunteering carries personal benefits/rewards in the sense of a more positive attitude to life. Volunteering is also seen to bring people together and enables them to gain new experiences.<sup>143</sup>

All stakeholders interviewed agreed that volunteering results in the following added value from a **direct beneficiary's perspective**:

- Benefits to the local community
- Increased social cohesion and inclusion
- Local / regional development (local development important)
- Inter-generation dialogue
- Common societal values

Other benefits mentioned include intercultural dialogue, environmental protection, sustainable development, new job creation (for example, the children of volunteers need to be taken care of) and decreased class differences.

One respondent emphasised that integration of the disabled is a particularly important benefit, which in turn brings about other positive impacts (increased self-esteem etc.). However, in order to be able to work with this particular group of persons, additional funding is necessary as they require more resources.

The stakeholders interviewed agreed that volunteering brings about the following added value from the **community perspective**:

- Stronger and more active communities
- Social integration (for example, of the disabled and migrants)
- Common societal values

Other benefits mentioned (depending on the specific volunteering activities provided by the organisations) include the promotion of intergeneration solidarity, improved environment, active citizenship, solidarity and increased and more active democracy.

The interviewees all agreed that volunteering contributes to economic and social policy goals at national level in terms of:

- Social cohesion
- Social inclusion
- Education and training
- Regional development
- Life-long learning
- Intercultural dialogue

It was also indicated that volunteering contributes to other economic and social policy goals (depending on the type of activity carried out by the different organisations) including knowledge and innovation, inter-generational dialogue, human rights (for example, one organisation only allows volunteering in countries where human rights are respected), humanitarian aid, new job creation, adaptability of workers, human capital, active ageing, sustainable development and environmental protection. Finally, one interviewee thought that volunteering also contributes to local and regional development; and that projects in small villages generally have greater effect.

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<sup>143</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 25.

## 5.2 Factors that motivate individuals to volunteers

The National Survey identifies four main factors that motivate people to volunteer (in order of priority)<sup>144</sup>:

- Desire to actively participate in the shaping of society (95%)
- Desire to get together with other people/ establish social contacts (95%)
- Doing a job that needs to be done but for which it is difficult to find people otherwise, i.e. on a non-voluntary basis (84%)
- As a way of getting politically involved (48%)

Hence, the National Survey suggests that key factors that motivate people to volunteer are the possibility to actively shape the society, as well as coming into contact with other people and participating in the community. Although contributing to the common welfare is a central aspect for voluntary work, there is a growing trend for individuals to use volunteering as a means to engage with their own interests and problems. This is particularly the case in the former socialist regions that have high rates of youth unemployment.<sup>145</sup>

Among unemployed volunteers, the main motivation is the desire to actively participate in the shaping of society and policy. In addition, unemployed volunteers see volunteering as an opportunity to further develop their employment related skills and to take on greater responsibility. In contrast, social commitment is the central motivation for more senior volunteers and among volunteers with a migrant background, the primary motivation for volunteering is to solve personal problems, to develop broad knowledge and experience and to gain employment-relevant skills.<sup>146</sup>

Stakeholders interviewed as part of the present study suggested that the following factors motivate individuals to volunteer:

- Learning or developing a new skills
- Being part of the local community
- Heightened sense of well-being (also for others than the volunteer)
- Sense of achievement
- Raising career and employment options – one stakeholder emphasised that this is only indirect; the persons may do a good job, but it may not directly lead to a better career or employment options
- Encouraging further training and education
- Developing new interests and hobbies
- Gaining new experiences
- Builds self-confidence
- Meeting a wide variety of people; volunteering provides a good place to meet likeminded individuals
- Sending a positive signal to society
- Following religious values, beliefs

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<sup>144</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 25.

<sup>145</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*.

<sup>146</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; pp. 21-22, p. 25.

As far as the actual involvement of persons to engage in volunteering is concerned, the impact of the different volunteer agencies (referred to above) should not be overestimated. According to the Second National Survey only a minority of voluntary active citizens (4%) got the impetus from special agencies and offices. For the majority, the main incentive came either from other volunteers who perform key functions in organisations or groups (44%) or from the immediate personal environment, mostly friends and acquaintances (39%), as well as from family members (14%).<sup>147</sup>

## 6 VOLUNTEERING IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 6.1 Recognition of volunteers' skills and competences within the national educational and training system

According to stakeholders, efforts are being made to increase the level of recognition of the role of volunteering in education, for example, in terms of volunteering being recognised as internships. At present the recognition of this is very subjective. Some higher education institutions recognise this, while others do not. Further efforts are considered necessary in this field.

