Denmark

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DENMARK

Country Facts Sheet

- Population: 5,519,259
- Area: 43,098.31 sq km
- Population density: 128.1 inhabitants per sq km
- System of government: Denmark is a constitutional hereditary monarchy. Denmark's present sovereign is Queen Margrethe II (b.1940). In practice, the monarch's role is symbolic and representative. The legislative power rests jointly with the government and the Folketing (the Danish Parliament), the executive power with the government and the judicial power with the courts. The degree of decentralisation in Denmark is relatively high. In addition to the central state administration, Denmark is divided at regional level into five regions led by an elected regional council without authority to levy taxes. However, health services and regional development are in their charge. At local level, Denmark is divided into 98 municipalities. The local authorities are led by an elected primary council with the authority to levy taxes. Furthermore, day-care institutions, elementary schools, care for the elderly, culture, environment and roads are among their main tasks.

- Social security and welfare system: The Scandinavian welfare model is often used as a general term for the way in which Denmark (and Sweden and Norway) has chosen to organise and finance the social security systems, health services and education. The principle behind the Scandinavian welfare model is that benefits should be given to all citizens who fulfill the conditions, regardless of employment or family situation. Therefore, the Danish welfare system is based on the principles of universality, accessibility, gender equality, sustainability, and adequacy.
- Denmark's total expenditure for social purposes amounted to DKK 465 billion in 2006 or DKK 86,000 per capita of which DKK 339 billion represented the public expenditure on social services, corresponding to 42 per cent of all current public expenditure.
- Expenditure on social services measured in relation to GDP accounted for 29 per cent in 2006. Social expenditure is defined broadly in this context and also includes health services and labour market schemes expenditure.

- Public health system: The public health insurance in Denmark, financed by taxes, provides equal access to public health services to all Danish residents. Everyone residing in Denmark has the right to public health insurance services as well as hospital assistance. Some newcomers will have a 6 weeks window period during which they are entitled only to free emergency care, but have to pay for any other medical service until they are integrated into the public health system.
- Level of education (Eurostat 2006): 20-24 years old who have completed secondary schooling 2006: 72.4%, 25-64 years old who have completed secondary schooling 2006: 81.6%, Immigration rate (Eurostat 2007): 2007: 1.18 %, Growth rate (Eurostat 2008): 2008: 0.20%, Employment rate (Eurostat 2006): 15-64 years old (total - male - female) 77.8% - 81.2% - 73.4%, Unemployment rate (Eurostat 2006): 15-64 years old (total - male - female) 3.9% - 4.5% - 3.1%.

- Legal framework: Volunteer involving organisations

- Volunteers involving organisations: 1.1.2 Volunteer involving organisations and their differences

- Data overview: 1.1.2 Volunteer involving organisations and their differences

- Social Services Act
- Danish Act on Popular Education
- Fiscal policies
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- Overview of laws and regulations

- Overview of laws and regulations
According to Salamon & Anheier, volunteering is not an isolated phenomenon. It is an integrated part of the social system. In Denmark, volunteering is in fact a very important part of the Danish culture and the way society is structured. In this aspect, it will be more precise to name it the 1st sector instead of the 3rd sector, because the welfare society has developed in a close relation and has been inspired by organisations in the civil society. Civil society is therefore found in all sectors and spheres of society.

The voluntary sector in Denmark is manifold not only regarding objectives, but also in structure. It embraces everything from small associations with few members, almost no money and "premises" at the chairperson's home office to large, well-established, professional organisations. The common feature, however, is "voluntary", and below is presented what is understood by volunteer, voluntary work and voluntary organisation.

1 Definitions

1.1 Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who undertakes a voluntary activity within the criteria mentioned in the paragraph below.

1.2 Volunteering activity

Volunteering activity is the activity or act carried out by a volunteer. Volunteering activities refer to activities that are:

- Voluntary or non-obligatory, i.e. undertaken freely without physical force, legal coercion or financial pressure and no threats of financial or social sanctions (for instance of being cut off from social security benefits or a social network) if you no longer wish to continue the work.

- Unpaid. However, this does not preclude reimbursement for expenses the volunteer has incurred while carrying out the activities, such as travelling and telephone expenses. Or that the person receives a symbolic amount for the voluntary work.

• Carried out for persons other than the volunteer’s own family and relatives. This distinguishes voluntary work from ordinary domestic activities and the informal care of family members.
• For the benefit of other people than the volunteer and his or her family. The value that the work has for others makes it voluntary work. This precludes participation in i.e. self-help groups or sport clubs as voluntary work.
• Formally organised - mostly in an association, but this need not be the case. Ordinary helpfulness or spontaneous acts are not officially considered to be voluntary work.6

1.3 Voluntary organisation

In Denmark “voluntary” is often used for organisations that organise voluntary work. This is a way to emphasise that these organisations differ from private companies as well as public organisations and institutions. Hence, a voluntary organisation is defined as:

• An “institutional reality” i.e. with a legal status or an organisational permanency, which among other things means that they have ongoing activities, formal objects, structures and procedures (e.g. written statutes), frequent meetings, an address or meeting place.
• Private and non-governmental. i.e. the organisation is not part of or controlled by the public sector. This does not however prevent the organisation from undertaking work on behalf of the public sector or from receiving public funding.
• Operating on a not for profit basis. In this context, it means that the organisation does not operate with a view to securing profits for investors or individuals. A financial profit, if a profit is yielded, is invested in the organisation, and therefore, used in compliance with the objectives of the organisation.
• Self-governing. It must be in charge of its own affairs and not controlled by any other organisation - public, commercial or voluntary.
• Non-compulsory as to membership or affiliation, participation and financial contributions.

1.4 Volunteers on volunteering (interviews)

As mentioned above, volunteering - and committing oneself in local matters - has been a part of the Danish culture and tradition for centuries, and it has also become a part of the legislation. For example, regarding the educational area, The Danish Act on Popular Education (Folkeoplysningsloven) has given an important foundation to make volunteering visible and to support financially voluntary associations, local as well as national.

In more general terms, the importance of volunteering has three aspects:

• It is vital for the relationship and interaction between people.
• It is a forum for handling interests or advocacy and “conflict” negotiation i.e. it is a forum of many different organisations securing different interests and through these negotiations new solutions can be found.
• Civil society and volunteering are also a take-off to new initiatives and development in general and today there is a focus on innovation through interaction between actors from different sectors.

Volunteering is not only a matter of getting people to work without pay; what really matters is that volunteering does something for the volunteers. Volunteering is also a way to express oneself, and it gives people something else than paid work. It is a need for people to engage themselves in their hobbies or leisure time activities.

…” but often you will find, that the more involved you get the more you want to create a good working framework for others as well as for yourself and your passions. In this sense, volunteering is about creating a good framework in which people can act to improve conditions for a special group of people.”

Volunteering is also a platform to express opinions and interests. The political work is very important for the volunteer involving organisations, and it is more effective when people, the young disabled people for instance, plead their own case to the authorities.
### 1 ROOTS: BEFORE 1900

#### 1.1 The adoption of a democratic constitution (before 1900)

The adoption of Grundloven (the Danish Constitutional Act) in 1849 made it possible for a civil society to flourish. Now, citizens could freely join organisations, unions and associations. Although there had been various forms of organisations which could be described as the forerunners of today’s voluntary associations, it was not until the transition from the traditional to the modern society that a fully-fledged voluntary sector emerged in Denmark. At the same time, the need for new communities and interest groups arose and new communities gradually replaced the traditional networks, bonds and safety nets, and it became possible to distinguish between the public and private sectors.

