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**EU youth policies. Case study: European
Voluntary Service, participation and impact**

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Introduction

The present thesis is a result of the interest I developed for European youth policies and programs during the six months of internship I spent in a Spanish NGO, based in Madrid. My tasks inside the non-profit organization AFAIJ were focused on the implementation of international voluntary programs, particularly European Voluntary Service (EVS), a framework for volunteering in Europe, addressed to all young people between the ages of 17 and 30.

The aim of this thesis is to acquire a better understanding about the processes and outcomes of non-formal learning activities. The focus is placed on the EVS program and the extent to which it reached its objectives of ensuring the participation of youth in society while contributing to the development of their personal and professional skills and competences in view of increasing their employability as well as their active citizenship. On the basis of data and interviews collected from AFAIJ for the period 2010-2014, information is gathered and interpreted, regarding participation to the EVS program and impact of the experience on young participants.

The empirical study is preceded by a theoretical premise, established in the first part of the thesis with the purpose of providing a complete image of the policy-making process and of the societal and institutional actors involved, as well as of the scope and outcome of their actions and instances of collaboration.

Traditionally, civil society, the state and the market had certain roles that they each acted out within their independent spheres, which however predisposed to interactions, remained for the most part separated, acting independently in order to influence the others. In recent years we have

witnessed a higher degree of integration across a shared space, and a greater level of activity to address and resolve social challenges, within each sector. This shift in the dynamic between these areas, especially between the civil society and state sphere is explored in the first chapter.

Civil society is a term drawn from political philosophy that has evolved over time across many centuries, adapting to various forms of institutional change. It regained attention during the last decades of the 20th century following the failure of communist nations to achieve their ideals and the failure of capitalist nations to solve social problems. No single concept of civil society exists instead there are a variety of slightly different though often overlapping meanings of the term. Civil society is seen on the one hand as a political space, a modern form of an “agora” kept alive by critical thinking and by concern for public interest and issues. On the other hand, civil society is also constituted of associations such as cooperatives, non-profit entities, voluntary organizations, and characterized by the active participation of citizens and users in building services. The relatively recent concept of global civil society has been increasingly linked to that of democratization, of improved service delivery as well as with NGO campaigning and advocacy work. The non-profit sector and NGOs are also prone to some confusion as to their definition and roles; however there is some level of agreement as to the fact that the nonprofit sector is the expression of civil society’s capacity for organization. Sometimes referred to as “the third sector” next to the government and its administrative agencies as the first, and the business arena or commerce as the second, it is a sector that has gained prominence in recent years in the fields of welfare provision, education, community development, international relations, the environment, arts and culture.

Most political theories on civil society and NGOs would agree that a net separation of these notions from both the state and the economy helps maintain their independence and ability to represent the public needs and

interests. We must acknowledge however, that there are also a variety of mechanism of coordination in play, between the state and civil society, that accord with a more active role of the former in policy formation and implementation in collaboration with the government. This cooperation in the field of policy making is observed in the second chapter of the thesis. The most relevant aspects of public policies and of policy-making starting with definitions, types, process and actors involved are presented, in order to subsequently analyze how and if these features are mirrored in a supra-national setting, namely the European Union.

There are numerous approaches and a definitional pluralism in understanding public policies and public policy analysis. Most scholars agree that at the basis, public policies are those policies developed by government bodies and officials in dealing with a political or public problem or a matter of concern. Policy-making can be mostly identified with a process, which is decision-centric and value driven, because it is focused on the decisions that must be taken and on the desired outcome, performing and iterating until such outcome is reached. Policy-making happens in different ways: it may be based on a blue-print of society, inspired by technical expertise, a solution for a social problem. Policy-making is a complex and layered area, with local, regional, national and European levels and a variety of actors in play.

The European Union can be viewed as the most developed post-national polity as well as one of the most prominent models of multi-levelled governance with a competence distribution characterized by a sort of institutional competition and a policy process which is the setting for an ever widening agenda, in line with the territorial expansion of the EU. The policy making process involves an often complex interplay between different actors, institutional and non institutional, governmental and non-governmental.

The European Parliament and the European Commission are the institutions most committed to consultation with civil society, which is

intended to improve linkages between the EU and its citizens. Social NGOs contribute to policy-making, collaborating in instances of implementation and although a co-operative action is difficult to achieve, it is sought by both EU institutions and civil society organizations, with a number of institutional declarations, consultations and creation of formal or informal networks.

The policy areas under the EU's belt are multiple and there have been over time waves of interest regarding the single market, environment, regional policy, employment policy, migration. Other policy domains such as youth policies remain much less documented. Youth policies within the European Union are discussed in the third chapter of the paper, which highlights a timeline for recognition of this area, initiatives and programs.

Cooperation programs in education and youth training have been on the EU's agenda for a few years, with the Erasmus program being developed in 1987, followed by "Youth for Europe" in 1988. However, it was not until the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 that formal European competencies in the field of education, vocational training and youth were included in the Union's founding treaties. These programs have influenced the development of more formal EU policies in the youth field, establishing further cooperation and debate of youth issues. The White Paper of 2001 thus proposed a new framework consisting of two components: increasing cooperation between EU countries and taking greater account of the youth factor in sectorial policies.

Youth policies produce strategies and practices that can address challenges such as the living conditions, participation and integration of young people. The EU has made a priority out of enabling youth to play an active role in society and its institutions and to that end, provides guidance and support as well as educational, youth integrated policy measures and other tools such as: voluntarism, associative life, participation opportunities and non-formal learning. The EU has adopted a broad and comprehensive

approach to learning, which includes a whole range of different learning methods and environments: formal, non-formal and informal, as key instruments in providing support for young people, validation and evaluation of youth organizations and their contribution.

Within this framework, European Voluntary Service offers young people between the ages of 17 and 30 the opportunity to carry out voluntary work, for up to 12 months, outside their home country. Beyond benefiting local communities, EVS offers volunteers the opportunity to acquire new skills, learn new languages and discover other cultures. The program was established in 1998, after a one year pilot action, and it went on to become one of the most popular mobility programs in Europe, as part of the EU Youth Program in 2000, of Youth in Action starting with 2007 and currently under the Erasmus Plus banner.

One of the key features of EVS is the training and evaluation it provides, guiding young volunteers through a non-formal learning process before, during and after their period of service abroad. The training and evaluation dimension within EVS aims at providing young volunteers with continuous guidance and support throughout their voluntary service period. Such training and evaluation contributes to the education and development of each young person. It also helps resolve conflicts and prevent risks, and it provides a means of assessing the volunteer's EVS experience.

It is precisely these features of the program that are assessed in the forth chapter of the thesis, on the basis of experience and data collected from a Spanish NGO that manages EVS programs. The aim of the empirical study is to determine if and in which ways EVS reached its objectives, with a focus on volunteer participation and impact.

The information establishes the predominant age groups of the participants, gender, country of origin or host country, duration and type of

project chosen. On the basis of interviews administered to host volunteers at the end of their projects, their motivation for participating in European Voluntary Service was explored. Emphasis was also placed on their expectations in terms of gaining particular skills and knowledge: whether young participants are aware of benefits they can obtain during the service; whether they applied in order to get particular skills and knowledge or if the only desire was to have an experience abroad; whether volunteers believe that participating in EVS will improve their job opportunities. Further attention is given to the participants' previous volunteering experiences, competences and skills acquired as a result of their EVS participation, career orientation, future plans and finally their overall assessment of the program.

The thesis is structured in five chapters and they are as follows: the first chapter centred on civil society and the non-profit sector; the second chapter focused on policy-making theory and EU practices; the third chapter directed at the youth policies and programs in the EU and the role of non formal learning and of European Voluntary Service. The fourth chapter is an empirical analysis of the European Voluntary Service, an account of participation and evaluation of the perceived impact on volunteers. The final chapter contains the conclusions and findings resulted from the study.

Chapter 1

Civil society and the non-profit sector

1.1. What is civil Society?

Recent years have seen an increasing interest throughout the world towards the broad range of institutions that operate outside the market and the state. They are known and recognized variously as “non-profit”, “voluntary sector”, “civil society” or the “third or independent sector”¹. The growth of the non state actors is at the origin of the emergence of the notion of civil society in international relations.

Civil society is a concept that has evolved throughout the centuries, describing the institutional change in the modern period, the creation of democratic governments and capitalist markets. It resurfaced as a popular idea in the public mind during the last decades of the 20th century. Its emergence at that time can be traced to the failure of communist nations to achieve their ideals and the failure of capitalist nations to solve social problems.

1.1.1 Scientific definitions

A definition provided by the Centre for Civil Society states that:

“Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and

¹Lester M. Salamon, Helmut K. Anheier, *Civil society in comparative perspective in Global civil society. Dimensions of the non-profit sector*, The John Hopkins Comparative nonprofit sector project, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, 1999, p. 3

market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy group. ²

Following this explanation the key role of civil society is to identify and interpret social problems and bring them to the forefront, seeking a solution that is morally acceptable. Civil society serves as a mechanism to interact with the state and demand citizenship rights. It can contribute to the democratic action by serving as a political arena for the development of some important attributes of democracy such as facilitating public participation, furthering citizenship rights and countering the state power and questioning it when necessary.

However, no single definition or theory can adequately explain how civil society operates and how it affects the world. There were, and continue to be, many different outlooks on the subject. The term civil society is highly ambiguous and the amount of definitions and explanations of the concept, have underlined the variety of normative values and commitments involved as well as the lack of consensus about its meaning.

There are three main, often overlapping views on civil society. The analytical-descriptive theory focuses on the composition of civil society, forms

²Center for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political Science, "Report on Activities July 2005-August 2006" available at <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/29398/> accessed at 30.04.2015

of associational life different from the market and the state, pursuing common interest and the facilitating collective action around shared interests. A second view point studies the strategic or public policy implications of civil society, as a sphere of deliberation and dialog for active citizenship. Finally civil society is also defined in normative terms as being the realm of service which breeds cooperation, trust, tolerance and non-violence amongst the participants.³ These theorists argue that government cannot solve all the problems that originate in society and that this sector is often better qualified for certain kinds of public work. Civil society is seen as the network of citizens and nongovernmental organizations that create a political community, a network lying between the individual citizens on the one hand, and the state on the other.

An additional view on civil society that can help clarify this issue comes from the development experts. They identify civil society as being identical to the third sector made up of non-governmental associations that are non-profit seeking, and distinct from the government and the business spheres. This is the idea that the world of institutions can be divided in three parts: the first sector of government, the second sector of for profit businesses and a third group of organizations that do not fit into the first two: 'A global third sector: a massive array of self-governing private organizations, not dedicated to distributing profits to shareholders or directors, pursuing public purposes outside the formal apparatus of the state.'⁴ The third sector is also difficult to define, the denominations and composition attributed to it vary in fact from the non-profit sector, and the voluntary sector, non-profit corporations, social movements, citizens' groups, schools, religious institutions, a vast array of associations that represent members in civic organizations, public interest

³John E. Trent *Modernizing the United Nations system: Civil Society's role in moving from national relations to global governance*, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen and Farmington Hills, 2007, p.9

⁴Edwards, M., *NGO Rights and Responsibilities: A New Deal for Global Governance*, The Foreign Policy Centre/NCVO, London, 2000

groups, and recreational clubs. The focus point is on a group of organizations that act independently from the state and from the market, but that facilitate the actions of both, that “can substitute for the state, in providing social services, for example; they can check abuses of the state and poor governmental practices; and they can call corporations to account.”⁵

Amitai Etzioni first coined the term “the third sector” in 1973, in his “The third sector and domestic missions,” defining it as an alternative sphere separate from and balancing the state and the market. For Etzioni the third sector is characterized by value-driven action and commitment from individuals operating within it.

“While debate over how to serve our needs has focused on the public versus the private alternative, a third alternative, indeed sector, has grown between the state and the market sector. Actually this third sector may well be the most important alternative for the next few decades, not by replacing the other two, but by matching and balancing their important role”⁶

If the state, considered the primary sector, ultimately achieves compliance via coercion and sanctions, and market organizations which form the second sector, coordinate individual activity through the imperative of profit-making, rewards or remuneration, a “third sector” exists with neither of the two mechanisms. Instead it is a platform for equalitarian and persuasive action, where individuals and organized interests interact with each other through communicative acts designed to pursue solutions for collective profits, without seeking financial gain from them. The organizations of the third sector rely on normative power to achieve compliance building the

⁵Mary Kaldor “Civil society and accountability” in *Journal of Human Development* vol.4, no.1, 2003, p.9

⁶Amitai Etzioni “The third sector and domestic missions” in *Public Administration Review*, Vol.33, No.4 (Jul.-Aug.), 1973. p.315

commitment of workers, volunteers and members through the provision of symbolic rewards.

A European approach stresses the "open, mixed, pluralistic and intermediary nature of the third sector"⁷, instead of seeing it as an independent sector where organizations assume either a residual or an alternative role to that of the state and the market. In fact, the 'welfare triangle' developed by Evers places the third sector and its organizations in an intermediary position, inside the triangle itself, while the three angles represent the state, the market and the private households or families.⁸ The interaction between these sectors determines human welfare. In this instance, non-governmental and non-profit organizations are not seen as a specific sector, but rather as a part of an intermediate area, a dimension of the public space in civil society.

This is different from other contributions that emphasize a separation of the third sector from the state and the market, considering it independent from the two, and a natural feature of a civil society sector. Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier are amongst those who subscribe to this perspective, creating a parallel between the third sector and civil society as a whole, under the more general label civil society sector, which they resume as: "...the plethora of private, non-profit, and nongovernmental organizations that have emerged in recent decades in virtually every corner of the world to provide vehicles through which citizens can exercise individual initiative in the private pursuit of public purposes. If representative government was the great social invention of the eighteenth century, and bureaucracy – both public and private – of the nineteenth, it is organized, private, voluntary activity, the

⁷Adalbert Evers, Jean-Louis Laville *Defining the Third Sector in Europe* in *The Third Sector in Europe*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Northampton, 2004, p.15

⁸Ivi. pp.14-15

proliferation of civil society organizations, that may turn out, despite earlier origins, to represent the great social innovation of the twentieth century.”⁹

Therefore, a third sector exists distinct from the state, or the provider of public goods and services and the market, or provider of private goods and services. The third sector offers a different type of goods and services, which Donati defines as the relational goods or “goods that can be produced and used only by those people who have actually produced and used them through the relations connecting the subjects involved; these goods are therefore called relational good as they are (“in the”) relation”¹⁰ He also stresses the emergence of theories that do not agree with the “third sector” denomination, which seems to imply it being a residual or left-over sector, dependent in the first two and therefore not their equal. In order to make up for this restrictive and misleading identification, Donati coins the term “social private” which defines a “sphere where sui generis social relations are established; these relations give life to associative networks that are privately established and managed and guided by pro-social values and action orientations.”¹¹ The private characteristic implies discretionary openings and closings towards the public sphere and independence from the political administrative power, as opposed to a third sector that exists as instrumental with respect to the state and the market.