Stakeholders consulted considered that volunteers' skills and competences are not sufficiently accredited / recognised within the context of the German education system. These respondents referred to the new certification systems that are currently being developed (including EU level initiatives such as Europass and Youth Pass); however, it was considered that the federal level needs to do more than what is currently the case.

Indeed, the role of volunteering is considered to be recognised in national policies 'to some extent', for example, it is included in conferences on lifelong learning and in the lifelong learning strategy. However, one respondent emphasised that only individual elements are included in the latter, and that the role of volunteering needs to be recognised to a greater degree in national policies. In this respect, a national strategy for volunteering is currently being developed in Germany.

Furthermore, whereas interviewees consulted indicated that there are some good examples of volunteering being encouraged by educational institutions, this only happens in individual cases; the role of volunteering is currently not sufficiently encouraged by educational institutions.

At the same time, several initiatives for recording the competences and skills acquired through volunteering have been identified.

Indeed, in Germany voluntary activities of young people are recognised by means of various types of certificates, including cards and documentation in school reports<sup>148</sup>. One example of such a card is the card for youth leaders (the Jugendleiter/in-Card; Juleica<sup>149</sup>). This card is a certificate for young volunteers who are active in a voluntary organisation. In order to obtain the card, it is necessary to attend qualification training and to be at least 16 years old. The card documents the engagement and the qualification of the youth leaders and provides various reductions for community services, cultural offers etc. Juleica is the

<sup>147</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*.  
<http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>.

<sup>148</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe); p. 18.

<sup>149</sup> [www.juleica.net](http://www.juleica.net)

most common certificate for young volunteers in Germany; approximately 3,000 cards are issued each month. In November 2007 the German Federal Youth Council launched a project to develop the card further. For example, the project aims to develop nationwide minimum qualification standards for the 'Juleica' training courses.

In most cases the documents certifying voluntary activities of young people are issued by youth organisations or by organisations/associations that offer places for voluntary services and which are officially recognised as voluntary or statutory bodies in the youth sector.

As far as civic services are concerned, young people who have carried out a Voluntary Year of Social or Ecological Service are entitled to a certificate confirming the form and the duration of their voluntary service. The certificate in some cases also includes a performance rating and the vocational qualifications the young people acquired during their service.

At regional level, some federal states have their own system for certifying qualifications. For example, in Baden-Württemberg the 'Qualipass'<sup>150</sup> documents practical experiences and competences of young people between the age of 12 and 25 acquired through voluntary commitment but also through traineeships, stays abroad etc. Other federal states have similar ways of documenting voluntary commitment of young people (i.e. Hamburger Nachweis, Berliner FreiwilligenPass, EhrenamtsCard in Hessen).

Since 2006 voluntary activities of young people in international contexts (this also includes volunteering activities carried out in Germany) are recognised through 'International Certificates' (Nachweise International). Launched in 2006 this system of certification offers to issue certificates concerning various elements of the volunteering activity (participation, engagement, competence).<sup>151</sup>

## 6.2 Education and training opportunities for volunteers

Training of volunteers varies significantly, depending on the voluntary work performed. For some programmes, such as the voluntary ecological year, there are good structures in place (including mentoring and support), whereas for other initiatives training is only sporadic.

The National Survey suggests that in 2004, only 43% of all volunteers were aware of opportunities for ongoing training related to their volunteering involvement (compared to 46% in 1999). This could be due to a decline in the provision of government funded training for volunteers.<sup>152</sup>

In 1999, roughly 70% of all volunteers stated, in the National Survey, that they participated in training. The highest proportion of participants in courses and further training occurred in areas such as 'accident, rescue and voluntary fire services' and 'Health sector' due to the specific knowledge demanded from volunteers working in these fields. In each of these areas approximately 50% of the volunteers stated that training was compulsory.