In this sense, the history of the voluntary sector in Denmark is primarily the history of the associations. The concept of joining together was nothing new but an association was a new way of doing it. The seed of “association in Denmark” as it is known today was planted in the late 18th century, however, when a number of unions – societies and clubs – were formed to perform various social tasks. The Constitutional Act guaranteed citizens’ rights and associations were formed in almost every sphere of society: political party associations, interest organisations, trade unions, economic associations (savings banks, health insurance societies, cooperatives), philanthropic associations, sports associations, religious associations etc.

#### 1.2 The popular movements and philanthropy (about 1849 - 1900)

In the late 19th century, the mass popular movements arose: the farmer’s movement, the labour movement, the mission movement, the temperance movement and the popular sports movement. They represented an attempt to solve the problems that emanated from the new social order and the new social middle classes. As far as the development of the Danish welfare state is concerned, the popular movements had enormous political significance as democratic partners and opponents. In addition, the movements have endowed the Danish voluntary sector with unique features: the high level of membership rates. To this day, the average number of associations’ memberships per capita is very high: 3.5 memberships per capita. Another feature is the relatively large amount of voluntary work done in associations and organisations, which have a low proportion of paid/employed staff. Another feature is that the core areas are concentrated on culture, sports and leisure time and far less on social, health and education issues.

### 2 THE BRIEF CENTURY: 1900 - 2000

#### 2.1 The formation of the welfare state (1900 - 1980)

After the adoption of the Constitution, voluntary organisations started seriously to take shape and flourish. Associations and organisations were established as a means of devoting interest and in opposition to the establishment. However, in spite of this, there were no great discrepancies between the state and the voluntary sector during this period, and parts of the sector, especially in the social-political field, attracted much political attention and received public subsidies at an early stage. The associations were seen as tools to perform different tasks and tackle social problems. A distinction should be made between mutual self-help organisations (insurance associations etc.), philanthropic organisations (Red Cross etc.) and membership based organisations, including interest organisations. These types of organisations developed gradually and were involved in various forms of cooperation with the public authorities.

In the period between the First and Second World War, voluntary organisations grew in number and membership. Many small interest organisations were established, each fighting for the rights of people they represented. At the same time, the scene was set for even closer cooperation with the public authorities, but in several fields the state gradually took over more and more responsibility. The Social Reform of 1933 was a turning point in the way cooperation was thought about. The Minister of Social Affairs, K.K. Steincke, stressed that the reform presupposed that as many relief institutions were under the province of the state or local authorities, they had been conferred with tasks pertaining to public law, and therefore simply...
could not be left to the private initiative. The Act, however, did pre-suppose a close cooperation with philanthropic organisations. A special form of cooperation became common in this period, i.e. negotiation agreements between local authorities and what are known as self-governing institutions. The 1935 reform enabled such cooperation, partly because the local authorities at that time did not have the capacity to do all the work for which they had legal responsibility. Throughout this whole period, the public-sector support gradually grew and so did public control, especially in the social field.

During the 1950s, the idea of equal benefit for all (universalism) grew, the welfare state became increasingly important and the voluntary organisations, especially in the social sphere, were disregarded as a means of solving problems. They functioned primarily as interest organisations and saw themselves as "pioneers", "tree thinkers" and "alternatives".

Therefore, after the Second World War, the state assumed responsibility for more and more social and health matters, often under political pressure from voluntary interest organisations, which accepted the concept characterising the welfare state, according to which solidarity solves problems. The concept, according to which the state was responsible for the prosperity and security of its citizens culminated in the Danish Local Government Reform in the 1970s and in the social reform with the Danish Social Service Act, under which local authorities were instructed to cooperate with voluntary organisations. In many cases, this resulted in an "exploitation" of the associations, which were more and more involved in the production of welfare and were expected to fill the role of the trustworthy partner.

3 WHERE WE STAND: 2001 - 2008

All in all, today the situation of the voluntary sector (especially within the social and health fields) is that 100 years after their first boom and after being forgotten for a couple of decades (1960-1980), voluntary organisations have re-assumed their role as important players in the Danish welfare society. This means that great hopes and expectations have been placed on the sector in the name of civil society, expectations that can be difficult to fulfill. The voluntary sector personifies personal freedom, social community and the fight for human rights, is the fertile soil for self-help, empowerment and integration functions, as a school for democracy. When the sector is expected to assume responsibility for the work that the state cannot provide or handle, it is difficult to meet all these demands without involving professional expertise; they do not have the capacity. This professionalisation and also bureaucratisation of the voluntary sector implies the risk of the voluntary element declining.

Another current discussion is the role and autonomy of the voluntary organisations. The more they are used as instruments to do work for the state, and the more they are "tempered" by state grants, the more the voluntary organisations' view of themselves as independent advocates and innovative players is questioned. The discrepancy between the expectations of the voluntary sector and its capacity and motivation to be turned into a public-sector entrepreneur is also a highly relevant and current issue and a future challenge facing the voluntary sector as well as society in general.

4 VOLUNTEERING NOW (INTERVIEWS)

After a period where volunteering was regarded as "less valuable", was invisible and where the state played the main role in providing social welfare, today there is an increasing understanding of the necessity of volunteering and of the fact that volunteering can solve part of the existing financial difficulties. There is an awareness of volunteering as a means to create new solutions especially for social and health problems in society. There is also an awareness of volunteering and the involvement of civil society as means to cope with integration problems and more existential problems such as loneliness and health.

Although volunteering in general is increasing, unfortunately, in some areas there is a tendency to a decreasing involvement in associations, this means also fewer volunteers. This theme has been debated e.g. among Danish youth organisations and they believe that it has something to do with the "fitness culture"; you can participate without really getting involved in the organisation. It is a kind of "grab bag culture".

As to the current roles of volunteering in Denmark, interviewed people underline that nowadays the role of volunteering is generally highly acknowledged, especially within the social field. Volunteering is considered to bring high value, however, rather in the sense of the visibility for the citizen or user than for the society or the public in general. The municipalities recognise volunteering for the effect it has on, for example, the elderly or poor people, and not so much for the value that engagement, 'voice' (being a spokesperson) and democracy - which are some of the virtues of volunteering - bring to society. Volunteering is regarded as a means of solving social problems that the public authorities are not capable of solving themselves, either due to a lack of resources or lack of methods. Furthermore, today there is an increasing understanding of the necessity of volunteering and of the fact that volunteering can solve part of the financial difficulties. There is an awareness of volunteering as a means to create new solutions especially for social and health problems and to cope with integration problems and more existential problems such as loneliness.

When speaking about the role of volunteering in society, another aspect that has to be considered is the territorial level. Volunteering is much more articulated by national politicians and civil servants than by local ones. From discussions on volunteering on a national level with national actors such as government, national bodies, researchers etc., it seems that volunteers are considered very important actors by the municipalities. Nevertheless, many find that the reality is quite the opposite, and that it is appalling to see how little the municipalities ascribe to volunteers. It seems that they do not take them seriously and that they do not have much confidence as to what the volunteers can do and contribute. This might be due to the fact that many small municipalities, when looking across the local volunteer landscape, "only" see some associations for elderly people who play bridge or knit and therefore they find it difficult to see how this volunteer work produces anything useful or good.