Civil society is therefore a broad sector that encompassed a plurality of identities and shared purposes, as it fosters the development of different individuals and group identities based on a variety of conceptions. It can thus be viewed as a “intermediary sphere” populated by voluntary organizations

⁹Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier, "The Civil Society Sector," in *Society*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Jan/Feb, 1997, p. 60; also, *The Emerging Nonprofit Sector*, (N.Y.: Manchester University Press, 1996).

¹⁰Helmut K.Anheier, G. Rossi, L. Boccacini (eds), *The Social Generative Action of the third sector*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2009. p.111

¹¹P. Donati, *The Emergent Third Sector in Europe: Actors, Relations and Social Capital*, in *The Social Generative Action of the third sector*,op.cit.pp.13-14

and societal networks in which citizens are engaged, an umbrella under which both citizenship and the third sector perspective find place, an independent sector, social private etc..

1.1.2 Theoretical background

The growing agreement on the importance of civil society is accompanied by growing disagreement about its meaning. Terminology used to describe these groupings includes: the third sector; NGOs; charities; voluntary organizations; grass roots organizations (GROs); not-for-profit organizations (NFPOs); civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). At times these are seen as distinctly different types of entities, at others they are seen as over-lapping and sometimes even identical. There have always been CSOs as long as human society has existed but the scope and number of these organizations reflects changes in society and the motivations of those who form them. The term comes with a longstanding, often contradicting tradition of political and philosophical meanings. However civil society may be defined, it has to be analyzed and studied throughout its historical evolution as it worked in different ways in each stage of development. The specific characteristic of society and the nature of the problems that arise within it in a given period of time, influence what is perceived as a relevant social goal and to what analytical and practical uses the concept might be put. In the early modern period the concern was for the existence and respect of civil rights, the freedom from fear, and so civil society had the role of replacing physical coercion, arbitrary arrests, and it represented a constructed political order. In The 19th century it was the emerging bourgeoisie that acted as the main actor in civil society, while the interest revolved around political rights. By the turn of the century, the workers movement had become a force to be reckoned with in terms of challenging the state and the pre-existing structures of power, and the issue

became that of economic and social emancipation.¹² During the 1980s it came to have a very specific meaning, referring to the existence of self-organized groups or institutions capable of preserving an autonomous public sphere, which could guarantee individual liberty and check abuses of the state.

Civil society has a centuries-long history, and as most western political concepts it dates back to Greek political philosophy. Aristotle talked about 'politike koinona' (political community/society) to refer to a law-governed society in which the ruler puts the public good before his own private interest.¹³ The Latin equivalent of the term, translated as "societas civilis", together with its Greek counterpart, describe the existence of a 'political society' with citizens actively involved in its institutions and policies.

Our contemporary notion of civil society however can be traced to the emergence of the nation state in 17th century Europe. For the early modern thinkers there was no distinction between civil society and the state, rather civil society was a kind of state characterized by a social contract.¹⁴ " At the dawn of modern political thought, 'civil society' coincided completely with political society, as in Hobbes, who does not see any space of 'society' before or outside the space made peaceful by the action of the Sovereign".¹⁵ The dividing line seems to be between civil society on the one hand, viewed as the state of order, a right based society where the rulers and the ruled are subject to the law, and despotism and savage living on the other, the hobbesian state of nature of " every man against every man".

¹²Mary Kaldor, *The idea of Global Civil Society* in Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, Mary Kaldor *Global Civil Society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 585

¹³Mary Kaldor 'Civil society and accountability' in *Journal of Human Development* op.cit.p.2

¹⁴Mary Kaldor, *The idea of Global Civil Society*, op.cit. p.584

¹⁵Debora Spini *Civil society and the democratization of the public space*, in David Armstrong, Valeria Bello, Julie Gilson and Debora Spini, *Civil Society and International Governance*, Routledge, Oxon, 2011, p.29

A century later Scottish enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson put forth his theory which stated that civil society had developed as a result of a slow process of refinement and improvement of arts, trade and military culture. Civil society is understood here, first and foremost as the locus of material civilization and social and intellectual progress, through which 'rude nations'¹⁶ were shaped by the policy of their government, by their education, knowledge and habits, towards becoming a political community based on the consent of the citizens. The emphasis is also on the importance of a commercial society, which with the removal of the fear that characterizes the state of nature, can 'provide the conditions for economic exchange based on contract instead of coercion, and for the public use of reason'¹⁷

It was not until the 19th century that civil society began to be seen as something different from the state.

Hegel was the first to define civil society as an intermediate realm between the family and the state, "the achievement of the modern world-the territory of meditation where there is free play for any idiosyncrasy, every talent, every accident of birth and fortune, and where waves of passion gust forth, regulated only by reason glinting through them"¹⁸ In *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*¹⁹, Hegel characterized civil society as a 'system of needs', the place in which individuals reconcile their particular private interests with social demands and expectations, which are ultimately mediated by the state. The state acts as an arbiter or more specifically as the source of those norms which would prevent its implosion under the pressure of conflicting interests. Civil society consists of a sphere where men can

¹⁶Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (first published in 1767), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995

¹⁷Mary Kaldor, *Civil society and accountability*, op.cit.p.3

¹⁸John Ehrenberg, *Civil society the critical history of an idea*, New York University press 2009, New York, p. 209

¹⁹F.W. G. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford University Press, London, 1942, p. 105.

trade and interact, separate from the state and form the government and purely within public activity. “ It is a space where individuals establish social bodies for the pursuit of particular interests. Such groups are collective – yet not universal – and are likely to be in competition, even in open conflict, with one another”.²⁰ Thus the socially constructed needs are met through the social interaction within civil society and through the action of the economy.

French scholar and commentator Alexis du Tocqueville developed the idea that most closely resembles what we mean by ‘civil society’ today. Although never actually using the term, Tocqueville argued that the guarantee of individuals’ liberties can be found in what he called “democratic expedients”²¹: an independent judiciary system, a free press, local self-government, the separation of church and state and above all associational life, all useful tools for the development of democracy and as a source for democratic strength and economic power. In his “Democracy in America”, he praised the richness of associational life in the U.S. as a key to its emerging democracy, thus foreseeing the demand for a voluntary sector to hold government power in check. The role of voluntarism, community spirit and independent associational life is emphasized as a safeguard against the domination of society by the state. “If men living in democratic countries (...) never acquired the habit of forming associations in ordinary life, civilization itself would be endangered”.²² In his account of the American democracy, Tocqueville states that government’s actions should not go beyond the political sphere, as it would develop into a tyrannical power. Civil society is therefore seen as the arena of organized citizens which acts as a balance to the power of the state and the market.

²⁰Debora Spini, *Civil society and the democratization of the public space*, op.cit. p. 30

²¹Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mary Kaldor, *Introducing Global Civil Society* in, *Global Civil Society*, op.cit. p.13.

²²Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America*, Volume 2, Book 2, Section 2, Chapter 5 The use which the Americans make of public associations 1835, translation by Liberty Fund Inc, Indianapolis 2010.

Tocqueville's contention about the virtues of associational life, contributed to inform modern-day thinking on the subject, particularly in the United States. The late 20th century saw a revival of the tocquevillian perspective of civil society, taking it a step forward and seeing it not only as a barrier against a potentially overly powerful state or a vehicle for democracy, but as the general principle of societal constitution. Civil society began being equated with the notion of civility, popular participation and civic mindedness. In the neo-tocquevillian view, norms of reciprocity, citizenship and trust are embodied in networks of civic associations, with the non-profit sector as the basis for the social infrastructure of civil society. Recently the notion of social capital has been brought into development debate as third sector organizations are believed to contribute to the creation of cross-cutting social ties and networks which might be the ground for collective action and increased level of democratic participation.

Robert Putnam's ideas about social capital are in line with tocquevillian view of civil society as being built upon the notion of trust and social interactions which are key ingredients of good governance and properly functioning markets. According to Putnam, it is possible to consider social capital as "features of social organization such as networks, norms, social trust that facilitate coordination and motivation for mutual benefit."²³ In "Making democracy work" Putnam states that voluntary associations are the main explanation for Northern Italy's economic progress over the southern part of the country.

Putnam linked the tocquevillian 19th century description of self-organizing, participatory local society to the social fragmentation and isolation facing American and other modern societies today. In "Bowling alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community", he argues that the decline of

²³R. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital", *Journal of Democracy* 6, 1995, pp.65-78.

the membership rates and of other forms of participation and civic engagement led to lower levels of trust in society and caused an increase in social ills such as crime. He thus emphasizes the significant relationship between trust and voluntary associations.

Fukuyama²⁴ also agrees on this point but he emphasizes the importance of economic success or "sociability" and social trust, which in turn depend on some degree of associational structure.

Social capital is conceived as the economic outcome of the third sector. As Putnam and Fukuyama argue, social capital encourages the emergence of social trust, which represents a fundamental resource for modern liberal democracies for two reasons. First, it strongly influences the quality of public life and the performance of the social institutions. Second, it is a crucial element in order to improve the efficiency of market, through the reduction of the transaction costs associated with formal association mechanisms.

Marx and Engels take up the Hegelian view of civil society, but arguing that the state is subordinated to this notion that "embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage, and hence, transcends the state and the nation"²⁵ Marx's conception placed even greater emphasis on the conflicting nature of civil society, defined as the whole of material relationships among individuals, and, consequently, as a space overlapping to a good degree with that of the market.

In the 20th century the concept of civil society came to be seen in a different way, not only a space between the state and the family, but the

²⁴F. Fukuyama, *Trust: Social virtues and the creation of prosperity*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1995.

²⁵Norberto Bobbio, 'Gramsci and the concept of civil society', in John Keane (Ed.) *Democracy and Civil Society*, Verso, London, 1998, p.82

sphere outside the government, business and family where political and cultural debate could flourish.

In his "Prison Notebooks", Gramsci resurrected the term civil society' for modern usage, conceptualizing it as the site in which the state power was consolidated and projected in capitalist societies, as well as the location where contestation and resistance to hegemonic power is possible. Gramsci emphasizes the role of negotiations as a means of resolving what he views as the struggle for the legitimate use of the state power. He characterized the political struggle within civil society as a "war of position" in contrast with the "war of movement" typical of revolutions. In this radical instance civil society is construed as being the setting for the development of independent resistance to the state, the site of conflict between hegemonic and non hegemonic power. Civil society for Gramsci is a sphere in which the dominated social groups organize themselves, separated from the government, judiciary or repressive institution and gather consent, as opposed to the political society that rules by coercion and direct dominance. In the gramscian, perspective civil society is endowed with a higher degree of autonomy, as it provides the arena for a struggle over cultural influence and hegemony that goes beyond a strict opposition between structure and superstructure²⁶. Gramsci sees civil society as the non state and non economic sphere of social interaction, consisting of cultural institutions, such as the "church, but also of schools, associations, trade unions and other cultural institutions. " On the one hand, it is through this cultural 'superstructure' that the bourgeois class imposes its hegemony, using it to keep the working class in its place. On the other hand, it is a kind of wedge

²⁶Debora Spini, *Civil society and the democratization of the public space*, op.cit.p18

between the state and the class-structured economy, which has the revolutionary potential of dislodging the bourgeoisie.²⁷

The interest for civil society resurfaced in the 1970s and 1980s within the dissident movements in Latin America and Eastern Europe, which used the term in order to express opposition against the respective authoritarian regimes. Thus the reentry into use of the concept is related to the “third wave of democratization”²⁸, by the efforts to create autonomous public spaces in the context of authoritarian regimes, closely linked to various forms of participatory democracy, especially in the Western world. As such, civil society identifies with a realm outside political parties - in large part discredited in these societies, where citizens strive to communicate freely, independently from the state and the market. Thinkers from both regions were also influenced by the idea of human rights, which in those years was gaining worldwide prominence with the signing of the Helsinki Accords and the entry into force of the two main UN human rights conventions in the mid 70s.

Subsequently, the civil society idea began to spread like wildfire, in countries that had recently emerged from dictatorships, such as the Philippines, South Korea, South Africa, but also in places like Western Europe, North America and India, where the idea of civil society was seen as a means of fighting against the erosion of democracy, electorate apathy and

²⁷Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mary Kaldor, *Introducing Global Civil Society* in, *Global Civil Society*, op.cit.p.13

²⁸Samuel Huntington has identified the current era of democratic transition, started in the 70s and 80s, as constituting the third wave of democratization of the modern world. The first wave began in the 1820s with the widening of the suffrage to a large portion of the male population in the US and continued until 1926, bringing into being 29 democracies. In 1922 the coming into power of Mussolini in Italy represented a first reversed wave that in the 1940s reduced the number of democratic countries in the world to 12. The victory of the Allies in WWII initiated a second wave of democratization, only to be followed by a reversed wave in the 1960s. Between 1974 and 1990 the spread of democracy accelerated once more around the world, bringing about the third wave of democratic political revolutions.

the disillusionment that led “ many people now (...) to be placing their hopes for society in this ‘third force’ .²⁹

The context for the developments that have taken place within civil society has been in a continuous mutation in the last decades, as economic and political power shifts have occurred throughout the world. The crises of the welfare state, the failure of the socialist regimes along with the reduced economic growth and subsequent development crises of the 70s have converged to diminish the hold of the state and open the way for the increased organized voluntary and associational action. These experiences pose challenges but also create opportunities and require new means of adapting on the part of the traditional actors,” in the midst of a global associational revolution that may prove to be as significant to the latter twentieth century as the rise of the nation-state was to the latter nineteenth.³⁰

1.1.3 Global civil society

Civil society has been, almost by definition, national. However as the line dividing politics, economy and society becomes increasingly blurred, civil society and with it social actors gain more and more political relevance. This also means that civil society once enshrined by the confines of the state, expands beyond them gaining a global standing. Self-organized non-profit associations and social movements have been networking across boundaries for nearly two centuries, but this has dramatically accelerated in the recent decades. This phenomenon has been attributed to the disappearance of many legal barriers to international commerce and human mobility, as the

²⁹ Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mary Kaldor, *Introducing Global Civil Society* in, *Global Civil Society*, op.cit.p.15

³⁰ Lester M. Salamon, “The Rise of the Non-profit sector” in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol73., no.4, July/August 1994, at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1994-07-01/rise-nonprofit-sector> accessed at 03.03.2015

end of the Cold War, the opening of many formerly closed societies throughout the 90s, and the establishment of the European Union, increased the ease of cross-border engagement. The technical advances, rise of internet, cheap air travel, transnational business and investments, communication, removed some of the physical challenges that had constrained transnational connections, decreasing the costs of organizing locally, nationally, as well as internationally. The disappearance or at least reduction of legal and technological barriers empowered civil society to extend from the local to the international, thus gaining a markedly global dimension.

The notion of global civil society began to capture the interest of IR scholars, as a new dimension of the global system of states and markets. Historically, civil society referred to a secular constitutional order, where the rule of law, based on an explicit or implicit social contract, replaced force as a method of governance. Thus it referred to domestic peace. "Today civil society is transnational, engaged in a process of debate and negotiation with governments, companies and international organizations",³¹ giving rise to a supranational sphere of social and political awareness and to new models of citizen participation both online and offline. Through the development of networks this allows greater numbers of people to aggregate and address challenges, collectively in order to advance common interests.