Specific training for volunteers takes place within the framework of the voluntary service programmes. The host organisations of these service programmes are required to provide pedagogical support and 25 compulsory seminar days, to prepare the volunteers for their service.

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<sup>150</sup> [www.qualipass.info](http://www.qualipass.info)

<sup>151</sup> The International Certificates can be issued by all bodies (mainly voluntary organisations) active in non-formal international youth work. However, some certificates, such as the International Competence Certificate may only be issued by specialists and experienced team leaders who are already qualified and have received training. [www.open-the-world.net](http://www.open-the-world.net)

<sup>152</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 160.

Training is mainly organised by organisations that belong to one of the 'peak' welfare organisations. An 'Academy for Volunteering in Germany' also exists, which specialises in providing general training for the voluntary sector in Germany. This Academy provides training for those who work in the voluntary sector, as well as for volunteers. Since 1998 the Academy has offered seminars, qualification programmes and workshops on the following topics: volunteer management, organisational development, association management, volunteer coaching, fundraising and encouraging citizen competence. Furthermore, the academy provides consultation and supervision in every area of volunteer management and gives information and publications on its homepage.<sup>153</sup>

In terms of other types of support, events and meetings are organised for volunteers to exchange experiences face-to-face. Apart from this, online services such as platforms or contact fairs support the exchange among volunteers at local and regional levels.<sup>154</sup> Generally, practices vary between the regions. For example, one region has introduced a mentor school, to teach people how to become mentors to volunteers. Once educated, these mentors can then be educated to provide training to mentors.

Stakeholders consider that overall, too little support and training is provided to volunteers.

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<sup>153</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*.  
<http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>

<sup>154</sup> Moreover volunteers communicate via internet platforms/forums. Examples of websites include: (i) [www.foej.net](http://www.foej.net) - is a platform where young volunteers who are carrying out a Voluntary Ecological Year can exchange information and experience; (ii) [www.fsj-adia.de](http://www.fsj-adia.de) - Young volunteers having done their service abroad can upload an experience report in order to inform others interested in doing such a service. An online forum provides space for direct exchange and a "job fair" helps to find a place in an organisation/association receiving volunteers abroad; and, (iii) [www.missionarin-auf-zeit.de](http://www.missionarin-auf-zeit.de) – provides an online forum for young people having done, doing or planning to do a missionary temporary volunteer service. Source: The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe)

## 7 EU POLICIES AND VOLUNTEERING

### ***Recognition of volunteering***

Stakeholders consulted considered that volunteers' skills and competences are not sufficiently accredited / recognised within the context of the German education system. These respondents referred to the new certification systems that are currently being developed at EU level such as Europass and Youth Pass, which could give an impetus to the adoption of new measures in this field in Germany.

### ***EU Internal Market policy***

Some information on the (likely) impact of EU Internal Market policy on volunteering in Germany has been identified in a report from 1999<sup>155</sup>. This report suggests that while the German principle of subsidiarity has been both beneficial and problematic for the development of the German non-profit sector, its future is 'anything but assured'. Indeed, the privileged position that it gives to parts of the non-profit sector is in conflict with the market-driven logic of the EU. The conclusion was drawn, that it 'seems rather unlikely that German non-profit organisations will be able to protect their market shares in health and social services in the future due to the European deregulation procedures'.

It was also indicated that, already at this point in time, in accordance with the European integration rules, recent German legislation had already begun to loosen the rigidity of the subsidiarity principle in some areas. For example, as part of the (at that time recently introduced) long-term care insurance, all service providers regardless of their organisational form were treated on equal footing. As a consequence, non-profit organisations were unable to capture significant market shares in the relatively new personal social care market. More generally, the report draw the conclusions that 'there is little doubt that Brussels will gain in importance in the future as far as the legal regulation and funding procedures and sources are concerned. Already, a number of EU programmes providing infrastructure and financial support are leaving their marks on German non-profit organisations, especially in fields such as arts and culture and education and job training.'

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<sup>155</sup> John Hopkins (1999): "Germany" in *Global Civil Society, Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector* (Vol. I), p. 117

## 8 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING

### 8.1 Challenges for volunteering

In Germany, different levels have different roles and responsibilities in relation to volunteering. For example, whereas the framework and benchmarking are established at national level, at regional level key questions that still remain include insurance, certification and legislation.