When it comes to the desirable role of volunteering in the present society, interviews with the representatives of the volunteering sector emphasize that the role of the voluntary work should be in concert with the state and the market. "Voluntary work produces something else. Volunteering is, essentially, free of power relations, free of authoritative power, free of market mechanisms. In our society today, there is so much bureaucracy, so much market; therefore..."

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Interview with representatives of the volunteering sector.
In Denmark, there is a long tradition of forming associations and the liberty of association is of such great importance that there never have been any laws that define or regulate third sector organisations and associations. On the contrary, the liberty of association is secured by § 78 of Grundloven (the Danish Constitution).

There is no actual single act governing associations in Denmark, i.e. a law that places specific requirements on an association before it can be declared legal or eligible to receive public-sector funding etc. Concerning self-governing institutions and funds (described in section 4 below) both organisational forms are gathered under the current legislation under the collective name “fund”, i.e. Lov om fonde og visse foreninger (the Danish Act on Foundations and Certain Associations) which from 1984 applies also to self-governing institutions. However, there are some laws and regulations that affect the third sector organisations in different ways. For example, there is no demand for organisations and associations to register in official state records, but if the organisation wants to receive money from the public, the organisation must have a CVR-number (a registration number for all kinds of businesses) and a Nem Konto, which is an account all citizens, companies and associations are obliged to have, and which the public uses for various financial transactions and pay outs.

When an organisation or association employs paid staff or volunteers who will be in contact with children under the age of 15, they are obliged - but so far only when they receive specific kinds of public funds - to obtain a Børneattest (child certification) from the person concerned. A child certification is a specific type of criminal record which specifies whether a person is convicted for any sexual crimes in relation to children.

As there are not specific laws governing the third sector, changes in legislation affected indirectly the third sector. Some changes regard for instance the Danish Act on Foundations and certain Associations which from 1984 applies also to self-governing institutions. However, there are some laws and regulations that affect the third sector organisations in different ways. For example, there is no demand for organisations and associations to register in official state records, but if the organisation wants to receive money from the public, the organisation must have a CVR-number (a registration number for all kinds of businesses) and a Nem Konto, which is an account all citizens, companies and associations are obliged to have, and which the public uses for various financial transactions and pay outs.

One of the scenarios envisaged for the voluntary sector is represented by the creation of a niche which should be 100 per cent dedicated to social enterprises organised within a voluntary organisation. In this context, some assignments now carried out by the state or market actors would be carried out by the voluntary sector or social enterprises. Another scenario for volunteering in the future could be the making of a better foundation for the development of self-organisation and new organisational forms. In some voluntary fields proper legislation can be already found, e.g. the Danish Act on Popular Education contains very fine possibilities to strengthen the involvement and self-organisation. However, the social and health areas still have a long way to go before they can achieve the same conditions.

Legal framework

1 OVERVIEW OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS

In Denmark, there is a long tradition of forming associations and the liberty of association is of such great importance that there have never been any laws that define or regulate third sector organisations and associations. On the contrary, the liberty of association is secured by § 78 of Grundloven (the Danish Constitution).

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As there are not specific laws governing the third sector organisations, changes in legislation affected indirectly the third sector. Some changes regard for instance the Danish Act on Foundations and certain Associations passed in 1984. Furthermore, the Social Services Act and the Danish Act on Popular education brought about some relevant changes.


2 See paragraphs below for details.
1.1 Social Services Act

In Denmark there are two laws which aim at supporting volunteering and voluntary organisations on a local level: Lov om Social Service § 18 (Social Services Act) and Folkeoplysningsloven’ (Danish Act on Popular Education).

The Social Services Act imposes an obligation on local authorities to provide financial support for local voluntary work and to cooperate with voluntary organisations. The objectives are to improve interaction between voluntary social work and local authorities, to make voluntary work more visible in local communities and to improve the conditions for voluntary work. To solve this task, local authorities receive an annual financial compensation from the central government, paid via block grants. In 2007, approximately 18 million Euros were received.

1.2 Danish Act on Popular Education

The Danish Act on Popular Education obliged local authorities to support popular education with grants, premises and other supporting initiatives such as establishing a committee, consisting of a majority of users and a minority of council members to administer the agreed budget. The Act provides for two main categories of recipients for grants: adult education associations and other groups engaged in teaching and organising study groups or lecture activities; sports and youth associations and clubs. When the local authorities are allocating grants, they must earmark at least 5 per cent of the total budget for innovation and development work.

2 Participation in public policy making

All volunteering representatives that filled in the questionnaire agreed on the importance of the bottom up principle and on the importance of having a strong partnership with the public sector. Therefore, representatives of the questioned volunteering organisations underline that volunteering organisations are more close to citizens than the state and know better their problems and consequently it is in the interest of the state to involve them in the decision making process of public policies:

“If volunteering is about active citizenship and a joint responsibility for the development in society, it is also natural to include the volunteer sector in policies that affect our field, for instance the local volunteering policy. To me it is most suitable if volunteers and their views are included in the local volunteering policy. Otherwise, there is a risk that a policy that does not have support from the volunteer sector is drawn up. The public sector does supply the funds, but funds are not enough. The tasks that are carried out by the volunteer sector cannot all be carried out by the public sector. We are mutually dependent on a prosperous cooperation. On a national level it therefore makes sense to include the large volunteer organisations in drawing up new policies.”

“Civil society/the voluntary sector is often the place where social problems and the lack of solutions are discovered and pinpointed and organisations and volunteers have often a closer and special contact to the needy and various user groups. A ‘bottom-up’ participation where voluntary organisations have an influence on public policies will therefore qualify the decision making bodies.”

Despite the underlined importance of involving volunteering organisations in the decision making process, according to representatives of questioned organisations, it seems that mostly big organisations are involved in the decision making process, while others are somehow left out.

“It is in general difficult to have a large say in the definition of public policies, but some of the biggest volunteer institutions have been quite successful.”

Big volunteer organisations (and the umbrella organisations) can function as sparring partners for the municipalities, for instance, when leisure and youth policies are being worked out. This is already the praxis, although to a lesser extent than we would want it.”

4 Rolls and Registers

Voluntary organisations in Denmark are not registered.

5 List of laws and regulations

LBB no. 979 01/10/2008 Social Services Act
LBB no. 924 2000/10/05 The Danish Act on Popular Education
LBB no. 300 1984/06/06 Danish Act on Foundations and Certain Associations

13 Source: EAEA (European Association for Education of Adults) http://www.eaea.org/index.php?l=1833
Volunteer involving organisations

1 Organisational forms

In the Danish context the above mentioned definition of a voluntary organisation includes three different forms in particular which are shortly described in 1.1 and 1.2 below.