Until three decades ago, governments and intergovernmental institutions were the main actors of international relations, but this has gradually changed, as non-governmental organizations, national and international, social movement, academia and mass media have become

³¹Mary Kaldor, 'Civil society and accountability' in *Journal of Human Development* op.cit.p.11

partners on the international stage as part of an emerging global civil society.³²

Civil society commonly defined as “the arena outside the family, market and state” is composed of entities with a wide range of purposes, structures, degrees of organization and formality, membership, geographical coverage and linkages to the state and the market. Typically it includes NGOs, non-profits, COs, registered groups, faith based organizations, social movements, different types of collective action and in more recent years, online groups and social media communities.. Civil society is thus the sphere of social life that includes interactions between groups of organized interests and the state, characterized by cooperation, structures of voluntary association and networks of public communication.

The membership of civil society is so diverse, that it is difficult to draw boundaries between who is included and who is excluded. NGOs however are generally considered the most prominent actors of civil society. Global civil society is often equated with international NGOs, a sphere where individuals, groups and organizations come together voluntarily to debate public affairs and to exert political influence, engaging in a dialogue with different levels of authority.³³ However not all NGOs can be described as civil society organizations as they require a purpose in influencing public policy and a concern for public goals to be seen as such.

The World Bank definition of civil society also offers an insight into its membership: “the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political,

³²John E. Trent *Modernizing the United Nations system: Civil Society's role in moving from national relations to global governance*, op.cit.p.179

³³Mary Kaldor, Denisa Kostovicova, Yahia Said, *War and Peace. The Role of Global Civil Society* in Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mary Kaldor(eds) *Global Civil Society Yearbook 2006/7*, Sage, London, 2007, p. 94.

scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil society organizations therefore refer to a wide array of organizations: community groups, NGOs, labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.”³⁴

The many views and theories on civil society seem to agree on the idea that it is the collective intermediary between the individual and the state, thus emphasizing the importance of collective action in reaching goals and purposes. The term brought to the forefront the idea that society is more than government, markets, or the economy, and more than individual citizens and their families. It also came to be seen as the context in which non-profit organizations operate and in which organized citizen interests are expressed. NGOs are a paramount factor of this equation. “If civil society were an iceberg, then NGOs would be among the more noticeable of the peaks above the waterline, leaving the great bulk of community groups, informal associations, political parties and social networks sitting silently (but not passively) below.”³⁵

Civil society is the process through which consent is generated, the arena where the individual negotiates, struggles against, or debates with the centres of political and economic authority but whereas two decades ago civil society might have been construed as being in opposition to the other sectors, namely state and market, nowadays there is an increasing collaboration and even partnership with government and businesses. The very processes of debate, agenda-setting and policy-making and implementation require the kind of participatory mechanism set in place by

³⁴<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html> accessed at 3.03.2015

³⁵Edwards, M., *NGO Rights and Responsibilities: A New Deal for Global Governance*, The Foreign Policy Centre/NCVO, London, 2000

civil society, of which the non-profit sector with its many groups, associations, provides an organizational infrastructure.

1.2. An insight into the nonprofit sector and NGOs

A glance across the institutional landscape governing the different parts of the world offers insight into the variety of ways in which people have chosen to organize themselves, politically, economically and socially. Despite the diversity of realities resulting from this observation, there are two omnipresent institutional complexes in which it has become conventional to abstractly divide society: the state or the public sector and the market or private sector. A distinctive social space exists outside the market and the state, in which a diversity of entities are comprised, but whose contours are less precise than those of the previous mentioned sectors.

There has been a growth in interest in the past decades around researchers for what have been termed NGOs, non-for-profit organization, voluntary organizations, as these types of entities have gained a heightened profile among policy makers in both domestic and international contexts. These terms have different usages and can be considered culturally bound to some extent, as each literature has its distinctive set of specialized terms³⁶. These labels may reflect genuine organizational distinctiveness but the varied labels also generate conceptual confusion. In the UK “voluntary associations” or “charity” is usually used, following a long tradition of voluntary work and volunteering perpetuated by Christian values and later by the development of a charity law. In the US, non-profit is the term generally used when describing organizations and institutions that are neither government nor business. This term defines a third sector of American society; an independent sector that provides services or goods to people,

³⁶David Lewis, *The management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations*, London: Routledge, 2001, p.33

where for profit or the state cannot deliver. "The term <<non-profit>> suggests there are sufficient commonalities among a significant number of different entities to warrant treating them as part of a single group or sector"³⁷ despite the differences they might present. Within this framework, NGOs can be seen as a specific subset of this wider family. Although the acronym is usually reserved for organizations of both the North and the South³⁸ specialized in "development" work, it will be used here as a synonym for the broad spectrum of organizations that is variously referred to as nonprofit, charitable, voluntary, independent or associational.

The origin of the term lies with the creation of the United Nations in 1945, who guaranteed a space for civil society within the UN system. When the UN Charter was drawn up, the term "non-governmental organizations" was awarded to the international non-state bodies engaging within the UN context, as stated in Article 71 of the UN Charter: "The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned." Thus, while the nonprofit sector had its roots in ancient societies, it became prominent after World War II when 41 NGOs received consultative status within the UN through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) a number that increased to 978 in 1995 and 15000 in 1998, with varying degrees of participation and access.³⁹

³⁷Lester M. Salmon, Helmut K.Anheier, *Defining the Nonprofit Sector. A cross-national analysis*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1997, p.14

³⁸A common distinction in the literature is that between "Northern NGO" (NNGO) which refers to organizations whose origins lie in the industrialized countries and "Southern NGO" (SNGO) which refer to organizations from the less developed areas of the world.

³⁹P.J. Simmons, "Learning to live with NGOs" in *Foreign Policy*, no. 112, Washington Post Newsweek Interactive, 1998, p83 at <http://carnegieendowment.org/1998/10/01/learning-to-live-with-ngos> accesses at 3.03.2015

1.2.1 Definition

Because of the wide range of entities embodied within the non-profit sector and the great profusion of terms used to depict them, it has proved challenging to forge a common definition. The sector includes a diverse group of organizations that defy generalization, ranging from small informal groups to large formal agencies, with membership varying from highly professionalized staff to supporters and volunteers. These elements of diversity and the terminology tangle have made it difficult for a clear concept of the social space outside the state and the market to develop.

Since the non-profit sector has emerged as a distinguishable social sphere and has gained a central role in the political discourse, the international community acknowledged its importance and attempted to provide a definition and analysis of its characteristics and features. NGOs were quickly identified by mainstream development organizations such as the World Bank, the UIA (Union of International Associations) and the UN as vehicles that could support democratic processes.

The World Bank defines NGOs as "...groups and institutions that are entirely or largely independent of government and characterized primarily by humanitarian or cooperative, rather than commercial objectives"⁴⁰ and acknowledges their strengths in pursuing activities to relieve the suffering, promote the interest of the poor, protect the environment, promote participation, provide basic social services or undertake community development.

The UIA definition of NGOs states: "A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a legally constituted organization created by private persons or

⁴⁰World Bank's Operational Directive on NGOs, No.14.70 August 28, 1989. Doc. available at <http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/wb-ngo-directive.html>, accessed at 30.04.2015

organizations without participation or representation of any government. The term originated from the United Nations, and is usually used to refer to organizations that are not conventional for-profit business. NGOs can be organized on a local, national or international level (INGO)."⁴¹

The UN often refers to "civil society and NGOs" in order to include not only formally organized associations but also other categories such as academia, churches, unions, the media, social movements.⁴² In a 1994 document, the UN defines a NGO as a "non-profit entity whose members are citizens or associations of citizens of one or more countries and whose activities are determined by the collective will of its members in response to the needs of the members of one or more communities with which the NGO cooperates."⁴³

These definitions seem to agree that the nonprofit sector is the expression of civil society's capacity for organization. NGOs are autonomous, private, non-profit seeking, principally independent from government, self-governed organizations. But an issue facing some intents to define the nonprofit organizations is that "NGOs, as has often been said, are defined as a sector by what they are not, rather than by what they are. They come in all shapes and sizes, and the agendas and actions of some are diametrically opposed to those adopted by others".⁴⁴ "In fact the <<non>> in nongovernmental is as much a statement about what these organizations are not like in form, structure, vision, and values, as it is a statement about what

⁴¹<http://www.uia.org/faq/yb2> accessed at 25.04.2015

⁴²John E. Trent *Modernizing the United Nations system: Civil Society's role in moving from national relations to global governance*, op.cit.p.31

⁴³United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Open-ended Working Group on the Review of Arrangements for consultations with Non-governmental organizations; report of the secretary-general, U.N. Doc. E/AC.70/1994/5 (1994).

⁴⁴Deborah Eade (ed.), *Development, NGOs and civil society. Selected essays from development in practice*, Qxfam GB, Oxford, 2000, p.12

they are most like in terms of the issues and activities that motivate them.”⁴⁵ They emerge as a group of people organizing themselves in a social unite with explicit objectives of achieving certain ends related to economic, environmental, social or cultural problems, to name a few, The fact they are not governmental is seen by most NGOs to be a badge of honor. This, however, does not imply that they are not interested in the government, on the contrary much o their activities implies interaction with the state in one form or another. The areas they cover are diverse and they range from regional, national to international.

Lester Salmon and Helmut Anheier⁴⁶ argue that existing nonprofit organizational definitions have only limited usefulness because they are not comprehensive and because the concepts used to depict the sector’s boundaries are imprecise. In order to correct this problem they begin by identifying a number of bases and factors in terms of which the non-profit can be defined, examining the various types of definitions available (legal, economical, functional) and their merits in terms of conceptual and empirical rigor. In choosing the better model, they rely on a three basic criteria: its economy, its significance and its explanatory or predictive powers. Firstly, an approach is economical if it can identify the critical aspects of a phenomenon, thus producing an accurate picture of reality, which is simpler than reality itself. In terms of significance, a superior model focuses on aspects or relationships that are not already obvious. Lastly, for a model to be predictive it must have rigor, combinational richness and organizing power. Rigor translates into the capacity of a model to produce unique answers regardless of who uses it. Combinational richness looks at the range of hypothesis that a model generates, the number of interesting features or relations it finds.

⁴⁵Adil Najam, “The Four-C’s of Third Sector–Government Relations Cooperation, Confrontation, Complementarity, and Co-optation”, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, Volume 10, No. 4, 2000, p.380

⁴⁶Lester M. Salmon, Helmut K.Anheier, *Defining the Nonprofit Sector. A cross-national analysis*, op.cit.pp. 30-39.

Organizing power refers to the ability of a concept to explain processes and account for new phenomena.

The legal definition focuses on the type of formal registration and on the status of organizations in different country contexts. Most countries have specific legal provisions regarding the classification of organizations that fall into the non-profit sector. Where the laws on the non-profit exist, the legal interpretation provides a straightforward image of the sector and of the entities that comprise it. As such this type of definition has rigor, but lacks economy and organizing power, because it almost by definition refers to a particular country, and the meanings attached to similar concepts can diverge greatly over time and borders.

The economical or financial definition refers to the source of an organization's resources. This is the approach taken by the U.N. System of National Accounts (SNA), which is the set of conventions adopted by countries worldwide for official reporting of national income. The SNA identifies five major sectors of economic activity: non-financial corporations, financial corporations, government, households and non-profit. The latter sector stands out among the others because it is composed of institutions that receive most of their income from the voluntary contributions of private individuals which are either members or supporters and not from the sale of goods and services. This model offers insight into the size and scope of the non-profit sector using few critical criteria, and enjoys a considerable amount of rigor, economy and organizing power. However other problems arise, particularly concerning significance and combinational richness. This definition restricts the non-profit sector by excluding from it organizations that also receive income from government, and writing off important interconnections between the non-profit sector and other spheres, as part of the other sectors.

The functional definition focuses on the type of activities that the organization undertakes, emphasizing the purposes it carries out. Generally

the function attributed to the non-profit is the promotion of public interest through the creation of groups of people who join together voluntarily in order to advance these shared purposes. This approach can easily travel cross-nationally, thus it has great organizing power, but lacks economy, rigor and combinational richness. It requires extensive listings of types of purposes that qualify organizations, and some of the functional categories it generates may come across as ambiguous and hard to define.

Since these three types of definitions only cover part of the concept, Salmon and Anheier have developed a fourth model derived from the observable features of the organizations. The structural-operational definition uses some key features in order to define non-profits, albeit different and concentrating on distinct characteristics, as: “organized”, “private”, “nonprofit-distributing”, self-governing” and “voluntary-at least in part”. Organized refers to a certain degree of institutionalization or organizational permanence in that it has regular meetings, rules of procedure, office bearers. The private characteristic stresses the institutional separation from government, in terms of control but not in terms of support or sporadic financial help. Non-profit distributing means that if some profits or organizational assets are generated they do not return to directors or owners, rather the surplus must be reinvested into the basic mission of the organization. This so called non-distribution constraint is a binding legal commitment that differentiates non-profit organizations from other elements of the private sector. A further feature is self-governing or able to control and manage its own affairs through internal procedures not controlled by outside components. The voluntary feature implies some degree of voluntary participation in the management of the organization, even if this does not translate into the use of volunteer staff as such. “The presence of some

voluntary input even if only a voluntary board of directors, suffices to qualify an organization as in some sense <<voluntary>>⁴⁷

The structural-operational definition identifies a broad range of organizations composing the non-profit sector with just five characteristics. The approach has a high degree of combinational richness allowing the examination of a wide array of features and characteristics not restricted to particular countries or geographical subsets. Although these characteristics can vary in degree, this model seems to offer the most advantages, permitting an empirical definition of the non-profit sector that goes beyond single organization analysis and that attempts a measure of cross-cultural rigor, that stands firm in different country contexts around the world.

The definition gives a good insight into the activity of NGOs as they “might generate income through profit making activities while still stopping short of becoming a commercial business, and it illustrates the fact that NGOs cannot be part of or organized by the government – although they must of course abide by the law and may register with government – and finally it shows that NGOs are autonomous in that they attempt to manage themselves through their own structures and bodies”.⁴⁸

1.2.2 Historical context

A good way to approach the understanding of NGOs and the non-profit sector is to prioritize history and background and to analyze them in the wider context of their long-term development and evolution. The growth of NGOs over the past two decades has given them an increasingly important role and has led to them forming a distinctive sector within civil society. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. “While recent years have witnessed a dramatic upsurge in organized voluntary activity, such activity has deep historical roots

⁴⁷Lester M. Salmon, Helmut K.Anheier, *Defining the Nonprofit Sector. A cross-national analysis*, op.cit.p.34

⁴⁸Ivi. p.38

in virtually every part of the world. Such activity was evident in China in antiquity and was strengthened and institutionalized under Buddhism from at least the eighth century.”⁴⁹

Nonprofit organizations have long been an integral and active part of the social, economic, and political developments in many regions. They have been active in Western countries since the 19th century, when national issue-based organizations emerged. One of the first, the British and Foreign Antislavery Society, founded in 1839, contributed to the abolition of slave trade in the United States and later when the issue went to war, had an important role in preventing British recognition of the South. In Europe, the Charity Organization Society, founded in 1883 in London, was at that time one of the largest formal organizations in the British Empire, and similar networks of private human service providers and charities began to form in Germany, France, Italy, Australia, and Japan.⁵⁰ By the start of the twentieth century, NGOs began promoting their identities and agendas at a national and international level, by participating in conferences such as the World Congress of International Associations in 1910. There were 132 international associations represented here, dealing with issues varying from transportation, intellectual property rights, narcotics control, public health issues, agriculture and the protection of nature.