Stakeholders were of the view that whereas challenges are encountered at all levels, the main challenges are experienced at the local level, and this is where the volunteering takes place.

From the perspective of volunteers, the main challenges commonly encountered are, according to the National Survey<sup>156</sup>:

- Financial constraints, in particular when it comes to funding volunteering projects; and,
- Inadequate venues and lack of equipment

Volunteers see scope for improvement in the following areas (percentage of all volunteers in brackets):

- More financial resources for specific projects (63%);
- Better infrastructure (venues, material, etc.) (43%);
- Better advanced training opportunities (35%);
- Better specialist support (34%);
- Less bureaucratic procedures for reimbursement of expenses (33%);
- Improved recognition of volunteers by salaried/employed administrators (28%); and,
- Better financial remuneration of volunteers (22%).

The CEV report 'Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and Figures'<sup>157</sup> also points out three major challenges for volunteering organisations. First, according to the report, the financial situation of the volunteer agencies seems to be 'extremely difficult'; they do not have sufficient financial resources to ensure strategic development of their aims and to enable them to become development agencies that also create and run their own projects in the field of volunteering. Indeed, there is no federal funding available for volunteer agencies.

Secondly, the report suggests that the current statutory accident insurance and third-party liability for citizens who volunteer should be extended to further areas.

Third, bureaucracy should be reduced. For example, the present public funding and governing grants practice could be simplified.

The 'European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy'<sup>158</sup> also points out a number of challenges that concern volunteering for young people:

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<sup>156</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2006): *Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999–2004*; p. 33.

<sup>157</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>; p. 15.

<sup>158</sup> The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2007): *Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities – Germany* (Youth Partnership, Council of Europe); p. 15.

- Although the budget for civic services has been increased lately, there are still not enough places. Every year the number of applicants is much higher than the number of places. On average, there are about twice as many interested persons as there are places in the programmes.
- Young people who would like to carry out a voluntary service outside the civic service often cannot afford the costs.
- Potential organisations/associations that would like to offer places for volunteers (civic service) cannot afford the monthly costs for the young persons.
- Legal conditions have become more restrictive (reduction of the maximum duration for family benefits, introduction of tuition fees in some federal states) which has negative effects on the voluntary activities.
- The status of young volunteers in the cross-generation voluntary services is not clear as far as social security obligations are concerned.
- There is a lack of financial resources for projects and initiatives (i.e. lack of basic funding).
- Young people between the age of 14 and 18 with lower educational background have fewer opportunities in application processes.
- Disadvantaged young people who would like to become active often cannot afford the cost of travelling and for participation or membership fees.
- Long waiting times: Young people cannot apply on short-notice for civic services or voluntary services abroad although it could be helpful in order to bridge waiting time (i.e. between graduation and vocational training or university).
- The regulations for international voluntary services are seen as too tight and not practical. More flexibility is needed.
- The status of volunteers going abroad is often unclear. Sometimes they are considered as an employee, which causes a lot of problems.
- Employers still see voluntary commitment as a disadvantage. They fear special leave may be requested.

Stakeholders suggest that legal and regulatory challenges are very important, as well as sustainable funding and infrastructure. In this respect, sustainable funding is considered to be key, as it is necessary to be able to develop projects further than on a year by year basis and to keep good personnel (if multi-annual funding would be provided, staff could continue to build projects with a more long term vision). There are also problems with regard to insurance and protection for volunteers.

Stakeholders and literature agree that ensuring funding on a continuous basis poses the main challenge for different types of organisations in the civil society infrastructure. A high proportion of volunteer centres depend on government project grants that are limited to periods of 2-3 years. Similarly, community foundations often have low financial endowments.<sup>159</sup> Because funding is not sustainable, it is difficult to invest, both in projects and infrastructure.

With regard to efforts to address the main challenges, a national strategy for volunteering is, currently being developed. Furthermore, on the basis of recent sources reviewed, it seems that problems relating to insurance have been addressed through several new acts /

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<sup>159</sup> Kamlage, J. (2008): *The Awakening Giant: The Development of Civil Society Infrastructure in Germany* (Paper prepared for the 'Volunteering Infrastructure & Civil Society' Conference, 24/25 April 2008, the Netherlands. Bremen International School of Social Sciences, BIGSSS); p. 12.



amendments, in particular the Law for the Modernisation of Accident Insurance that entered into effect on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2008<sup>160</sup>.