1.1 Juridical and organisational forms of not for profit organisations

This category applies to self-governing institution and funds or charitable foundations. A self-governing institution is a peculiar Danish organisational form; it is mainly financed by the public and has rarely any volunteers. The institutions are mostly found in the social or educational field (e.g. day care centres, shelters, free schools, kindergartens). Funds or charitable foundations are defined as assets deposited by an independent board of directors for specific purposes. The fund concept is however not defined by the legislation, but there are some characteristics which are based on custom and practice: an asset separated from the overall fortune owned by the founder; independent management (a board) disposes of the assets; the fund is regarded as an independent legal entity; the fund, not the founders' heirs for example, owns the rights. Funds have been operating in Denmark for centuries and like self-governing institutions or foundations, or foundations, are part of a long tradition of private initiatives that have taken on work now regarded as the duty and the thinking of the voluntary organisations and their role and the thinking of the voluntary sector and, despite the tendency to see each other as a contrast (e.g. the voluntary sector as the watchdog of society), the opposite was the fact. However, as described in the history paragraph, the status has played the main role and the thinking of the voluntary organisations and their role and legitimacy was different throughout the 20th century. Today the relationship is characterised mostly by cooperation.

In the above mentioned Social Services Act, the relationship between the public and the voluntary sector on a local level is determined by article 18 which states that local authorities must provide financial support to local voluntary work, for which they receive a block grant, and cooperate with voluntary organisations. During the past 10 years (the act was implemented in 1998) the relationship has developed and in 2007 two out of three municipalities had a formalised cooperation, e.g. a contract, a working forum, a volunteer council etc. The financial support, however, has declined even though municipalities have received more money (block grants). In 2007, the municipalities supported voluntary work financially with 17 million Euros (in 2005 it was 18 million Euros) but they received 17.7 million Euros in block grants. On average, the municipalities paid out 96% of the block grants to voluntary social work.

The Danish Act on Popular Education obliges local authorities to support voluntary organisations within the education field. It is a framework law and many decisions are placed on either the local council or on the ‘popular education committee’. Besides the obligation to supply popular education activities with premises, the individual municipality decides which activities to support and the amount – it is determined typically through local aid subsidies.

Volunteers involving organisations

2 Rules and functioning

Different Danish surveys show that almost all voluntary organisations in Denmark are organised in a very traditional way; they have a board that is elected by the members, they have statutes which describe the structure, the decision making procedures of the organisation, they have a chairman and a treasurer and they arrange a general assembly. Many organisations have a hierarchical structure, but many also have a so-called ‘flat’ or horizontal decision making structure, where volunteers as well as staff have equal influence and decisions are made in a joint forum. The majority of organisations is traditionally structured, but there is a small tendency towards the emergence of new forms of organisational structure; they are, however, characterised by not being formalised and structured such as informal groups and networks etc.

3 Relationship with public sector

3.1 Overview

Historically, the welfare society was developed to an extent in a correlation between the public and the voluntary sector and, despite the tendency to see each other as a contrast (e.g. the voluntary sector as the watchdog of society), the opposite was the fact. However, as described in the history paragraph, the status has played the main role and the thinking of the voluntary organisations and their role and legitimacy was different throughout the 20th century. Today the relationship is characterised mostly by cooperation.

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3.2 From our point of view

(Interviews and questionnaires)

The relationship between the voluntary and public sector varies from sector to sector (culture, social, education etc.) due to history. In some sectors, the relation causes frustration due to the decrease in the involvement of volunteering organisations in the definition of public policies:

‘... In psychological terms, I would say that part of the voluntary sector have lost their “focus on control”. It’s clearly the voluntary sector...’


VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

1 Research and statistics highlights

In 2006, Denmark concluded a three-year long research project: Frivillighedsundersøgelsen, which was the Danish part of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non profit Sector Project. The research was divided into three parts:

- A population survey about formal and informal volunteering and donations to voluntary organisations among 4,200 people aged 16-85.
- A comprehensive mapping of all local and regional associations, self-governing institutions and foundations in a representative region in Denmark together with a survey among national voluntary organisations.
- An estimation of the economic and labour market impact of the voluntary sector based on figures from the population survey and on information and data from the Danish National Account database.

This research gave for the first time unique and reliable data on volunteering and the main economic and statistical results are listed below.

2 Economic and statistical indicators

In 2004, the voluntary sector in Denmark contributed to the national economy with almost 14 billion Euros. If the economic value of voluntary work is added, the figure is 18 billion Euros, equivalent to almost 10% of GDP.
2.1 Types and range of voluntary organisations (in numbers)

- Associations: 83,000 local and regional, 3,000 national
- Self-governing institutions: 8,000
- Foundations: 6,200

2.2 Financial and human resources

Financial

- Transfers from local authorities and state: 43.7%
- Services and production: 28.5%
- Subscriptions, donations etc.: 21.1%
- Interest, transfers: 6.7%
- Total: 100%


Human resources

Table 4 Size of the Danish Voluntary sector, measured by workforce (paid/unpaid work), 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total workforce (FT E*)</th>
<th>Paid work in the voluntary sector</th>
<th>Unpaid work in the voluntary sector</th>
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<td></td>
<td>140,620</td>
<td>130,041</td>
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*Full-time equivalent (FT E) is defined as 1,650 hours per year.


2.3 Funding

Compared to other countries, Denmark is privileged because there is both local and national funding. This also means that politically volunteering is highly valued, which again means that volunteering is celebrated and acknowledged. Funding, therefore, is mostly provided by government grants, partly as basic grants, partly as project grants. Basic grants are grants awarded to the organisation without being earmarked for a specific activity or specific project. Instead, they are awarded on basis of objective criteria such as purpose, turnover and own collected funds. Project grants are awarded through the so-called Danish Pools and Lotto Funds, and more than 200 million Euros are distributed to all kinds of purposes in civil society, although voluntary social work receives about 18 million Euros. Project grants are awarded directly to specific projects and activities.

2.4 Growth trends

As there is no history of statistical records and data of the development, the only reliable data are derived from the above mentioned Frivillighedsundersøgelsen and from a question in the survey on when the organisations were founded and whether they have gained more members during the last five years:

- 50% of the Danish voluntary organisations have been established since 1975 and 25% since 1990.
- 40% of the organisations have gained more members during the last five years and only 25% have gained fewer members.

Another important question is how to support and improve the inter-disciplinary cooperation between the voluntary organisations. In the Danish model where the main funding comes from various public grants related to the respective purposes e.g. sports and culture are supported by the Ministry of Culture, social activities by the...
Ministry of Social Welfare etc., there are no real incentives or motives to a cross-sector cooperation. However, some parts of associational life are still based more on awareness than their own; for instance, the socially disadvantaged field orientates towards the occupa-
tional field, and the social field towards the integration field. There is an awareness of the importance of having a more holistic vision on the work for the respective target group, to create more synergy in the various efforts. It is a question also of legitimacy e.g. that sports asso-
ciations take a social responsibility and about “common knowledge”.

3 Of volunteers and organisations (interviews)

3.1 Motivations and barriers

Although motivation is a highly individualistic matter, it is often a combination of different motives, where some are altruistic, some more self-interest oriented and others refer to the relationship, but all are of equal importance.

“Young people with disabilities can obtain a lot from volunteering, because they are a part of something else but education or work and their disabilities are suddenly not in focus. You do an important work and you are needed. You have the opportunity of a meaningful project together with others. You meet people, whom you like or find interesting; social network and social relationship are an essential motivation for many volun-
teers. The relationship with other people and having a nice time together are somehow the foundation of good self-respect. Further, many volunteers like the fact that they are volunteers, a motive that should not be underestimated. For example, many people feel that is nice to tell about one’s engagement in various volun-
tary activities or organisations. It is not that people brag about it, but it feels good; it seems to be good for self-esteem.’