In his 1997 article, “Two centuries of participation. NGOs and international governance”, Steve Charnovitz traced the evolution of western NGOs in seven stages outlining their emergence from 1775 to 1918 and concluding with a current phase of relative NGO empowerment that has become evident since the Rio Conference in 1992.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Lester M. Salamon, ‘The Rise of the Non-profit sector’ in *Foreign Affairs*, op.cit.

⁵⁰ Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit organizations. Theory, management, policy*, Routledge, London, 2005, p.7

⁵¹ David Lewis, Nazneen Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organizations and development*, Routledge, London, 2009, pp.31-32

This first identified stage begins with the rise of national based organizations in the 19th century concerned with the abolition of the slave trade and peace movements. The number of such organizations reached 425 by 1900, active in different parts of the world just as the issues of labor rights and free trade also started generating interest. In the US the first national labor union was the International Federation of Tobacco workers founded in 1876, while in the UK the Anti-Corn League campaigning for free trade against the system of tariffs was founded between 1838 and 1846.

A second phase of NGOs involvement can be traced to the League of Nations period during the 1920s and 1930s a period that Charnovitz named "engagement". "NGOs began to move from a status as outsiders in the international system, to one in which they attempted to bring important issues to the attention of government within international forums from the inside"⁵². The International Labor Organization was set up in 1919 as a part of the League of Nations and each member country sent four representatives in order to create a forum in which the three sectors, government, business and community could have a part in influencing international conventions on labor rights and standards. However as the League of Nations became less active and fell into decline under the pressures of the imminent war, a phase of "disengagement" began, characterized by a diminished participation of NGOs in international affairs after 1935. This lasted until 1945 when the newly established United Nations led to a phase of postwar "formalization".

This fourth stage of NGO development, saw the recognition of their involvement in UN activities with article 71 of the UN Charter. This recognition however was little more than symbolic, as in practice the article merely codified 'the custom of NGOs participation' and constituted very little advancement from the relatively low levels of participation that NGOs had

⁵²Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit organizations. Theory, management, policy*, op.cit.p.32

experienced under the League of Nations. Hampered by the tensions of the Cold War and by the institutional weakness of the ECOSOC, NGO contribution was reduced to “nuisance value” as they were marginalized in the UN processes dominated by governments.⁵³

This situations lasted roughly until the 1970s, when there was an “intensification” of NGO strengths and activities as they played key roles in a succession of UN conferences such as the Stockholm Environmental Conference in 1972 and the World Population Conference in Bucharest in 1974.

Since 1992 NGOs influence at an international level continued to grow, as demonstrated by their involvement in the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), where more than 15000 NGOs were accredited. In Agenda 21, the main policy document that emerged from Rio for global environmental action, the need to draw on the expertise and views of non-governmental organizations within the UN system was formally stated as never before. This marked the importance of “the expertise and views of non-governmental organizations in policy and programme design, implementation and evaluation”⁵⁴ and their new ascendancy in development and international affairs. Thus NGOs shifted from a peripheral position to the center of action within the UN policy process, giving start to what Charnovitz calls the “era of NGO empowerment”

Perhaps there is a further perspective that can be added to the previous mentioned stages and that corresponds to the current state of NGO activity which is critical realism. The dominant view of NGOs as heroic

⁵³David Lewis, *The management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations*, op.cit.pp.40-41

⁵⁴Agenda 21, Chapter 27 Strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations: partners for sustainable development, art.27.9b at <https://www.iisd.org/rio+5/agenda/chp27.htm> accessed at 5.03.2015

organizations seeking to “do good” in difficult circumstances has become tempered in the new millennium as their novelty has worn off. The idea of NGOs as a straightforward “magic bullet”⁵⁵ that would solve longstanding development problems is also being reconsidered. In fact there is growing literature which offers a comprehensive critique of the NGO phenomenon, standing from issues such as their general lack of accountability and legitimacy, problems of transparency, their technical deficiency, and their excessively politicized and critical character. NGOs are also called out for shifting the attention away from state institutions and towards more privatized and potentially less accountable forms of public sector reform.

As funding for non-profit organizations increased throughout the 80s and the 90s, doubling the levels of the previous decades, so did the rhetoric about their role as saviours and altruistic promoters of good causes. But this idealistic image fell short of the empirical evidence emerging from aid and development initiatives carried out by NGOs. Criticism regarding effectiveness and performance has been directed towards service-provider and advocacy respectively for creating dependency on aid and for misrepresenting facts.⁵⁶ NGOs have been accused of becoming too bureaucratic and income driven, loosing “their idealism, their spirit of volunteerism, their small-scale and innovative flexibility and their ability to engage with people at the grassroots level”⁵⁷ The continued debate between the supporters and the critics is powered by the little data available relating to the performance and effectiveness of NGOs.

The fact that NGOs are receiving such high level of public scrutiny and such mixed reviews is a reflection on the wide diversity of NGO types and

⁵⁵D. Hulme, M.Edwards, *Behind the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World Era*, Kumarian Press, West Hartford, Conn, 1996, p.254

⁵⁶Reimann, Kim D., "Up to No Good? Recent Critics and Critiques of NGOs", *Political Science Faculty Publications*. Paper 5., 2005, pp.40-41

⁵⁷Ivi. p.46

roles and of their increasing importance. These critical remarks are however not generally directed towards the intrinsic nature of NGOs, as much as they are concerns about idealism having taken over pragmatism in the assessment of this sector of society. Clark, however, states that the bias remains largely pro NGOs “after all it is governments that we, the public, love to hate; non-government organizations can’t be suspect. It is large bureaucracies we mistrust; small, voluntary organizations are our friends. It is the profit-motive that we find vulgar; altruism is noble.”⁵⁸

This brief historical overview shows that the growth of the non-profit sector is clearly embedded in the broader development of a country or region and is linked to the ways in which the economic and social ordering of modern societies takes place.

NGOs funding and dissolutions match the general “state of the world” rising in periods of expansion and declining in times of crisis. It is difficult to know the precise number of NGOs, because few comprehensive or reliable statistics are kept. Some estimates put the figure at a million organizations, if both formal and informal organizations are included, while the number of registered NGOs is probably closer to “a few hundred thousand.”⁵⁹ The UIA has a long semi-official status as compiler of information on NGOs through links with the League of Nations first and United Nations later. Through the Yearbook of international associations it attempts to cover all “international organizations”, according to a broad range of criteria. It therefore includes many bodies that may be perceived as not being fully international, or as not being organizations as such, or as not being of sufficient significance to merit inclusion. Such bodies are nevertheless included, so as to enable users to

⁵⁸J. Clark, *Democratizing Development: The Role of Volunteer Organizations*, Earthscan, London, 1991, pp.52-53

⁵⁹<http://personal.lse.ac.uk/lewisd/images/encylciv%20societyngos2009-dl.pdf> accessed at 25.04.2015

make their own evaluation in the light of their own criteria⁶⁰. The first such compilation dates back to 1909 and identified about 200 organizations, many of which were not international in scope. Not-for-profit organizations grew rapidly in the latter part of the 19th century with about 10 new organizations emerging each year during the 1890s.

A peak of activity was arguably reached at the time of the Hague conferences of 1899 and 1907 and the increasing number of intergovernmental conferences provided greater political opportunities for transnational civic action. This trend was disrupted by the onset of the Great War, but would quickly recover and even expanded in the years following the conflict. The number of international nongovernmental organizations founded in the 1920s was twice the number founded in the entire nineteenth century. With the Great Depression, the size of the sector again began to decline and membership diminished considerably and by the second half of the 1930s the rate of NGO was about half that of the late 1920s, a rate that diminished again with the beginning of the Second World War. An early burst of enthusiasm took place in the postwar years, followed by a gradual decline during the 1950s that reversed itself as issues such as the environment, development, population, and food aid became part of the international agenda.⁶¹

The scale of this phenomenon after 1945 can be attributed to technological and economic developments and to the increase in importance given to social services, healthcare, education and culture. As for political developments, one of the most significant is the foundation of the United Nations, followed by decolonization which facilitated the growth of civil society in previously suppressed communities. The Cold War arguably helped by contributing towards a 'long peace', while the spread of democratic

⁶⁰<http://www.uia.org/yearbook> accessed at 27.04.2015

⁶¹P.J. Simmons, "Learning to live with NGOs" in *Foreign Policy*, op.cit, p.92

institutions and norms has also been important as it increased people's expectations for more participation and transparency in decision-making. The perceived failure of state-led development approaches during the 1970s and 1980s⁶² combined with a withdrawal of the state in providing welfare and related services can also be linked to the rise in the number of NGOs and to their increased involvement.

1.2.3 Roles and functions

NGOs are by nature autonomous organizations that are non-governmental, that is, they are not instrumentalities of government; and non-profit, that is not distributing revenue as income to owners.⁶³ Instead they are involved in what can be termed 'care and welfare' activities inherited from charitable work or philanthropy, in becoming vehicles for the development of alternative ideas about progress and change, and more generally in seeking to bring solidarity within the world system. NGOs are an extremely diverse group of organizations which play different roles and can take different shapes and forms across and within different countries and geographical contexts. They can be defined in terms of their functions and services in the social system which are diverse but could be summarized as 'expressing and addressing the complex needs of society', 'motivating the individuals to act as citizens', 'promoting pluralism and diversity', and 'creating an alternative to the centralized state'⁶⁴.

⁶² David Lewis, *Bridging the gap?: the parallel universes of the non-profit and non-governmental organization research traditions and the changing context of voluntary action*, International Working Paper Series, 1. Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1998, p.2

⁶³Neera Chandhoke "How Global Is Global Civil Society?" in *Journal of World-Systems Research*, vol.11, no. 2, 2005, pp.326-327

⁶⁴D. Sigel, J. Yancey *The rebirth of civil society. The development of the non-profit sector in Eastern Europe and the role of western assistance*, Rockefeller brothers fund, New York, 1992 p. 15

One important feature of non-profit organizations existence, which offers important insight into their functions, is the mission or mission statement⁶⁵ it sets out for itself. The mission is the main purpose of the organization and the reason of its being, portraying the functions and values of the organization, while also serving to motivate staff and volunteers. The mission is based on a precise vision which conveys the aspirations and ideal future of the NGO. The mission statement sets the boundaries for the organizations' activities and work helping to prioritize long term objectives and tasks, the needs that the organization fills, its core values, operating systems and aspirations for the future. The mission can be seen as a type of social contract between the organization, its members, and society in general, that spells out what the organization stands for, what it seeks to achieve.

The goals of most nonprofit organizations is to improve understanding of certain issues, influence agendas and implement policies, in the public interest either for a single purpose or for a broader societal benefit and contribute to the deepening of democracy, by strengthening processes of citizen participation and voice. They can become expressions of citizen action in public space thanks to their wide membership which includes individuals, organizations, personnel that can be voluntary, expert, invited, elected or managerial and is basically open to everyone.

NGOs are best known for two different, but often interrelated, types of activity – the delivery of services to people in need, and the organization of policy advocacy, and public campaigns in pursuit of social transformation. They are also active in a wide range of other specialized roles such as democracy building, generation of ideas and recommendations, information gathering, analyzing and dissemination, monitoring and watchdog roles,

⁶⁵Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit organizations. Theory, management, policy*, op.cit.pp.176-178

mediation, conflict resolution, human rights work, cultural preservation, environmental activism, and policy analysis.

The roles undertaken by NGOs, however diverse, can be analyzed and summarized, according to David Lewis, in three main sets of activities: as implementers, as catalysts and as partners⁶⁶.

The implementer role is usually concerned with mobilizing resources in order to provide goods and services to people in need of them, either as a part of the NGOs own program or project or of that developed by government or donors.⁶⁷ This activity can be also defined as service delivery oriented, and can be carried out in a variety of fields that range from education, healthcare, environmental, emergency relief or human rights. The service delivery feature of NGOs has increased in the past decades, coinciding with a wave of governance reform and privatization, with governments and donors “contracting” the services of non-profits to achieve specific tasks in return for payment. The motivation for an NGO to take on a role as service provider may vary. Sometimes it is related to the delivery of services for needs that are unmet otherwise, while in other situations NGOs act on behalf of governments (companies, donors) in order to take over the delivery of services which were formerly provided by them. The increasing profile of NGOs in service delivery can be viewed as part of a growing “civil society” which can strengthen and improve the efficiency and accountability of the state. NGOs can also contribute to strengthening the already existing public delivery systems of a given service, by providing research and innovative responses to delivery problems or unmet needs. NGOs can be the primary service provider where neither government or business are willing or able to perform, or they can provide services which complement the service delivery of other sectors but that differ qualitatively from them.

⁶⁶David Lewis, *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations*, op.cit. p.110

⁶⁷Ivi. p.69

“A catalyst is an agent that precipitates change”⁶⁸, so this role of NGOs can be understood as an ability to facilitate and contribute to promoting change among other actors at an organizational or individual level. This might include advocacy work and lobbying and research directed towards influencing policy decisions and processes, through innovation and policy entrepreneurship. This effort may be directed towards individuals or groups in local communities, or among other actors in development such as government, business or donors. Since NGOs have become more active in service delivery work, advocacy has become an important counterbalance or alternative to service provision, as it implies taking up and defending causes, speaking out for policy change, addressing the root causes of problems. Through advocacy, NGOs seek to advance some interests, introduce new programmes or policies or to alter existing ones, by means of negotiating with power holders, usually the state but increasingly also with the business sector. NGO advocacy work can be seen as a particular form of micro-politics in which individuals and organizations seek to influence policy, either through informal discussions or through the construction of alliances and the mobilization of the public by building stronger links with similar entities to bring effective influence. For NGOs advocacy is a way of improving their impact and efficiency and a potential strategy for “scaling up” by linking local or regional action back into national and structural change. Advocacy differs from service delivery as the former activity seeks to change the status quo rather than to meet some immediate needs. Advocacy can also be distinguished from implementation since it involves the articulation of a set of demands in relation to policy, but not necessarily the enactment of such policies, although it may be converted into the ultimate goal.⁶⁹.

⁶⁸David Lewis, Nazneen Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organizations and development*, op.cit. p.97

⁶⁹David Lewis, *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations*, op.cit. pp.123-124

A second example of NGO catalyst role is innovation which may be linked to the development of new technologies, organizational arrangements and approaches to service-delivery or new planning and research models. While aid agencies and governments are usually bound by formal structures and procedures, NGOs have considerable flexibility to experiment, adapt and find new solutions to problem solving. Because they are less constrained than businesses by stakeholders, expectations and demands and not subject to the electoral process such as governments, non-profits can more easily act as change agents.