However, according to stakeholders consulted, further efforts need to be made.

## 8.2 Opportunities for volunteering

The BMFSFJ acknowledges that despite a range of successful projects and initiatives, areas for improvement in the national framework for volunteering still remain. Potential points of action include:<sup>161</sup>

- Design more targeted policy initiatives and measures to provide incentives for volunteering, with a focus on making the public aware of the benefits of volunteering
- Provide a central platform for information on volunteering where citizens can learn about opportunities and ways to get involved (and whom to contact)
- Further develop and strengthen networks at local, regional and federal levels, and enable the gathering of resources, exchange of best practice among actors, and the development of appropriate funding strategies
- The promotion of volunteering as a cross-sectional task requires greater involvement and co-operation from different political actors at all levels, as well as the integration of governmental and third sector actors and organisations

CEV<sup>162</sup> suggests that recent developments within Germany provide opportunities for volunteering. According to a CEV report, the Study Commission's recommendations on building up infrastructure and organisations at local, state and federal level have already led to significant improvements in Germany. Notably, a specific department for volunteering has been introduced in the BMFSFJ, the regions have integrated voluntary work within the administration and a sub-committee on civic engagement has been established under the auspices of the German Federal Parliament with the aim to develop the legislative process in the field of voluntary work. Furthermore, with the BBE there is now a national platform that brings together the various actors in the field. Likewise, the National Survey on volunteering shows a great deal of progress has been made in the field of compiling statistics and comparative values about voluntary work.

The challenges outlined above may also provide some pointers with regard to where the opportunities for volunteering are.

From the interviewees' points of view, sustainable funding and infrastructure are considered essential, as well as simplification of the legal and regulatory framework.

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<sup>160</sup> Unfallversicherungsmodernisierungsgesetz vom 30. Oktober 2008, BGBl. I S.2130. Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (BBE): *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementförderung in den Bundesressorts*; p.3

<sup>161</sup> Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth (2009): *Zukunft gestalten, sozialen Zusammenhalt sichern – Nachhaltige Entwicklung durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement*, p. 24.

<sup>162</sup> European Volunteer Centre (2004): *Voluntary Action in Germany – Facts and figures*. <http://www.cev.be/data/File/FactsFigures%20Germany%20final.pdf>; p. 14.

## ANNEX 1 – MILESTONES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

Milestones in the evolution of the volunteering sector include:

- **The precursors to voluntary service programmes were translated into policies already in 1964** in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) after several campaigns led by the Catholic and Lutheran Churches in the 1950s. The so-called ‘Voluntary Year of Social Services’ (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr), hosted by social welfare organisations, offered young people the possibility to volunteer fulltime for 12 months in social and health care services. The activities included working with physical disabled or elderly as well as in hospitals. There was also an equivalent service introduced by the Lutheran and Catholic Church in the former GDR.
- **The federal model programme for volunteer centres for elderly people (Bundesmodellprogramm ‘Seniorenbueros’)** which ran between 1993 and 1997 explored different ways to better utilise the experience and knowledge of elderly people for the benefit of the wider society in light of demographic change. The programme led to the creation of 44 volunteer centres for elderly people throughout Germany.
- Due to new legislation, **in 1994 the ‘Voluntary Year of Ecological Services’ (Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr, FÖJ)** was introduced offering young people the possibility to volunteer also in the environmental field. Furthermore, an amendment of the relevant legislation in 2002 meant that it could then be broadened to culture and sports<sup>163</sup>. At present the voluntary service programmes offer young people (younger than 26) who have finished their compulsory schooling to link volunteer activities with concrete practical experience in a professional area. It is also an alternative to civil community service for those who are ‘recognised conscientious objectors’. At present, the possibility of introducing voluntary service programmes for other age groups is being explored through pilot projects.
- **Emergence of ‘community foundations’ in the mid-1990s**, of which there are today more than 190 across Germany (some of the more prominent ones include the ‘Bertelsmann Foundation’, ‘Robert Bosch Stiftung’, ‘Koerber Stiftung’, etc.). The main objective of these community foundations is to provide financial support to promote social capital and foster volunteering activities in NPOs and within municipalities.
- In 1996 the six major welfare associations (**Caritasverband, Diakonie, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband, Rotes Kreuz**) started to promote and foster volunteering within their organisations.