A third set of motives is the cause. One becomes a volunteer because s/he sympathises with a cause that can be very specific and local, i.e. you want better cultural activities. Alternatively, one becomes a volunteer because s/he gets affected by a cause and wants to help or make a difference in people’s life. Whether one becomes a volunteer because s/he is interested in a specific task or because of the cause, these motives are both acceptable and fruitful, as in some point - especially if one is involved in social volunteering - s/he will start to find more personal satisfaction and will feel that it is the right thing to do. Other barriers have to do with myths. There are some quite pre-
judices in social volunteering and it is compared to being an old-mo.

A motive has a learning/educational aspect, where people engage themselves in volunteering partly because they want to use their qualifications and competences they already have, and partly because they want to learn something new. Learning can be very spe-
cific: learning a new skill, tool, method etc., and put it on a CV, or a more diffuse and general learning, which has to do with danish (education/culture), whereby a person becomes more aware by being a volunteer. Through volunteering, people can also improve their ability of working together with many different kinds of people and get specific working experience. It gives complex interactions, which are also very important.

The gaining of competences is a relevant focus in Denmark and it is now legitimate to see volunteering as a place where people - besides doing good for others - also improve their own skills etc.

Another motive is involving oneself (“putting oneself on the line”). Through volunteering, people get to know other people and spend time with who they like or find interesting; social network and social relationship are an essential motivation for many volun-
teers. The relationship with other people and having a nice time together are somehow the foundation of good self-respect. Further, many volunteers like the fact that they are volunteers, a motive that should not be underestimated. For example, many people feel that is nice to tell about one’s engagement in various volun-
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Several motives are disguised in the fitness trend. Reasons for not volunteering have of course also to do with age and people’s stage in life.

All in all, volunteering is to be increased, it can be done by ask-
ing people to volunteer, by making volunteering accessible, by recognising the value of volunteering and by telling the stories of volun-
teering so non-volunteers will get a more precise and “daily” picture of volunteering. Traditions and habits (family or friends are volun-
teers), introduction and encouragement from schools to volunteering are important factors too.

3.2 Needs and challenges

Besides establishing a good relation with the public sector, vol-
tary organisations have also other needs and face different chal-
lenge. However, many of the needs and challenges are related to recruiting and retaining members and volunteers. Some organisa-
tions loose members and, as recruitment often take place among the members; it is more difficult to get new volunteers. Furthermore, as they want to recruit young people and get them involved in the organisational work, there is a need to make the organisations attrac-
tive for young people, to make the organisation look “young” and “light”, where decisions are made easily and where you get influence.

Organisations with small member groups (as in many disabili-
ties’ organisation) this causes some challenges too: to generate a mutual connection and solidarity between the members, but also to find new generations of volunteers.

“We are an umbrella’s organisation for the organisations for young people with disabilities and thus we cannot draw on our own members. Constantly we have to find people from the member organisations and this is a general challenge. There are member organisations that do not make use of us very often, consequently, we do not have much contact with them. We have to improve the co-
operation with these organisations in order for us to get more volun-
teers. Our goal is to recruit people with different kinds of disabilities.”

Volunteering thrives among other things on recognition and vis-
ibility, but money is essential and the organisations need to ensure
the financial basis and maintain the financial support they receive. “For my organisation the greatest difficulty is a very bad finan- cial situation which they have to struggle with, so much that we might not exist next year. We need money! The way the funding system is structured in Denmark, it is very difficult for small voluntar- ie organisations such as ours to raise money, because we do not have a salable cause. Right now in Denmark, there is a tendency to support initiatives, projects, organisations etc. that are close to the citizens; initiatives that are farther away and have to do more with infrastructure are considered less valuable. To raise awareness of our importance and to get recognition are big challenges for us.”

Another type of challenge is expressed in this way: “In the voluntary field in which I operate, we find that more and more tasks that typically were voluntary now have a commercial counterpart e.g. fitness centres and football and handball schools. This gives the following scenario: there is no longer any reason to support civil society activities because there is a commercial market, so why should we spend all those billions on volunteering? Fortunately, there is a strong political will to support volunteering, because it is important for our society and our culture to have these communities in which we work together. We are strongly grounded in volunteering because it is important for our society and our culture to have these communities in which we work together.”

When looking at the individual level, the challenge refers to getting young people to be more involved in voluntary organisations, both as members and as volunteers. It is difficult to recruit young peo- ple, because they are busy with their education. There is a change in the way volunteering is considered. Now the focus is more on how volunteering can fit into one’s life project and how it can develop someone personally. This personal development has come to stay, previously it was either. Either people were idealistic and socially engaged without any ulterior motive or they had chosen volunteering as a career. Now it is both ways and this diversification has to be integrat- ed in the volunteer involving organisations. They also have a chal- lenge in “re-inventing themselves” as people need new exciting chal- lenges; they wish to do something meaningful and at the same time to be placed in new situations. The organisations need to take care of volunteers, they have to feel appreciated and it is very important that they are not overburdened with work.

In several organisations they do a lot of work in showing young people the value of volunteering, values such as doing something for other people, the values of (spirit of) community and solidarity and values such as competences (social, leadership etc.). But also that participation is about being together and achieving a common goal and not, as in sports, about competition. The organisations are opti- mistic and they believe that the work will make a difference in future, that they will be able to change the culture in order to get young peo- ple to choose values instead of a grab bag culture. And that young people will choose an organisation membership. It is their vision for volunteering in future.

Besides the more common needs and challenges, the organisa- tions face individual difficulties also, sometimes related to the areas in which they operate. Sports organisations, for example, face difficulties in keeping up with changes in society regarding sport habits. In the 1970s, people played volleyball and handball and badminton and the sports halls were built for that purpose. Today, people are running, jogging and biking, and the question is whether these activities are to be facilitated as well. If facilities in the different sport centres are not adequate, it brings people to choose the nice and well-equipped fit- ness centres and to do other activities. This has an impact on associations like ours and volunteering. New types of activities require also new types of volun- teers, and the organisations have to keep up with new trends.

Further organisational needs are, for instance, to maintain and develop a learning oriented environment in order to generate a bet- ter competence foundation and a dynamic professional environment, but also to get inspiration and interaction between people with differ- ent life conditions. Cooperation with local authorities, employers and specialist who are working in the specific social subject areas and cooperation with actors abroad in order to support a sustainable transnational environment are other organisational needs.

A main challenge in Denmark is the great difference in capacity and infrastructure between the different voluntary sectors (sports, cul- ture, social etc.). Regarding the social and health areas, there are great differences - also in terms of capacity and infrastructure - between national and local organisations. One of the main challenges is to make local organisations capable of cooperating with local authorities and public institutions and that the organisations are seen as relevant partners by the municipalities.”

This challenge is actualised by the Structural Reform under which local communities are changing and by the need to find new partners in order to solve new tasks. A way of tackling these local challenges is through the formulation of policies on how to involve civil society and, within the social and health areas, through the formulation of volunteer policies, which are still under consideration. In addition, there is a clear political will to support volunteering, because it is important for our society and our culture to have these communities in which we work together. We are strongly grounded because it is important for our society and our culture to have these communities in which we work together.”

With reference to capacity building, there is an unused potential to establish structures that can be supportive, for instance, through local Volunteer Centres or local health centres.