A further key role for NGOs is as monitors which can scan policies in order to determine if some remained unimplemented or poorly carried out as well as expose violations, events or activities that could interfere with future policy development and implementations.⁷⁰

The partner function emphasizes the growing collaboration between NGOs and government, donors and other entities of the private sector in general, by building joint activities that are effective and non-dependent.⁷¹ Partnership is a process, varying from sector to sector and country to country and the successful ones might be difficult to replicate. They are very sensitive to external factors and changes, including economic conditions, political climate, culture and ecology. The current policy rhetoric of “partnership” seeks to bring NGOs into mutually beneficial relationships with these other sectors and to create synergies among different agencies and initiatives. The creation of partnerships is a way of making more efficient use of resources, increasing the quality of NGO interactions and thus of their activities. Not all collaborative relations are partnerships. A partnership is an agreed relationship with clearly established common goals and a division of roles and responsibilities as well as a sharing of risks, which contributes to

⁷⁰Ivi, p.98-112.

⁷¹ David Lewis, Nazneen Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organizations and development*, op.cit. pp.12-13

improving the capacity of the actors involved. NGOs are optimistically viewed alongside governments and the private sector in a pluralistic organizational universe, where they can promote more equitable and effective development practice and where they can work alongside government and business for specific, mutually agreed purposes.

The roles that non-profit organizations play are thus multiple and they are often engaged in combining several roles and activities. 'NGOs are becoming significant policy-influencing actors, "partners in policy-formulation, information, dissemination, standard setting, advocacy, monitoring and implementation" ⁷²They are not confined to a single function, but can undertake multiple types at the same time, or shift interest from one to another as opportunities and changes occur.

1.2.4 Relations with the state and market

The nonprofit sector does not exist in isolation from other institutions in society but is part of an open system, a mixed economy of care and service delivery, alongside of profit and public entities. This makes them highly dependent and susceptible to the events and contextual dimensions around them and to the actions of other actors. As stated previously, Ever's triangle of state, market and civil society can be a good indicator of the influence of the wider organizational environment in which NGOs operate. Third sector organizations form an arena of social economic and political activity alongside the state and the market and have come to play increased roles in public policy.

Clearly each of these three sectors pursues different objectives. Government is concerned with the optimization of social welfare by redistributing resources and providing basic needs, public or collective goods

⁷² Ramesh Thakur, "Security in the new millennium" in *Enhancing Global Governance: Towards a New Diplomacy*, United States University Press, Tokyo, 2002, p.277

and services, for the completion of this goal, with equity and social justice as the main criteria. The activities of the public agencies are financed through government's power of taxation. The private sector on the other hand seeks to maximize profits for owners and stakeholders, through the production and distribution of goods at a market price, regulated by demand and supply and based on exchange. Finally non-profits aim at maximizing members' benefits around shared values, while the distribution of certain services or goods is based on collective interests, and is often bound, orientation-wise, by the existence of shared ideology, ethics and values. Non-profits typically rely on donations and public subsidies as a means of subsistence, often dealing with chronic resource insufficiency as a result, which can also restrict their organizational size. However they do operate at a lower cost due to the voluntary nature of their activities. Participation in non-profit organizations is in fact mostly value-driven, goal oriented, based on purposive incentives, with intangible rewards. The business sector benchmark for participation is also voluntary, but it is subject to an economic need and material motivations such as tangible monetary rewards, while the state is based on automatic individual participation, or citizenship. From an organizational-structural point of view, businesses have a goal orientated approach measured by profit which allows for easy monitoring and measurement on the part of the controlling authority, usually owners and stakeholders to whom the firm is accountable. Government accountability is less straightforward, due to changing agendas and political imperatives, split control and power struggles. Nonetheless, public agencies ultimately answer to voters, through the election of political officials. Non-profits are accountable to their members, who can also be board members, the decision-making process is directly democratic and the organizational-structural is informal.⁷³

⁷³Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit organizations. Theory, management, policy*, op.cit., pp.181-183

There are certainly a multitude of differences between the third sector and the organizations of the private and the public sector, which also imply distinctive complex management challenges and procedural realities. There is no clear link between the providers of funds and the users of services for non-profit organizations, while in the private sector customers pay for goods and services at a market price and if the organization fails to provide these goods and services at the right quality and price, it stands to go bankrupt. In the public system, if people within a democratic regime are not receiving an acceptable level of quality of services they can, at least theoretically and at predetermined deadlines, vote officials out of office. For third sector organizations there is a lack of a similar accountability model available to markets and political processes. This creates a set of problems regarding their activities and implies certain vulnerability especially in the service delivery role. In recent years this impasse has been surmounted by the creation of links and partnerships between non-profit and more accountable entities, especially government agencies, in the development and implementation of certain projects and programs.

As their name suggests, NGOs need to be viewed first and foremost in the context of the government in relation to which they define or try to distinguish themselves as 'non-governmental' organizations. NGOs are conditioned by, and gain much of their legitimacy from their relationships with government, and by the nature of the state.⁷⁴ NGO history shows a long time interaction with government in the making of international policy, although their room to maneuver generally depends on the type of government they find themselves dealing with at a local, national or international level. In the past 3 decades NGOs have become increasingly involved with government, actively participating in policy formation and providing social services which were once carried out by the government. However, NGOs often have an

⁷⁴David Lewis, Nazneen Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organizations and development*, op.cit, pp.26-27

ambivalent attitude towards the state, “They can oppose the state, complement it, or reform it—but they cannot ignore it.”⁷⁵

Individual NGOs differ greatly from one another and so do the relationships that they establish with the state. One form of relationship sees NGOs in a dependent-client position towards the state, implementing government-prepared programs or receiving funding through the state. A different type of interaction is the adversarial one, in which there is no common view point between government and NGOs and any intent or ability from either side to reach an agreement area. The third and most constructive type of relationship emerging from the interaction between the two sectors is a collaboration one, a genuine partnership to handle mutual agreed problems, without excluding constructive debates and even disagreements.

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NGOs may adopt numerous strategies in relation to government, first of which is maintaining a low profile by working in the spaces existing within government provision either with tacit government acknowledgement or by letting them take credit. This is a gap-filling role of sorts, which may bring short term benefits but can also raise questions of accountability and sustainability for NGOs on the long run. A second scenario is that in which NGOs engage in selective collaboration with certain government agencies, restricted to particular sectors, often building upon individual relationships between personnel or otherwise informal, local level links. This stance is pragmatic and while it might bring some advantages it can also lead to inconsistencies in policy implementation. The final strategy that NGOs might adopt is that of policy advocacy, in which they act as a pressure group in support of the interest of third parties. Ideally, on the basis of their motivation

⁷⁵Clark, J. *Democratizing Development: The Role of Volunteer Organizations*, op.cit, p.75

⁷⁶John Clarke, “The state and the voluntary sector”, *Human Resources Development and Operations Policy*, The World Bank, October 1993 available at <http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/state-ngo.html> accessed 02.05.2015

and values, NGOs analyze each of these scenarios and determine which one to adopt in order to reach their long-term objectives while still maintaining their identity.⁷⁷

On the other hand, governments present different perspectives on NGO actions, usually influenced by political factors. "Government attitudes towards NGOs vary considerably from place to place and tend to change with successive regimes. They range from active hostility, in which governments may seek to intervene in the affairs of NGOs or even to dissolve them (with or without good reason), to periods of active courtship and 'partnership' (and sometimes 'co-optation'), as governments and donors may alternatively seek to incorporate NGOs into policy and intervention processes."⁷⁸ The growth of NGOs can represent a dilemma for the state since private independent initiatives can challenge the state's legitimacy or undermine its power. The state has various instruments it can use to influence the health of the non-profit sector. These mechanisms range from legal frameworks and regulations regarding the registration process, recording and accounting requirements, incentives such as specific taxation policies and subsidies for NGOs to direct expenditure, including official support, grants, contracts, preferential regulatory treatment to benefit the non-profit sector.⁷⁹ The state can also seek NGO collaboration if it determines their potential for social and economic contribution under the guiding hand of the government, and from which the government might benefit in terms of popularity and public gratitude and approval.

⁷⁷David Lewis, *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations*, op.cit. pp.149-151

⁷⁸David Lewis, Nazneen Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organizations and development*, op.cit, pp.26-27

⁷⁹John Clarke, "The state and the voluntary sector", *Human Resources Development and Operations Policy*, op.cit. available at <http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/state-ngo.html> accessed at 02.05.2015

According to Bratton⁸⁰ the state can use at least four strategies in determining their relation with NGOs. These are an array of regulatory mechanism that ensure NGOs comply with national norms and standards. The first one is monitoring, keeping track of what NGOs are doing and maintaining some degree of control over registration of organizations. Governments are able to restrict the size of the non-profit sector through discretionary decisions regarding which organizations may establish themselves within the state's jurisdiction. Secondly the state might use coordination as a way of spreading NGO activities and investments more evenly across the territory, in order to avoid duplication and to insure the benefits are distributed equally or as needed across geographical areas. It implies a synchronization of activities among independent organizations. There are certainly some benefits in government laying down policy guidelines for NGOs, but it can also prove to be excessively rigid and ponderous in its requirements. Co-optation is a scenario in which the state seeks to take a certain level of control over NGOs and steer them away from potentially threatening roles, towards the kind of work that the government wants done. Lastly, through dissolution, the state acquires complete control over NGOs, using a set of mechanisms such as its power of delaying approval for their activities, limiting their scope and actions, and finally closing down those organizations it considers irrelevant or troublesome. Governments usually try more gentle forms of regulations before resorting to heavy handed interventions.

NGO functions are further explained through a number of theories. The public goods theory ideated by Burton Weisbrod in his 1975 article, "Toward a theory of the voluntary non-profit sector in a three-sector economy", states that the rise of the non-profit organizations is related to an undersupply of public goods by part of the government to heterogeneous

⁸⁰Michel Bratton, *The politics of government - NGO relations in Africa*. Working paper no. 456 Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, 1987, pp.18-25

populations, which is compensated instead by these organizations. The basic premise is that citizens have individual preferences about the levels, qualities, and types of public goods they desire and how much they are willing to pay for them. Governments decide on the quantity and quality of the public goods provision based on citizens' preferences, usually following the preferences of the median voter, and is constrained by considerations of equity and uniformity. If citizen preferences are not homogeneous, some will remain unsatisfied. Thus nonprofit organizations can develop a supplement and substitute role to government's failure in public goods provision.

The trust related theory identifies a different problem, which is that of information asymmetries related to in the provision of goods and services. The information problems between supply and demand that are in detriment to the customer or recipient, explain the existence of the non-profit association which have the advantage of trustworthiness owed to the non-distribution of profits constraint.

While the first two theories explain the existence of non-profits related to aspects of service demand, the next model focuses on the supply-side perspective and on the preference that individuals must have in order to engage in the non-profit sector. The entrepreneurship theory points out that non-profit are the result of a certain kind of entrepreneurial behaviour which explains why these types of organizations are founded and their engagement in the provision of services. An entrepreneur is portrayed as an individual with a specific attitude towards change, but social entrepreneurs differ from business ones, in the sense that the former do not seek to create monetary value, but they instead work to create social value by pursuing new opportunities to serve a certain mission, engaging in a process of innovation, adaptation etc.

Whereas the approaches presented above all establish some degree of conflict between governmental provision and non-profit provision, the

interdependence theory takes a different stand, showing non-profit government relations in a less competitive light, emphasizing collaboration instead. The main statement is that non-profit organizations are complements to government and that they are more often partners than competitors because their respective weaknesses correspond well with the strengths that the other features, thus finding a balance between them. The Government is able to find a stable set of resources, public sector revenue to guarantee nonprofit founding, splitting the providing role with NGOs, determining priorities, improving quality of care and services.⁸¹ In other situations it is more efficient for governments to delegate some service provision by contracting nonprofit organizations and thus avoiding start-up costs and easing the process of altering and stopping programs.

Young⁸² reinterprets some of the relationship features described above and suggested a triangular model of nonprofit-government relations, looking at both sides of the relationship and acknowledging that its final shape is a function of decisions made by government as well as NGOs. He argues that to varying degrees three types of relations (supplementary, complementary and adversarial) are present in a given moment, but that some may prove to be more significant in particular periods than others. In the supplementary view, first advanced by Weisbrod, nonprofits are seen as fulfilling the demand for public goods left unsatisfied by governments. However there are substantial variations in the non-profit involvement based on the sector, and as government expenditure rises in areas of service delivery, less needs to be raised through voluntary collective means.

⁸¹ Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit organizations. Theory, management, policy*, op.cit, pp.120-131

⁸² Dennis R. Young, *Alternative Models of Government-Nonprofit Sector Relations: Theoretical and International Perspectives*, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, March 2000 vol. 29 no.1, pp. 149-172.

In the complementary view, nonprofits are seen as partners to government helping to carry out the delivery of public goods largely financed by the state. This mechanism allows governments to reduce costs, as it is often more financially advantageous to delegate the delivery of services than to perform them internally. Furthermore government can overcome the information problems regarding the heterogeneous preferences of its citizens and, within limits, allow those delivery agents to customize their services to local constituents. In this perspective as government expenditure increases it helps sustain growing levels of non-profit activity.

The third type of relation, the adversarial one sees nonprofits acting as pressure groups in order to achieve changes in the public policy and to maintain or acquire government accountability for the public. Government on the other hand attempts to influence the behaviour of nonprofits by regulatory means and by responding to its advocacy initiatives. These three perspectives are not mutually exclusive; nonprofits may simultaneously finance and deliver services where government does not, but also deliver services that are financed or otherwise assisted by government, advocate for changes in policy and be affected by governmental pressure as a result.

An additional viewpoint on the subject comes from Najam's four Cs model⁸³ of government-nonprofit relations. This approach stresses the importance of studying NGO-government interaction from the perspective of the resulting relationship rather than looking at the individual attitudes of one party towards another. It examines the extent to which their respective institutional interests, organizational goals and means overlap and how this influences their interactions. Each institutional actor pursues certain ends and each has a preference for certain strategies it might adopt in order to achieve

⁸³Adil Najam, "The Four-C's of Third Sector-Government Relations Cooperation, Confrontation, Complementarity", *and Co-optation*, op.cit, pp.375-397

them. These actors come into contact with each other in the “policy stream” in one of four possible combinations: cooperation in the case of similar ends and similar means; confrontation in the case of dissimilar ends and dissimilar means; complementary in the case of similar ends but dissimilar means, and co-optation in the case of dissimilar ends but similar means.

Firstly, cooperation is likely when on a given issue government agencies and nongovernmental organizations not only share similar policy goals but also prefer similar strategies for reaching them. If both the ends and the means are in sync a cooperative relation is probable because neither of the two actors will consider their position challenged. But governments and NGOs often find themselves in explicitly or implicitly adversarial relationships.