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<sup>163</sup> In 1997, the Robert Bosch Foundation established a Commission to consider the future of voluntary service programmes for young people. The idea behind this initiative was that voluntary services are an important possibility for young people to gain educational and work related experience, to take responsibility and become an active member of society. The initiative also took account of the fact that in the future, Germany may abolish its compulsory military service, which may result in a need for alternative civil community services for conscientious objectors. The Commission presented a concept for expanding and renewing voluntary service programmes in its Manifesto ‘Youth Renewing Society – A Call for Voluntary Service in Germany and Europe’ (Jugend erneuert Gemeinschaft). The Commission’s proposals stimulated a broad public debate. Furthermore, in order to develop a wider and attractive range of voluntary service opportunities that went beyond the ‘classical’ areas, pilot projects were financed in collaboration with the Robert Bosch Foundation. Finally, the recommendations of the Manifesto had an impact on the renewed legislation for voluntary service programmes that went into force in June 2002.

- **In 1997, the first umbrella organisation for volunteer centres was established;** the 'Federal Working Group of Volunteer Agencies' ('Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen e.V.', BAFGA), and was given the task of representing the needs and interests of the volunteer centres at the federal political level.
- **Launching of the first comprehensive 'National Survey on Volunteering and Civic Engagement' (so-called 'Freiwilligensurvey') in 1998.** In order to examine all forms of volunteering, including civic engagement in informal organisations, the German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) initiated the First National Survey on Volunteering in 1998. Almost 15,000 residents aged 14 and above were interviewed over a period of three months, from May to July 1999. A second national survey was performed with the same number of interviewees from April to July 2004.
- **Establishment of the Study Commission on the Future of Civic Activities by the German Federal Parliament in 1999.** With the objective of designing concrete political strategies and measures to encourage voluntary civic activities, the German Federal Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag) established a 'Study Commission on the Future of Civic Activities' in December 1999. The Commission consisted of 11 Members of Parliament and 11 external expert members (leading social scientists and Third Sector representatives) and started working in February 2000. In 2002, this Committee published an influential report on the state of volunteering which, *inter alia*, for the first time created a clearer conceptual delineation of the different forms of volunteering. It also put forward proposals for the promotion of volunteering, and thereby set the framework for the wider debate and political developments in respect of volunteering in the following years. Recommendations for action included the development of networks at federal, regional and local level (which only partly existed in some fields), to create an infrastructure bringing together government players, the voluntary sector and civil society and to establish a 'culture of recognition' with regard to various forms of certification, e.g. with regard to training for volunteers. The Commission recommended also reducing bureaucracy in relation to funding, reforming the tax law on donations and non-profit status, compensation for expenditures and ensuring adequate third-party liability and accident insurance. It also proposed to create a permanent Commission linked to the Bundestag in order to promote civic activities in a durable and sustained manner.
- **Several conferences, meetings and events were organised within the framework of the International Year of Volunteers 2001,** which played an important role in terms of increasing public and political awareness of volunteering.
- **In 2002, the 'Federal Network for Civic Engagement' ('Bundesnetzwerk Buergerschaftliches Engagement, BBE') was established** with financial support of the federal government, linking together volunteering organisations, the business sector and public authorities in accordance with the recommendations by the Study Commission on the Future of Civic Activities. The momentum from the International Year of Volunteers 2001 also played a role in its establishment this year.
- **A national strategy (white paper) on volunteering** does not exist at present, but its preparation is being considered by the Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth. The Ministry has given the Bundesnetzwerk

Buergerschaftliches Engagement (BBE) the task of preparing an initial discussion paper.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Bundesnetzwerk Buergerschaftliches Engagement (BBE): *Bestandsaufnahmen der Engagementfoerderung in den Bundesressorts.*

## ANNEX 2 – SOURCES

### Interviews

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