Regarding the cooperation and the dialogue between the public and the voluntary sector, it is important to establish various kinds of co-operation platforms. During the last years, many organisations have been frustrated about the cooperation and especially the lack of support by local authorities. The organisations often interpret this organisational layer as a lack of confidence or recognition. This frustration is seen especially in relation to the block grant. This has an impact on associations like ours and volunteering. New types of activities require also new types of volun- teers, and the organisations have to keep up with new trends.

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1 Federations

There are several umbrella organisations in Denmark. For instance, Frivilligt Forum – Landsforeningen af de Frivillige sociale organisationer (Volunteer Forum) is an umbrella organisation for voluntary social organisations. They have about 90 members, mostly national organisations but some also local or regional. Their aims are to promote volunteering, make social problems visible, be a spokesperson for vulnerable groups and cooperate with other associations to create networks.

2 Consulting bodies

Nationally, there are two bodies: Frivilligrådet (the National Volunteer Centre), which is a consultancy and service institution for volunteers and voluntary organisations within the social and health area.

Locally, several local authorities/municipalities employ consultants (civil servants) who cooperate and are the contact persons to voluntary organisations and who often are the administrators of the public funds (see Data Overview: 2.3 Funding).

3 Networking (interviews)

Organisations have in general many experiences in cooperating with other organisations, in projects as well as in political and interest formulation. They cooperate both with national and international organisations, especially in the Nordic and European countries and often with other organisations or organisations within the same field.

“As an umbrella organisation, cooperation is the very essence of our work. We cooperate a lot and have especially selected large organisations as our strategic alliance partners, because we are a small organisation and can benefit from larger organisations’ experience, knowledge etc. It is very important to be in dialogue with other organisations and get different views.”

Support bodies

1 Support measures (questionnaires and interviews)

According to representatives of questioned organisations, although in certain areas there are some support measures, especially at national level, in most cases they are too fragmented and at local level they are often only symbolic.

“The initiatives are too fragmented and in some areas not existing.”

“Nationally, there are some initiatives, especially from the Ministry of Social Welfare, but locally they are too few or, to put it more precisely, they are often the wrong ones. Local initiatives are not very ambitious, they are more symbolic.”

Furthermore, representatives of questioned organisations underline that measures to support volunteering are different from one volunteering sector to another. For instance, in the social and health fields there are no signs of relevant measures for supporting volunteering, despite the fact that representatives of volunteering sector consider it to be one of the most important volunteering fields at local level and emphasize the importance of its strengthening:

“There are many different varieties of ‘volunteering’ in Denmark.”

On the other hand, within sports, education and culture, the Danish Act on Popular Education plays an important role in supporting volunteering in this sector.

As to financial support measures, representatives of questioned volunteering organisations characterize measures as being excessive-ly fragmented and bureaucratic:

“... we want a less fragmented view on financing of the volunteer association life, where some (according to law) are financed by funds and others by free means and others are bounded by activities.”

“Today there are a fair number of pools where the volunteer organisations can apply for funds both national and local. In principle, there are funds for new volunteer initiatives. But I do see the tendencies of the increased demand for evaluations that comes with funds from national pools as a problem and a limitation of value for the field of volunteering. I seek a fundamental understanding from the official authorities regarding that the volunteer sector functions after another set of guidelines than the public institutions and the publicly managed projects. I do not think it is suitable to use the same methods for evaluations as the professional organisations. An increased professionalisation of the volunteer sector is not entirely a positive thing. You risk dampening the innovative motive power that often is behind projects in the field of volunteering. It is that power which helps generate new solutions on complex social problems to which the public sector cannot find solutions.”

“There is a need for clarification on the future financing of volunteering centres in Denmark.”

As to measures to be adopted for supporting the volunteering sector, interviewed representatives stress that it is extremely important to implement measures that acknowledge the importance of volunteering for the development of society. Therefore, recognition becomes one of the key words in supporting volunteering. In this aspect, it is important that volunteering is visible in society and that is valued, not only in general, but especially among local authorities, politicians and civil servants.

“If an organisation cooperates with a civil servant who really is aware of volunteering and its conditions and peculiarities, the cooperation is very likely to be successful and fruitful. But if the person only focusses on contracts, products, results etc., volunteering becomes much more difficult. Civil servants as well as local politicians have to be aware of the ‘game’ of civil society.”

“Recognition, knowledge and trust are crucial factors. If volunteers are not met by these indicators they leave.”

“How to support volunteering? On the one hand, more money, please! On the other hand, it is very important that both local and...
national politicians are aware of the value of volunteering, that it is recognised and given a good framework, not only in economic terms, but also implemented in the different policies.” “It is not enough just to say we need more support centres, more funding etc. Actually, if the voluntary sector was flooded with money, I think it would only lead to an overconsumption of ‘junk’ and meaningless agendas. All in all, the most significant way to support volunteering is to make it meaningful and to secure influence.”

This can happen, for example, by making clear as to what local authorities want to support. Also by telling positive stories of volunteering and best-practices, e.g. when a municipality has been engaged in activities with the volunteers. When these activities have been successful, they ease the way for more cooperation.

Another state-related supporting “tool” is dialogue. This means that when the state imposes new demands on the voluntary sector, the first step should be a dialogue with the organisations on how to implement these demands, what is meaningful and what is not. Volunteering can be supported also if the competencies that people gain through volunteering get credit in terms of education and jobs. Furthermore, the condition of education must give room to volunteering. If students can prove that they have spent time volunteering and therefore need longer time for completing their education, it should still be possible to obtain student grants.

The voluntary organisations express many other ways in which volunteering can be supported. There is a need:

- for capacity building and the purpose or target of capacity building;
- for the exchange of experiences;
- to strengthen the interest in involving new actors and partners;
- for a more general funding for the voluntary sector;
- for more risk capital in some voluntary areas;
- for more visions.

2 Volunteer support centres

There are different kinds of volunteer support centres in Denmark, but no common structure or organisational form. There are (umbrella) organisations which operate on a national level and cover volunteering in many spheres (e.g. Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd - Danish Youth Council and Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd - Danish Adult Education Association) and which aim at supporting their member associations and in this aspect work to promote volunteering. These kinds of organisations are typically funded through membership fees, grants and transfers from central government and activities.

Another type of volunteer support centre is the Voluntary Bureau or local Volunteer Centre (hereafter called VC). A VC is a local platform for voluntary social work, whose purpose is to assist, inspire and support volunteering in their local community. There are approximately 50 VCs in Denmark and, although they work to fulfill local needs, many have the same activities, structure and funding. Most VCs are independent, autonomous organisations, organised as self-governing institutions or associations with a Board, but some VCs are also organised by local municipalities. In general, they are very dependent on public funding and financial support from local and central government: between 25% and 50% of their income comes from local authority grants and the rest from central government grants. The VCs are all occupied in at least one of the following six activities, more often, several activities:

- facilitation of voluntary social work; self-help; starting up and supervising new projects; servicing local associations; networking; citizen directed activities.