A confrontational relationship may occur when governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations consider each other’s goals and strategies to be antithetical to their own. Whatever aspect of their respective ends and means are dissimilar, they are likely to feel threatened by the intentions and actions of the other, and therefore are more likely to sink into confrontational behavior and opposition. On its part the governments possess, and is often willing to use, its coercive powers for repression and harassment while NGOs can emerge as forces of reaction or resistance to particular governmental policies or of pressure for policy change.

A complementary relationship is likely to develop when government and non-governmental organizations share the same goals but prefer different strategies. Complementarity is defined as a function of ends. Where there is a common objective between the two actors, they will gravitate towards an agreement in which they complement each other in the achievement of the shared end, even if through dissimilar means. “This notion of complementarity is most common in the service provision arena

where NGOs...move in to fill a function that might otherwise be expected of government but that government is unable or unwilling to perform".⁸⁴

A co-optive relationship is likely when governmental and nongovernmental organizations share similar strategies but prefer different goals. This is a rarely encountered situation in which despite government and NGOs' similar preferences regarding the means, they have different ends in mind. This discrepancy creates instability as one or both the parties will attempt to change the goals of the other through persuasive manoeuvres, manipulation or outright confrontation. It is the power asymmetry that decides which side will give in and the relationship is resolved when it moves towards one of the previously stated scenarios. In rare occasions, one or both sides are able to change their goals so as to arrive at a common position, and therefore meaningful cooperation. In many others, the attempt breaks down, and relationships move to a confrontational plane.

There are sound reasons for NGOs to enter into a creative dialogue with the institutions which determine official development policy and deliver basic development services. The state remains the ultimate arbiter and determinant of the wider political changes on which development depends, and it controls the economic and political frameworks within which people and their organizations have to operate.⁸⁵

NGOs remain a controversial topic amongst researchers and policy makers because of the diversity of forms they take, the varied ideologies and approaches they espouse and the complex organizational histories from which they emerge. "Next to the institutional complexes of the state or public sector on the one hand, and the market or the world of business on the other,

⁸⁴Ivi. pp.387-388

⁸⁵Michael Edwards and David Hulme, *Scaling up NGO impact on development: learning from experience*, in Deborah Eade (ed) *Development, NGOs, and Civil Society*, Oxfam GB, op.cit., p.46

nonprofit organizations form a third set of institutions that are private, voluntary, and for public benefit. They thus combine a key feature of the public sector, i.e. serving public benefit, with an essential characteristic of the “for profit” sector, i.e. its combined private and voluntary nature.”⁸⁶

1.3 Conclusion

Civil society has been a shifting and contested term for centuries but looking into its theoretical background, trying to define it, differentiating it from the market and the state, helps clarify its role and also contributes to situating the nonprofit sector within this important social sphere. The nonprofit sector is the sum of the private, voluntary and non-for-profit associations. It describes a set of organizations and activities next to the complexes of the state or public sector on the one side and the business or private sector on the other. It is precisely on the first relationship that we concentrate in order to determine NGO interaction with the institutional actors in charge of the policy processes which respond to social needs and interests.

NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bringing public concerns to governments, monitoring policy and program implementation, and encouraging participation of civil society stakeholders at the community level. NGOs carry developmentalist ideas into communities, serve as agents of modernization, and can really only be properly understood with reference to the broader constellation of aid agencies and development ideology.

These characteristics as well as their capacity of networking across borders help explain why NGOs are often in a position of collaborating with governments on policy issues, such as the European policy-making and decision process that will be discussed in the following chapter.

⁸⁶Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit organizations. Theory, management, policy*, op.cit, pp.11-12.

Chapter 2

Policy-making: theories and EU practices

2.1 Public policies: definition and process

The policy studies field has grown substantially since the 1970s⁸⁷ stimulated by public concern for civil rights, the war on poverty, peace, environmental protection and other social problems. Public policies may confer advantages and disadvantages but they always have collective important consequences, constituting a significant portion of the social environment. Thus, their ubiquitousness makes it important to know something about their elaboration, implementation and evaluation. In that respect, policy analysis may help in clarifying the alternatives public policies offer to specific social problems.

There are a number of distinct approaches to public policies and policy process analysis. One is theological and outcome-focused, and stresses the policy making aspects, the problem definition and the solution finding. A different approach is relational and process-focused, and sees policy activity as a continuous flow of attention among a large and diverse group of participants who have overlapping agendas, different interpretations of the problem and of the measures proposed to solve it.⁸⁸

Colebatch identifies three different accounts of the policy process⁸⁹: authoritative choice, structured interaction and social construction. The first account is the one most frequently used to describe public policies,

⁸⁷Stuart S. Nagel, *Contemporary public policy analysis*, The University of Alabama University Press, Alabama, 1989, p.2

⁸⁸H. Colebatch, R. Hoppe, M. Noordegraaf (eds), *Working for Policy*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2010, p.228

⁸⁹Hal, Colebatch, *Giving account of policy works*, in *Working for policy*, op.cit., pp.32-33

understanding them as the outcomes of the choices actors make to achieve certain goals. This perspective focuses on decisions and on the actors making them, the decision-makers or policy-makers and on the implementation of these decisions. The policy process is thus seen in terms of analyzing and identifying problems, choosing and selecting appropriate responses, ensuring that these are implemented and evaluating or checking if the action taken produces the desired outcome. The second account on policies emphasizes the broad range of actors and participants with different agendas and values, who are linked together in various ways to produce meaningful outcomes. The policy is viewed as a process of structured interaction among, 'stakeholders'. Participants do not start by identifying a problem as in the previous example, they instead find themselves thrown together in a continuous flow of action, much of it initiated by others. The pursuit of their own objectives involves cooperation and negotiation with other actors in activities that don't solve problems as much as they manage areas of concern seeking mutually acceptable outcomes. Lindblom⁹⁰ calls this process, "partisan mutual adjustment". In the social construction account of policies a process is marked by conflict and ambiguity with regards to the problems to be addressed, to the voices that should be heard and to the most suitable activities. In this view policy is less about making a decision and more about discourse which is linked to the issue of participation and how the nature of the policy actors influences the nature of the discourse. Policy is thus driven by a desire to identify problems and to solve them, marked by uncertainty and disagreements about the nature of the problems and about finding the best responses.

⁹⁰C.E. Lindblom , "The science of muddling through", *Public Administration Review*, no.19, pp.79-88

2.1.1 Definition

Dissagreements and uncertainty are also characteristic to the many attempts at defining public policies that have been developed over time. It is difficult to explicit any systematic definition of policy, because policy is an ongoing process that evolves over time. The term has long fallen victim to definitional pluralism as various scholars using different analytical frameworks have defined or attempted the definition of the subject matter of public policy.

There are numerous definitions of public policies, some simple and some more complex but what they all have in common is seeing public policies as a result of government decisions to act on specific issues and considering that even decisions not to act are part of policy proceedings.⁹¹ Public policies are those policies developed by government bodies and officials in dealing with a political or public problem or a matter of concern.

Colebatch sees public policy as the systematic action oriented to particular collective concerns, taken by governments, within the framework of governing, when recognizing some existing problems.⁹²

Thomas Dye advances a rather succinct definition of public policy as “whatever government chooses to do or not to do”⁹³. This implies that the main policy actor is government which restricts the area of those involved, explaining that although capable of influencing policies, decisions taken by private entities, social groups, interest groups or individuals are not public policies. When we speak of public policies we refer to government choices to

⁹¹M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le politiche pubbliche*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1995, p.8

⁹²Hal K. Colebatch, Robert Hope, Mirko Noordegraaf (eds), *Working for Policy*, op.cit.,pp.11-15

⁹³T. Dye, *Understanding Public Policy*, Prentice-Hall, Eaglewood Cliffs, New.Jersey. 1972, p. 18

take certain measures through state agencies and bureaucracy, or not to act at all and maintain a status quo. The ladder concept is however more difficult to understand and explain. The strength of this definition is that it incorporates the possibility of inaction. However, it lacks insight on the issue, and it also fails to provide the sufficient means to conceptualize public policies in all their aspects.⁹⁴

William Jenkins provides a more generic version and definition of public policies as “a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve”.⁹⁵ For Jenkins public policy is a process, a set of connected decisions, as opposed to Dye’s view of it as a government choice. This because he believes it unlikely for government to solve a problem with a single decision, when most policies involve a set of choices some of them even unintentional ones. Jenkins admits that government is subject to limitations such as scarcity of resources, national or international oppositions on certain issues, which restrict its capacity to make choices and complicate the policy process. The definition thus separates policy from ambition by linking policy decision to available resources. Furthermore policy process is presented as a government behaviour directed at an aim, thus offering an instrument of measurement of their action. According to this definition public policies consist of the decisions made by government of establishing an objective and predisposing the measures of reaching it.

Carl Friedrich defines public policy as ” a proposed course of action of a person, group, or government within a given environment providing

⁹⁴James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, New York, 3rd edition, 1984, p.6

⁹⁵W.I.Jenkins, *Policy Analysis: A Political and Organizational Perspective*, Martin Robertson, London, 1978, p.44

obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose".⁹⁶

Similar to Friedrich is James Anderson's definition which states that "a policy is a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern."⁹⁷ Anderson's view adds two elements of innovation in policy definitions, first by stressing that decision-making is made by groups inside the government and not by a single group or by a single actor. Policies are thus a result of multiple decisions made by multiple decision-makers often pertaining to different government branches. Secondly, he stresses the link between a government action and the perception of a problem or of an issue which would make such an action necessary. Anderson additionally examines the concept of public policy through various theoretical perspectives and differentiates policy from such other concepts as 'decision' by the fact that it is "what is actually done as opposed to what is proposed or intended."⁹⁸ Thus, a decision is defined essentially as a specific choice among alternatives while policy is something that unfolds over time. Anderson notes that there are five main features of public policies: it is an action that is undertaken for a particular purpose; it is a course of action rather than separate discrete decisions; it is what government actually does rather than what it intends to do; it may be either positive (actions) or negative (inactions); it is based on law and administrative decision. Therefore, policies emerge as a result of policy demands, claims made upon public officials by other actors, official or private, in a political system for action or inaction on some public issue. In response to these

⁹⁶Carl J. Friedrich, *Man and his government*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1963, p.79

⁹⁷James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit, p.3

⁹⁸M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le policitche pubbliche*, op.cit.p.10

demands public officials make policy decisions which enact or give content to public policy actions.⁹⁹

For Lindblom, policy is simply any output of any process, whether that process is of political compromise among policy makers, something that springs from new opportunities rather than from defined problems, or of something that happens without it being specifically decided upon. The decision maker in this policy process can be an individual, a collective body small or large, a government or a non-governmental entity.

The policy-making can be mostly identified with a process, which is decision-centric and value driven, because it is focused on the decision that must be taken and on the desired outcome, performing and iterating until such outcome is reached. Therefore, public policies are designed to accomplish specified goals or produce definite results, although these are not always achieved. The final result may be a compromise between the targeted objective and the imposed constraints.

2.1.2 Types of policies

A further definition of public policies is provided by Lowi who also develops a classification of the types of existing policies, in terms of their impact or expected impact on society. Lowi believes that there is a limited type of policies and if adequately classified, they become types of regimes, each of them developing an own system of policies. This perspective is a great departure from the typical theoretical view which sees politics as the source of policies. In fact, Lowi states the exact opposite in that policies determine politics, and are in fact the confines in which political action takes place.¹⁰⁰ : “ whenever politics took an exceptional turn, there seems to have

⁹⁹James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit. p.5

¹⁰⁰Theodore J. Lowi, *La scienza delle politiche*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1999, pp.227-228

been an exceptional policy issue at the bottom of it.”¹⁰¹ In this context policy is seen as the means of resolving a collective problem while polity is the distribution of political power among authority figures.

Furthermore, Lowi believes that there is an element of coercion in all collective life and the role of the institutions is precisely that of moralizing coercion, of government to legitimize it, while administration is a means of routinizing coercion. In this context “policy is deliberate coercion-statements attempting to set forth the purpose, the means, the subjects and the objects of coercion”¹⁰² Government coerces and different ways of coercion provide a set or parameter, a context within which politics takes place.¹⁰³ Accordingly, Lowi considers that types of coercion may be associated with a distinctive political process.

Lowi develops a table classifying the types of policy, with a prospect of building and testing theories about their relationship with politics. He refers to four categories ensuing from two crossed dimensions considered fundamental and equally important to the nature of policy. First the likelihood of coercion used in carrying out the policy and secondly the degree to which coercion applies to individual conduct or the environment of conduct. He labelled the four resulting categories as: distributive, regulative, redistributive, and constituent.¹⁰⁴ In the case of the distributive policies, the applicability of coercion is remote and works through individual conduct. For regulatory policies, coercion is likely and applicable to individual conduct. The redistributive policies see an immediate likelihood of coercion that works through environment and conduct, as does for the constituent policies, although they differ through the remoteness of coercion.

¹⁰¹Theodore J. Lowi, “Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice”, *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 32, No. 4. Jul. - Aug., 1972, p.301

¹⁰²Theodore Lowi, “Decision Making vs. Policy Making: Toward an Antidote for Technocracy”, *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (May - Jun., 1970), p. 315

¹⁰³Theodore J. Lowi, “Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice”, op.cit.p 299

¹⁰⁴Bruno Dente, *Le Decisioni di Policy*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2011, p.102

These four basic types of politics are historically as well as functionally distinct for the American case which Lowi analyses. Distribution was almost the exclusive type of national domestic policy from 1789 until 1890 and it enhanced a decentralized, type of politics. The constituent issues related to the Civil War, civil rights, and the rights of the individual states helped establish the American two party system. Steps towards regulation and redistribution began at the turn of the century, but regulation became an established fact before any headway at all was made in redistribution.¹⁰⁵

But Lowi's typology goes further than the historical study of American politics, in explaining that each type of public policy, i.e. regime tends to develop its own distinct structure and policy process. These four types of public policies or government activity constitute real arenas of power, each developing its own characteristic political structure, political process, elites, and group relations.¹⁰⁶

The term "distributive" was first used in the 19th century with regards to land policies, but it quickly expanded to include contemporary land and resource policies. Distributive policies involve the distribution of services and benefits to particular segments of society: individual, groups, corporations or communities. Some distributive policies may provide benefits to only one or a few beneficiaries, while others may bring benefit to a vast number of persons such as in the case of tax deductions. This type of policy usually involves the use of public funds to assist particular groups. Those who seek benefits however do not compete with one another, nor do their benefits represent a cost to a particular group, because they are assessed to all tax-payers.¹⁰⁷ The typical relationship in the distributive arena is a log-rolling coalition, which is not one forged of conflict, compromise, and tangential interest but,

¹⁰⁵Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory", *World Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Jul., 1964, p.689

¹⁰⁶Ivi, pp.689-690

¹⁰⁷James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit.pp.113-114

on the contrary, one composed of members who have absolutely nothing in common.¹⁰⁸ Log-rolling usually involves a mutual exchange of support on two different issues and it is a prevalent form of bargaining because not every item on the agenda interests every leader to the same extent.