In 1992, the Ministry of Social Affairs established the Centre for Frivilligt Socialt Arbejde (The National Volunteer Centre) in order to offer a broad range of services to volunteers and voluntary organisations and to promote and support volunteering; both targeted the social and health fields. The Centre is established as a self-governing institution, i.e. an independent unit with its own supervisory board under Velfærdsm inisteriet (The Ministry of Social Welfare). The core funding of the centre comes from Government’s grants and only a small percentage comes from services provided. The main activities are: consultancy; training and education; development of organisations and networks; conferences; knowledge of the voluntary sector, national and international. The Centre also has a database on the website with addresses and information about national Danish voluntary social organisations.

Focus on support bodies

(Questionnaires)

The National Volunteer Centre

Center for frivilligt socialt arbejde (The National Volunteer Centre in Denmark) was established in 1992 on a national basis to promote and support the development of voluntary social work in Denmark.

Its mission is to promote and develop volunteering and to work for a strong and independent voluntary sector which can contribute to the development of the welfare society in cooperation with other sectors and actors.

Activities

• Consultancy.
• Training and education.
• Development of organisations and networks conferences.
• Knowledge of the voluntary social work.

Achievements

As a service and knowledge institution, it is difficult to pinpoint what stands out as main achievements. Its aim is to be successful in all the activities and services provided without counting their achievements.

Two of the best activities carried on in 2007 were the development of a course focusing on capacity building and volunteer management and building a new office allowing the organisation to carry on a higher number of courses and to receive more volunteers.

Member of CINEFOGO (Civil Society and New Forms of Governance in Europe) network of Excellence.
The Volunteer Centre functions as a natural connecting link between the member associations and between associations and citizens who want to volunteer or to use the support and activities of the Volunteer Centre. The Volunteer Centre Hillerød also works to increase the quality of volunteer work and sharpen the profile of volunteer work, all deeply rooted in the local community. The mission of Volunteer Centre Hillerød is to promote and communicate contact between volunteer associations and groups in the municipality of Hillerød, in order to strengthen and develop the social volunteering and the social and cultural gathering in the municipality.

Activities

The Volunteer Centre’s help to the associations includes:

- Practical help.
- Professional sparring and networking.
- Courses and seminars.
- Visibility.
- Help to get started with new projects.
- Knowledge bank.
- Recruiting of new volunteers.
- Increased possibility for dialogue with other actors in the field.

The Volunteer Centre’s help to the citizens of the municipality includes:

- Help to find or create relevant offers.
- Contact to relevant associations.
- Inspirational arrangements that contribute to the development of the social and cultural environment in the municipality.
- Possibility to volunteer and actively enter into the development of Volunteer Centre Hillerød.

Volunteer Centre Hillerød

The Volunteer Centre functions as a natural connecting link between the member associations and between associations and citizens who want to volunteer or to use the support and activities of the Volunteer Centre. The Volunteer Centre Hillerød also works to increase the quality of volunteer work and sharpen the profile of volunteer work, all deeply rooted in the local community. The mission of Volunteer Centre Hillerød is to promote and communicate contact between volunteer associations and groups in the municipality of Hillerød, in order to strengthen and develop the social volunteering and the social and cultural gathering in the municipality.

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Volunteer Centre Hillerød

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Achievements

The fact that the Volunteer Centre Hillerød has a new office and the recruiting of volunteers are two important achievements.
The best of 2007 has been establishing contact with the associations in Hillerød, getting the volunteers involved in the volunteer centre and establishing and maintaining a general visibility in the local society.

Member of Frivilligcentre og Selvhjælp Danmark (Volunteer Centres and Self-Help Projects in Denmark).

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**Territory covered**
Hillerød, Nordjylland

**Volunteers**
20

**Staff**
1 full time and 1 part time for volunteer support and development

**Activities**
- Health
- Culture and Cultural Goods
- Sports
- Social Assistance

**Volunteering support and development**
- Promotional Activities
- Consulting and Assistance
- Communication
- Training
- Information & Documentation

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The best of 2007 has been establishing contact with the associations in Hillerød, getting the volunteers involved in the volunteer centre and establishing and maintaining a general visibility in the local society.
The Association Shop

The Association Shop started as a project in 2006 but was established as an association on January 1st 2009. Its target group is the volunteer senior associations in Aarhus. Its objectives are to support and render visibility to the volunteer seniority life in Aarhus.

Activities

• Association service to the seniority associations in Aarhus.
• Drawing up conventions.
• Applying for funds.
• Working out PR material.
• Drawing up accounts.
• Development of the association and starting of new initiatives.
• Carrying out a general meeting.
• Recruiting new volunteers and maintaining the old.

Achievements

Development of projects and recruiting volunteers for these projects.
The best of 2007 has been the development of the websites www.foreningsbutikken.dk and www.aarhusseniorklubben.dk

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Questionnaires

The Association Shop

- Territory covered: Aarhus
- Volunteers: 17
- Staff: 1 part time for volunteer support centre
- Volunteering support and development:
  - Consulting and assistance
  - Information & documentation
  - Communication
  - Training
  - Promotional activities
The Danish Youth Council

The Danish Youth Council (DUF) is an interest group for nationwide organisations working with children and young people in Denmark. Its objective is to develop and improve the framework for volunteer association activities and to place the concerns of children and young people on the national and international political agenda.

Activities
- Political lobbying and communication.
- Organisational development in member organisations.
- Facilitation of international projects concerning dialogue and educations of young leaders.
- Administration of pools and lottery funds.

Achievements
- Crucial role in lowering the voting age, first to 21 years in 1957, then, to 18 years in 1978.
- Development and training programs for member organisations in order to strengthen their ability to further develop their own (local) member organisations.
- International projects stimulating and promoting intercultural understanding and dialogue.
- The development of both long-term and short-term training processes with a total of 700 participants during 2007.

Member of
- Referencegrupper (reference group in relation to the project “Upper secondary education for all”)
- Samarbejdsgrupper om Børnekonventionen (liaison group in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Det nationale Dialogforum (The National Dialogue Forum)
- Samarbejdsudvalget ved Folkekøblingen (The Liaison Committee in relation to General Education)
- Ungdomspolitiske Afgengrupper (The Youth Policy Reference Group)

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duf@duf.dk
www.duf.dk

Questionnaires

The Danish Youth Council

- Territory covered: Denmark
- Staff: 20 full time and 5 part time for volunteer support activities
- Volunteering support and development:
  CONSULTING AND ASSISTANCE
  COMMUNICATION
  TRAINING AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES
  INFORMATION & DOCUMENTATION
Danish Adult Education Association

DAEA support the interest of non-formal adult learning through dialogue with national authorities and organisations and through documentation of the important role our sector plays in providing relevant competences, personal fulfillment and motivations for further lifelong learning. The objectives of DAEA is to advocate the common interests of member organisations and to ensure the best possible conditions for the non-formal adult education organisations and other member organisations in order to give their participants the highest quality possible in the activities.

Activities
- DAEA offers information and counselling concerning.
- Project funding.
- Project development.
- Legal framework.
- Organisational development.
- Public relations and international relations.

One of the best projects regarded the Constitution Day. The purpose of the project was transforming the Constitution Day, which traditionally is rather passive, into the Democracy Day character. The purpose was to supplement the rather passive way of organizing constitution meetings with active and involving events. A walk-and-talk in each city was the core activity of the Democracy Day.