Regulatory policies are specific and individual in their impact, which is generally one of directly raising costs and/or reducing or expanding the alternatives of private individuals. Regulatory policies involve the imposition of general rules of behaviour, restrictions or limitations on the conduct of individuals or groups, reducing the freedom to act of the regulated parties.¹⁰⁹ Regulatory policies are different from distributive in that in the regulatory arena is composed of a multiplicity of groups organized around common interests and in the short run the regulatory decision involves a direct choice as to who will be indulged and who deprived.¹¹⁰ Thus, the typical coalition is born of conflict and compromise around tangential interests and has a far less stable structure than the log-rolling, since the coalitions will shift as the interests change or as conflicts of interest emerge.

Redistributive policies are similar to regulatory policies in the sense that relations among broad categories of private individuals are involved and, thus individual decisions must be interrelated. In all other aspects, there are great differences in the nature of impact which is much broader, approaching social classes. These are policies where someone has to pay for what others get, but the beneficiaries are a large class, which is more empowered than pushed. Lowi gives progressive income tax as an example, presumably because higher income people perceive that they are paying for the tax relief of the poor. Redistributive policies see deliberate efforts made by the

¹⁰⁸Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory", op.cit., pp.690-693

¹⁰⁹James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit.pp.114-115

¹¹⁰Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory", op.cit., pp.690-691

government to reallocate wealth, income, property, rights among broad sectors of population. They are difficult to secure and retain because those who poses money or power are reluctant to yield them.

Finally, constituent policies were subsequently added as a forth type and did not feature in Lowi's original model. They are characterized by little coercion and environment of conduct. This type of decisions intervene on the way that policies are carried out and they are best understood as a residual category, focusing on government institutions and procedures, which could include setting up an agency, or government advertising.

The basic idea behind Lowi's classification of policies, that the substance of a policy might tell us something about the kind of politics associated with it, and about its outcome, is bold and forward thinking. The content of the public policies and the nature of the problems that are being considered as well as solutions put forward often determine the way in which the problems will be handled inside the political system. It is therefore the very content (regulative, redistributive, distributive or constituent) to determine the way in which the public policy will be managed.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, Lowi's typology could be seen as lacking in rigor as well as empirical plausibility. Some critiques argue that it is hard to distinguish between the types except in extreme cases, and that there are many policies that could be classified under two or more categories.¹¹² Thus the scheme based on this insight seems to require modification.

Wilson suggests a new classification of policy on the basis of whether the cost and benefits are widely distributed or narrowly concentrated from the

¹¹¹M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le politiche pubbliche*, op.cit.p.12

¹¹²Bruno Dente, *Le Decisioni di Policy*, op.cit.p.104

point of view of those who bear the costs or enjoy the benefits.¹¹³ These costs and benefits are not necessarily monetary but instead, they indicate decreases or increases in individuals' stocks of one or more different values. Four distinct profiles emerge from this allocation.

When both costs and benefits are widely distributed, we expect to find majoritarian politics. All or most of society expects to pay. Majoritarian politics are fought out through public debate and occur in the visible institutions of government, engaging political parties. Interest groups have little incentive to form around such issues because no small, definable segment of society such as an industry, an occupation, a locality, can expect to capture a disproportionate share of the benefits or avoid a disproportionate share of the burdens. Policies that involve a broad distribution of costs and benefits such as highway construction, police and fire protection, public education, national defense tend to become universally accepted and institutionalized.

Where both costs and benefits are concentrated, Wilson talks about interest group politics, where special interests are pitted against special interests. This means that a subsidy or regulation will often benefit a small group at the expense of another small group, with each side having a strong incentive to organize and exercise political influence. The public does not believe it will be much affected one way or another and though it may sympathize more with one side than the other, its voice is likely to be heard in only weak or general terms. Policies that provide benefits to a well defined group at the expenses of another distinct group tend to produce conflict among the groups and their partisans.

¹¹³Wilson, J. Q. 1974. 'The Politics of Regulation' in J. W. McKie (ed.), *Social Responsibility and the Business Predicament*, Washington, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., pp. 68-136.

In the third type of situation, client politics, benefits are concentrated but costs widely diffused, pitting special interest against the general public. Some small, easily organized group will benefit and thus has a powerful incentive to lobby. Success partly depends upon the legitimacy which public opinion attributes to the interests being benefited. But, since the costs of the benefit are distributed across a large number of people, they have little incentive to organize in opposition. Political parties play a minor public role, though they may be quietly active. These politics encourage government agencies to organize active clientele groups to promote programs challenging alliances as issues and influence shift. Policy changes incrementally, rather than through major confrontation or basic changes in community values. Some policies and programs are of benefit to an identifiable interest group while the costs do not appear to fall on any particular segment. Wilson notes that policies of this type encourage the formation of pressure groups to support their continuation and gives veterans benefits and special tax provisions as examples.

When a policy that will confer general benefits at a cost to be borne by a small segment of society is proposed, Wilson speaks of entrepreneurial politics. These tend to pit the general public against special interest by distributing benefits widely while more narrowly concentrating costs. Entrepreneurial politics are the opposite of client politics in that the many rather than the few win the benefits. In this case, the incentive to organize is strong for the opponents of the policy but weak for the beneficiaries. Some policies seem to provide benefits for a large number of people while their costs fall on fairly distinct identifiable groups in society. Examples are environmental pollution control, industrial safety policies. The enactment of these types of policies usually succeeds through the formation of a coalition on interest in response to a crisis of some sort.

These four types of policies are only approximate models, as all policies will not fit into one or another category. However the model is useful in gaining insight into why the responses to policies vary and predict what they may be, and in analyzing the struggle that policy adoption will face, because to some extent the kind of policy proposed will help shape the enactment process.

2.1.3 The policy process

A policy includes not only the decision to enact a law but also the following decisions relating to its implementation and enforcement. One of the most commonly used systems for simplifying and explaining the formation of public policies is the division of the process into distinct steps. The resulting sequence is called policy cycle. This term refers to the recurrent pattern shown by procedures that ultimately lead to the creation of a public policy. The advantage of analyzing these procedures by dividing them into stages resides in that it offers explanatory insights into the decision-making process. More precisely, the notion of policy cycle provides a means of thinking about the sectoral realities of public policy processes.

There are numerous descriptions of the policy cycle and different models proposed by policy analysts. As policy making is a pattern of action, most of these versions share similar steps in the process, but there is no one single processes in which policies are made. It is possible however to develop generalizations of policy formation, a sequential pattern of actions involving functional categories that can be analytically distinguished, although an empirical distinction might be more difficult to make.

The idea of simplifying the complex phenomenon which is public policy-making in a number of separate steps was first drafted by Harold Laswell, who described public policy science as being multidisciplinary, problem-solving and explicitly normative. He presents his 7 steps as not only

a way of describing the policy process but also as a means of defining public policies.

Most cycles presented in the literature are based on the concept of Lasswell who compared policy making to problem solving. In 1956, Lasswell introduced his seven stage policy cycle and explained the decision-making process that occurs when a public policy is formed.¹¹⁴ The policy process begins with the intelligence step, and it addresses how information is processed by policy makers to formulate problems and alternatives. It includes the gathering, processing and dissemination of information for the use of all the participants in the decision process. The following stage is promotion, and it adds intensity and other tactics to the dissemination of a value, to promote self interest and causes. Prescription is the phase in which general rules about a policy alternative are adopted or enacted by the policy actors. It is characterized by the stabilization of expectations concerning the norms to be sanctioned if challenged in various contingencies. Invocation describes how the application of the policy rules or laws are made and where the focus of power and authority to assure compliance with policy lie. The police, grand juries, lower courts and administrative agencies are specialized to this role. Application deals with how rules or laws are applied by executives or enforcement officers. This is the task of appellate courts and of most of the bureaucratic structures engaged in public administration. Termination focuses on how the original rules or laws are terminated, modified or extended. It deals with the claims put forward by those who stand to suffer value deprivation when a prescription ends. Appraisal labels the process by which the success or failure of the operation of policies are appreciated. It identifies those who are casually or formally responsible for

¹¹⁴G. Ronald Gilbert (ed.), *Making and Managing Policy: Formulation, Analysis, Evaluation*, New York and Basel: Marcel Dekker Inc., 1984, p5

success or failure. Legislative or executive commissions are authorized to perform investigations and to express their appraisal.¹¹⁵

The analysis of the policy process advanced by Lasswell only provides the decision process within government without a more in depth study of the internal and external factors that influence its behaviour. According to this view the process is only related to the skills of a small number of people who act on behalf of the governing apparatus as bureaucrats. In spite of its flaws this model has had a great influence on the development on public policy analysis by helping reduce the complexities of the policy study by separating the various phases and examining them before reconstruction the policy-process as a whole.

At present, there is a consensus in the research community that the model should be divided into five major stages: agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation and policy evaluation. The five stage policy process is considered to be the standard model because it simplifies reality and allows for a better understanding of the complexities of the proceedings.

Agenda setting

Agenda setting is the first stage of the policy cycle and it is the process through which a policy and the problem it is intended to address are acknowledged as being of public interest. It refers to the step in which social conditions are recognized and considered to have evolved into a “public problem”, thereby becoming the focus of debate and controversy in the media and in politics. Agenda actors and institutions, influenced by their ideologies, play a fundamental role in determining the problems or issues

¹¹⁵Harold D. Lasswell, *A Pre-View of Policy Sciences*, American Elsevier Pub. Co, New York, 1971, pp.28-30

requiring action on the part of the government.¹¹⁶ A problem can be defined as a situation that produces needs and dissatisfactions on the part of people for which relief or redress is sought. This may be done by those directly affected or by others on their behalf. Public problems have a broad effect and consequences for persons not directly involved.¹¹⁷ For a public interest to be involved the policy should be large enough in scope to affect a vast number of people in a consistent way, or must, regardless of its scope, express a clear rule of law.¹¹⁸

John Kingdon's treatment of the public agenda set the stage for much of our current understanding of where issues come from: "an agenda setting process narrows the set of subject that could conceivably occupy their attention to the list on which they actually do focus"¹¹⁹ He emphasized the separate sources of policy problems from the solutions that may be offered to them. Government programs, come about when a given solution is attached to a particular problem. Political actors' search for popular issues, windows of opportunity open and close, stochastic events such as natural disasters or airplane crashes momentarily focus public attention on an issue. The consequence of many unrelated factors, often serendipitous, helps explain why a given policy is adopted, according to his study.

There is a very large number of demands generally made upon government by groups or individuals but only a small portion of that amount receive serious attention from the policy-makers, becoming part of the policy agenda. Agenda status is attained through an elaborate process and does not necessarily result from any single decision or action. In fact, the fate of an issue may depend as much on "non decisions" as on formal decision-

¹¹⁶M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le politiche pubbliche*, op.cit.pp.114-127

¹¹⁷James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit.pp.44-46

¹¹⁸Theodore J. Lowi, "Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice",op.cit.p.308

¹¹⁹J. W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Little, Brown, Boston, 1984, p.205

making.¹²⁰ Items may achieve agenda status and become part of a particular policy agenda in result to a crisis or spectacular event such as a natural disaster. This would cause public responses and compel officials to act upon it. Some issues may capture the attention of the media and as a result of coverage be converted into an agenda item or if it already has such a status it may be given more salience.

Scholars have variously written about the public agenda, the media agenda, the legislative agenda, and any number of other agendas as they have focused on different political institutions, but Roger Cobb and Charles Elder¹²¹ were the first to note that there are a number of policy agendas in every political system, the two basic kinds being the systematic agenda and the institutional or governmental agenda. The first type refers to issues that are perceived by members of the political community as being worthy of public attention and as involving matters within the jurisdiction of the government authority. The systematic agenda is basically a group of issues that is under discussion in society so it can be defined as a discussion agenda, as action to a problem requires it be brought before a governmental institution with the authority to take action. The institutional agenda is made-up of a set of issues being discussed in a particular governmental institution, those problems that public officials feel obliged to handle and to give active attention. Thus, this is an action agenda and may be more specific and concrete than the systematic agenda. Institutional agenda items may be divided into old issues, those that appear regularly on an agenda and new items usually generated by particular events. The first type of issues tends to

¹²⁰Roger W. Cobb; Charles D. Elder, "The Politics of Agenda-Building: An Alternative Perspective for Modern Democratic Theory", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 4. (Nov., 1971), p.904

¹²¹R. W. Cobb, C. D. Elder, *Participation in American Politics: The Dynamics of Agenda Building*. Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1972.

receive more attention from the policy-makers based purely on longevity and on their recurrence.¹²²

Agenda-setting is a critical stage in the policy cycle since its dynamics have a decisive impact on the whole policy process and on the policies resulting from it.

Policy formulation

Not all items on the agenda receive specific treatment in terms of decisions about policies and programs. Those that do however, then become subject to formulation and legislation. Policy formation thus , "involves the development of pertinent and acceptable proposed courses of action for dealing with the public problems"¹²³. At this stage the public administration concerned examines the various policy options and considers the possible solutions. These are activities that involve presenting a number of alternatives for a given problem and choosing the most suitable ones among them. Part of this process is collecting, analyzing, disseminating information in order to assess the alternatives and likely outcomes. Coalitions of actors can at this point strive through the use of advocacy strategies, to gain priority for a specific solution. As power relationships crystalize through compromise and negotiation, the direction in which the policy will move is determined. This does not always result in a proposed law as sometimes policy actors may decide not to take positive action on some problem.¹²⁴

When options are being identified, policy makers are limited in their room to manoeuvre by constraints of two types. Substantive constraints are related to the nature of the problem itself and entail considerable use of state

¹²²James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit.pp.47-48

¹²³ James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit.p.53

¹²⁴R. B. Ripley, *Stages of the policy process*, in D. McCool (Ed.), *Public policy theories, models, and concepts: An anthology*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1995, p.159

resources to resolve a problem. Procedural constraints, which also affect all aspects of the formulation stage, may be characterized either as institutional, based on government procedures, or as tactical, based on relationships between various actors or social groups. According to Howlett and Ramesh¹²⁵, who deal with tactical constraints in some detail, actors and social groups are parts of subsystems, and the cohesiveness between these two components with respect to discourse (reflecting values and beliefs) and their social bonds has a fundamental influence on policy formulation. The more cohesion there is between the discourse community and interest networks in a policy subsystem, the more resistance there will be to new ideas and new actors. Inversely, a less cohesive subsystem structure that is open to new ideas and new actors will offer better chances for innovation, as long as the government also favours this type of structure. The relationship between the government and social actors is thus a significant factor influencing the formulation of public policies.