Member of
- International Council of Adult Education - ICAE
- European Association of adult education - EAEA

Questionnaires

Danish Adult Education Association

- Territory covered: National
- Staff: 5 full time and 3 part time in the volunteer support centre
- Volunteering support and development: COMMUNICATION
  - PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES
  - CONSULTING AND ASSISTANCE
  - INFORMATION & DOCUMENTATION
  - TRAINING
1 Public incentives

At the moment, there are no initiatives from central government to value volunteering (except for the various support described above and financial initiatives), but locally there are different events. The Structural Reform in which municipalities were given new assignments has also given new incentives to support volunteering and to cooperate with local voluntary organisations.

Many municipalities have yearly awards for the “good volunteer” or the “good organisation”, or use December 5th, the International Volunteer Day, to mark and recognise volunteering. Other municipalities have a celebration where volunteers are invited to “wine, dine and dance”.

2 Civil society initiatives

One initiative regards the events that are held each year on December 5th. This day is very often used by voluntary organisations to value and promote volunteering. In some towns, they hold a fair or market where citizens are invited to visit the organisations and many organisations have a celebration for their volunteers.

3 On infrastructure for volunteering (Interviews and questionnaires)

Although all voluntary fields have somehow experienced a positive development in their funding, on the other hand, there is no sign of the public investing larger amounts in the social and health fields. There are upcoming initiatives from the government as to taxation etc. For example, they are discussing right now to put VAT on the income from second hand shops and to reduce the tax reduction of donations to voluntary organisations.

Regarding volunteering within sports, education and culture, the Danish Act on Popular Education plays an important role, but there are divided opinions in the voluntary sector as to the prospects of the future. From the point of view of organisations within the culture area, there is an anxiety about the fact that the framework given by the act – in which local authorities are given a framework to support volunteering on a local level – will disappear. This might turn to be a catastrophe for small organisations in the local communities. The sports organisations also regard the Act as very important in order to secure financial support to the formation and running of associations and to qualify voluntary work. But, opposed to the cultural organisations, sports organisations would like Denmark to have a general Sports Act “… because sport is very different from public education” and they consider the local “politics of leisure and sports” which each municipality implements as an important factor. Further, the Structural Reform in which municipalities were given new assignments, e.g. health and the prevention of diseases, has also given new incentives to support volunteering and to cooperate with local voluntary organisations.

Generally, the conditions for volunteering are to be upgraded. But, overall, I am pretty satisfied. We are privileged e.g. concerning courses, which have a high quality and are reasonable in price. There is a need for an increased effort concerning integration and volunteering needs to be more accessible to disabled people. Compared to the increased welfare in the society, the volunteer involving organisations have not been specifically richer.”

4 Strategic goals

In the 1980’s, voluntary organisations were not expected to interact with each other, with the market and with the public sector. Today, on the other hand, the organisations are expected to interact with different actors and sectors, and to play a certain role in society. However, the society has not managed to create supporting or capacity building measures and initiatives that match these expectations.

Another strategy put in place by the government refers to supporting volunteer centres. In 2005, the Government granted 6.5 million Euros to support and develop Volunteer Centres and their work. The aim was partly to make volunteering more accessible to the citizens by making it’s more visible, partly to create new and more activities and partly to improve local cooperation. The project ended in 2008 and the Government has now to decide future steps based on three evaluation reports.

The Danish Ministry of Education puts in place another type of development strategy. In 2009, the government committee on public and adult education will discuss how public education and voluntary work may contribute to a stronger and more coherent society, to strengthen democracy and active citizenship as well as education, integrations, health etc.

5 European perspective (Interviews)

Interviewed representatives of the volunteering sector underlined some important differences between volunteering in Denmark and volunteering in other European countries, such as better structures and organisation forms, corporation, communication of volunteering.

“We have often studied the conditions for volunteering in United Kingdom and find the framework of voluntary work very different from Denmark. There is a high degree of equality both in word and practice. You find a well-developed strategy for civil society, a good foundation for capacity building and research and an investment scheme (Future Builders) that provides loans and grants for voluntary organisations in England. The voluntary sector is more mature; they have achieved a high degree of structure and organisation. But they are also highly regulated. Trust, respect, history and targeted investments are some of the key factors. And well-established feedback mechanisms. All of which somehow guarantee a bottom-up instead of a top-down approach to volunteering. Other European countries, e.g. Germany, are characterised by very large voluntary organisations providing social and welfare services which gives great possibilities for innovation. And corporatism in Italy is very interesting in terms of creating diversity in the welfare provision. But of course there are different welfare systems etc. which make comparisons more difficult.”

“It is very different and the culture of communication is also very different (in some countries they do not communicate much between different organisations and sectors). Financially, we are very well off in Denmark compared to other countries.”

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In strengthening volunteering it is very important to have a European dimension. For many organisations it is important to have access to the international arena: what are the experiences abroad, how do other countries tackle this and that question, what kind of methods is used etc. European networks are vital.

There is a need for initiatives that enhance the accessibility and provide a general or overall knowledge of volunteering in other countries. An example could be European grants and pools focused on volunteering across countries in order to get volunteers to meet each other and exchange ideas and experiences, to get inspiration from each other. Another example could be putting volunteering on the agenda of the European Parliament and politicians, in order to make the value of volunteering visible and recognised. In addition, the creation of a stable and identical framework of the volunteering sector across European states could be very useful for strengthening cooperation in this field across EU Member States and for rendering it more visible and more strengthened.

However, in many areas there are already many initiatives and lots of cooperation and structures around volunteering, but the strengthening of voluntary organisation’s role in relation to the formulation of a European citizenship is important.

Transnational cooperation is highly valued as it generates learning, defines problems and gives new ideas and inspirations to solution models and method development. Further, it allows exchanging experiences and knowledge. The involvement and cooperation between civil societies across Europe is highly appreciated, not only for developing the work of the national organisations, but also in respect to the creation of a kind of European identity.

“Knowledge and experiences are important but also that we can disseminate our knowledge. It is often where recognition is found. We have a good cooperation, for instance, with German sports organisations, where we exchange knowledge about activities, recruitment etc. and that is very stimulating for us as an organisation as well as for the volunteers who are involved in the project. Again, it is about give and take and joint work. International experiences give us a stronger position in national politics, no doubt about that.”

“...our motives are partly to share and gain knowledge and experiences, and partly, more strategically, to establish alliances and send out the signal that we genuinely are interested in others and will not just take care of ourselves. We believe in cooperation, community and solidarity.”

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Birgitte Nielsen Vice-president of the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Association (in Danish DGI).

Isak Konnerup President of the SUMH - Sømneslukning af unge med Handicap organisation, active most of all in the area dealing with politics for the disabled, and a member also of the Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd - DUF (The Danish Youth Council).

Line Hauger Vice-president of Landforeningen for Dramatisk Virksomhed (DATS).

Sussi Maack Secretarial Director of Frivilligcentre og Selvhjælp Danmark (an umbrella organisation for voluntary bureaus and self-help projects) and a volunteer in different local and national organisations, networks and committees.

Terkel Andersen President of EURORDIS, the European Organisation for Rare Diseases, since May 2003. He has been member of the board of officers of EURORDIS since 1997. Since 1992, he has been president of the Danish Haemophilia Society. In 1992-2002, Terkel Andersen was elected to the executive of the World Federation of Haemophilia. Between 1993 and 1999, he was chairman of the European Haemophilia Consortium, a cooperation organisation between national haemophilia societies of 40 European countries.
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