The product of the formulation stage are policy statements including declarations of intent and a plan of how to act upon those intentions. In some cases program design may be vague and lacking details mainly because too much specificity may affect the compromises that have to be reached by the involved parties.¹²⁶

Decision-making

Decision-making or adoption is the third stage of the policy in which, at a government level, a policy choice is made that favours a certain approach to addressing a given problem. Decision-making involves the choice of an alternative among a series of possible solutions. Theories on decision-making are concerned with how such choices are made. Some of the more

¹²⁵M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le politiche pubbliche*, op.cit.pp.132-141

¹²⁶R. B. Ripley, *Stages of the policy process*, in D. McCool (Ed.), *Public policy theories, models, and concepts: An anthology*, op.cit., p.160

popular models are the rational-comprehensive theory, incremental theory, mixed-scanning, and the garbage-can model.¹²⁷

The rational-comprehensive theory is perhaps the most widely accepted one and it includes a number of elements, which describe the process of choosing the decision that most effectively achieves a given end. Firstly, the decision maker is confronted with a given problem that can be separated from other problems and considered in comparison with them. Second, the decision-maker is guided by goals, values and objectives which are clearly defined and ranked in order of importance. It follows that the various alternatives for dealing with the problem are examined. The consequences in terms of costs, benefits, advantages and disadvantages that follow from the selection of each alternative are considered. Afterwards each alternative and the consequences related to it can be compared with the other alternatives. Finally, the decision maker will choose the alternative that maximizes the attainment of his goal.

This theory has a lot of followers but has also been subject to criticism. It is often viewed as overly idealistic as it assumes that the decision-maker will have perfect information in dealing with a problem and in choosing the optimum alternative to solve it. It is unrealistic to believe the decision maker will be able to accurately predict the consequences of a given choice and that he can readily separate and compare values and fact in a rationalistic manner. One of the supporters of this critical view is Charles Lindblom¹²⁸, who contends that the decision-maker is not faced with concrete, clearly defined problems that can be solved by following the sequence of actions described above. Instead identifying and formulating the problem can prove to be more challenging and crucial than referred by the rational-comprehensive theory.

¹²⁷James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit.p.53

¹²⁸Charles E. Lindblom, " The Science of <<Muddling Through>>", op.cit. pp, 79-88

Thus, Lindblom proposes a second theory of decision-making, the incremental one or incrementalism, which is “essentially remedial and ...geared more to the amelioration of present, concrete social goals than to the promotion of future social goals.”¹²⁹ It is presented as a decision theory that avoids many of the problems of the rational-comprehensive theory, stressing the fact that decisions and policies are the result of a “give and take” between many participants to the decision process. Incrementalism is said to offer a more descriptive view of the way in which public officials make decisions, starting with the close link between the selection of goals and objectives and the empirical analysis of the solutions needed to attain them. Next, the decision-maker will consider only some alternatives for dealing with a problem, and these will differ only incrementally (i.e. marginally) from already existing policies. It is easier to reach a decision when the matters in dispute are only variations of existing programs rather than policy issues of great magnitude. For each alternative only a limited number of consequences will be evaluated. The problem facing the decision-maker is seen as being continuously redefined, so incrementalism allows for adjustments of ends and means in order to make the problem more manageable. Finally the incremental theory considers that there is no single right solution for a problem, but the important thing is that there is agreement on the part of the various analysts for a specific alternative.

The followers of this theory emphasize its realistic nature in admitting that a decision-maker does not have the time, intelligence and resources to engage in a comprehensive analysis of all alternative solutions to existing problems, and that sometimes it is better to seek an acceptable solution that can work, rather than look for optimal ones that might not be practicable. The incremental theory is criticized precisely for its conservative nature, for

¹²⁹James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit., p.10

concentrating too much on the existing order, thus being a barrier to innovation or search for other available alternatives.

A further rejection of the assumption of perfect rationality in decision-making belongs to Simon, who instead developed another way to think about and more importantly to act on problems, the concept of bounded rationality : "bounded rationality is largely characterized as a residual category - rationality is bounded when it falls short of omniscience. And the failures of omniscience are largely failures of knowing all the alternatives, uncertainty about relevant exogenous events, and inability to calculate consequences".¹³⁰ The theory is intended to encompass the idea of the practical impossibility of exercising perfect rationality. The main contention is that the human beings are not perfectly rational decision makers, instead the complexity of their environment, ambiguous or poorly defined problems, incomplete or inaccurate information and their limited cognitive system make maximizations impossible in empirical situations. "The capacity of the human mind for formulating and solving complex problems is very small compared with the size of the problems whose solution is required for objectively rational behaviour in the real world — or even for a reasonable approximation to such objective rationality."¹³¹ People do not evaluate all the available options and they do not carry out a full cost-benefit analysis of all possible actions. Rather, they use an adequacy criterion to decide whether an alternative is expected to be satisfactory and they choose the first option that fulfils this benchmark. Thus, decisions can be made with reasonable amounts of calculation, and using incomplete information. Hence, relatively good decisions can be made without the need of analyzing all the alternatives, which in most situations is impossible.

¹³⁰Herbert A. Simon, *Rational Decision-making in Business Organizations*, Nobel Memorial Lecture, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh,1978

¹³¹Herbert A. Simon, *Models of Man, Social and Rational: Mathematical Essays on Rational Human Behaviour in a Social Setting*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1957,p.198

In the 70s, “garbage can” approach to decision-making analysis emerged, affirming the lack of rationality in the decision process and criticizing the bounded rationality and incremental models. March and Olsen , the proponents of this new perspective, believe that the previous theories are misleading because they imply a level of comprehension of the problems, intentionality and predictability on the part of the policy actors , that does not occur in reality.¹³² “Although it may be convenient to imagine that choice opportunities lead first to the generation of decision alternatives, then to an examination of their consequences, then to an evaluation of those consequences in terms of objectives and finally to a decision, this type of model is a poor description of what actually happens.”¹³³

March and Olsen believe in the merits of a normative organizational theory of intelligent decision making under ambiguous circumstances in which goals are unclear or unknown. This means that the decision-making process is uncertain and unpredictable and only remotely linked to the search for adequate means for reaching a goal. The actors instead define objectives and choose means in which to reach them in a process that is often too abrupt to be considered incremental or rational. The metaphor of the “garbage can” is purposely used in order to break the aura of science and rationality attributed by previous scholars to the decision-making process: “ one can view a choice opportunity as a garbage can into which various kind of problems and solutions are dumped by participants as they are generated. The mix of garbage in a single can depends on the mix of cans available, on the labels attached to the alternative cans, on what garbage is currently

¹³²M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le politiche pubbliche*, op.cit.pp.153-154

¹³³Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, Johan P. Olsen, “A garbage can model of organizational choice”, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol 17, No.1, march 1972, p.2

being produced, and on the speed with which garbage is collected and removed from the scene".¹³⁴

Therefore, the garbage can model describes a process in which problems, solutions, and participants move from one choice opportunity to another in such a way that the nature of the choice, the time it takes, and the problem it solves all depend on a relatively complicated interaction of elements. These include mix of choices available at any one time, the mix of problems that have access to the organization, the mix of solutions looking for problems and the outside demands on decision-makers."¹³⁵ The garbage can model is so completely different from the other theories put forward, that it has reasonably sparked some debate. The main criticism goes to question the assumption of arbitrariness of the decision making process which is often seen as an exaggeration of real policy situations. While the basic postulates of the theory give detailed descriptions of how decisions are sometimes made, in certain situations more order and prescriptivism are expected.

Implementation

The fourth important stage is implementation, or the process of putting a public policy into effect and it includes all the activities that result from the official adoption of a policy. In order to implement a policy, resources need to be acquired and a variety of planning activities take place as well as implementation parameters established.¹³⁶ This occurs when a decision is carried out through the application of government directives and is confronted with reality. There is generally a discrepancy between a policy's intent and its outcome, which stems from the role played by its actors, particularly the public servants entrusted with responsibility for its implementation. The technical-administrative apparatus plays an important role at this stage, as do

¹³⁴Ibidem.

¹³⁵Ivi.,16

¹³⁶M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le policitche pubbliche*, op.cit.pp.161-164

groups associated with the policy sector. The term “policy network” is often used to refer to the actors within the government, as well as the stakeholders associated with a policy sector, who are in a sense, experts in the area. This policy network will have a major influence on how the policy is implemented. Civil servants' personal tendencies can influence their perceptions and even their intentions when it comes to implementing a policy. However, it appears that the main factor affecting the behavior of civil servants is their belonging to an organization.

There are two basic approaches that explain policy implementation: the top-bottom approach and the bottom-down approach¹³⁷. The first perspective states that the process can be seen as a series of commands in which policy leaders express preferences for a policy choice, which is then applied in detailed forms as it goes through the bureaucratic apparatus. This view emphasizes the decision taken by government, which has to be clear, specific, and organized in order to be handed over to the administration for the implementation procedure. It thus reserves a marginal role to the low level officials and to the general public and concentrates all attention on the decision-makers. This critique led to the development of an alternative approach to public policies: bottom-down. This perspective examines all public and private actors involved in the implementation of programs, looking into their personal and professional objectives. Only after does the attention shift to the higher level to observe the strategies and goals of those interested in financing a certain policy. The studies derived from the bottom-down approach show that in a large degree, the success of a policy depends on the level of engagement and skill set of the lower level officials directly involved in the implementation phase. The major strength is thus the attention to formal and informal relationships that make-up the policy network involved in the decision and implementation stage of policies.

¹³⁷Ivi., pp.165-166

Policy evaluation

After policy actions generate some results, the next stage involves an assessment of both the outcomes and the implementation process.

Evaluation is the final stage of the cycle, when the outcomes of a policy are analyzed in order to verify if they are in accordance with the pre-established objectives and goals. Evaluation is viewed as a pattern of activities in the assessment, estimation, and appraisal of a program in its effects, content and implementation. Policy evaluation can and does occur throughout the policy process, not only at the end, in an attempt to determine the consequences of a policy beforehand.¹³⁸ The evaluation can be carried out by government apparatus, by consultants or by civil society and "evaluators may be motivated by self service as well as public service, by a desire to use analysis as ammunition for partisan political purposes."¹³⁹

Policy evaluation is concerned with trying to determine the impact of policy on real-life conditions, including the effects on the recipients but also on groups at which it is not directed, due to spill-over effects or externalities. Moreover, the impact of policies upon future conditions and their direct and indirect cost are also thoroughly considered.¹⁴⁰

The question that comes to mind however is on what grounds is the policy evaluated? Three possible responses and parameters are: against another policy, against the lack of a policy and against the best known alternatives. There are also a number of criteria for policy analysis starting with efficiency, effectiveness, impact and equity. Other criteria include adequacy, net benefits, feasibility, compliance, appropriateness, procedural fairness etc. Efficiency measures the relationship between the cost and

¹³⁸ James E. Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, op.cit., p.134

¹³⁹ Ivi.p.135

¹⁴⁰ Ivi., pp.136-139

benefits of a policy or program. Effectiveness on the other hand measures the extent to which a particular policy is meeting its target goals or objectives. Equity focuses on the distributional effects of a policy in terms of “who gains or who loses” from the implementation of a given program. Adequacy involves the process of assessing a given policy rational or irrational to the problem at stake to be solved. Feasibility deals with means of achieving the end of a given policy and it has to do with the conduciveness of the implementation of a given policy.

The essence of this stage is the improvement of policy making through the assessment of its results. After the evaluation process takes place policy may be completely reconsidered and the policy cycle rewind to the agenda setting or to other previous steps or decision can be taken to maintain the status quo. A policy can suffer major readjustments or only minor modifications

For certain authors, the policy cycle model described above presents major weaknesses. For example, it can give a false impression of linearity, with each stage in the cycle occurring in a precise, predetermined manner, which is far from actual fact. According to Howlett and Ramesh, the model's disadvantage lies rather in its inability to explain what causes policies to advance from one stage to another. They propose that the model be further developed to account for policy changes, which may be categorized as either normal or atypical.

As mentioned above, public policy development is not a linear process. Indeed, many of the stages in this process frequently overlap. The stages are not necessarily separate and distinct: they can run parallel to each other, to such a degree that the boundary between them may be blurred. However the weaknesses of the policy models only stress the complexity of the actual process and the need to develop means of facilitating its understanding.

2.1.4 Policy Actors:

In a modern pluralistic society, the policy process is complex and involves many participants, official and unofficial who have a role in shaping its outcome. Policy actors are individuals or organizations that carry out the actions capable of influencing the outcomes of the decision process and which do so while pursuing objectives related to the issue at hand, to its possible solution or to their relationships with each other. In doing so, they use resources that become indispensable requirements for obtaining efficient results.¹⁴¹

The policy model as presented above might lead to wrongfully believing that policy makers can systematically resolve all the problems put in front of them in a linear manner. Reality is obviously not that ordered and precise because identifying a problem, developing a solution and acting on it are often ad hoc processes. Whoever acts upon a problem most times responds to circumstances and acts in terms of personal interest and ideological predispositions as well. A perfected model of explaining the policy process needs to offer an insightful view of the actors involved in the process and of the interests that they pursue. There is a multitude of actors involved in the policy process, who interact in different ways, according to personal interest with the result being the public policy. But, actors are not completely independent in choosing the way in which to operate because they are bounded by social relations, institutional contexts and the values that the institutions represent. Thus, the set of ideas, convictions, discussions around a policy issue influence the actors' behaviour. The variety of means at their disposal is a further element that limits their choices. What helps policy actors move beyond these difficulties is the possibilities of making alliances.

¹⁴¹Bruno Dente, *Le Decisioni di Policy*, op.cit.pp.98-99

Policy actors are actively involved in either making policy or influencing it. Policy issues have no fixed origin. They may originate from the public opinion, from the mass-media, parliament, political parties, international organizations, government departments or public authorities and agencies, all of which become an intrinsic part of the policy process. The policy maker is a person who has the power to influence or determine policies and practices at an international, national or regional level. He can design policies, codify and formalize them and assess or approve the solutions proposed. Roles and responsibilities of the actors can vary on the context.

The actors of the policy process can be either individuals or groups. They do not operate in isolation but are part of a large ecosystem and are subject to the forces of this system, which we will call policy subsystem. The policy subsystems are forums in which these actors discuss policy related issues trying to find consensus and negotiating in order to advance their interests. The number of actors involved in the policy process is very large and it depends on the state, sector, political system, sphere of policy and it is also subject to the variations over periods of time. For the sake of simplifying the description, policy actors can be divided into five categories, which represent the main areas they come from: elected officials, appointed officials, interest groups, political parties, research organizations, and the mass-media. The first two categories are part of the state administration.¹⁴² The remaining three are part of society and can be viewed as unofficial participants since their participation in the policy process is not a part of their duties under the constitution or law. Political parties serve an intermediary role in this scheme.

¹⁴²M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le politiche pubbliche*, op.cit.pp.55-58

The elected officials participating in the policy process can be further divided into two categories. First, the executive branch is a key element of the policy subsystems, because of the authority it is conferred with by the constitution, to govern the state. It has the authority to define and develop policies and it is ultimately the government who also possesses large part of the resources (fiscal, information, control of the political agenda), which help it strengthen its position. Secondly the legislative body or parliament is the forum in which problems are brought to the attention of the elected officials expecting solutions. The parliament has the task of controlling government action rather than deciding to carry out a policy or another, but it is the former function however that allows it to influence policies.

The appointed officials which are involved in public policy-making and public administration are commonly called bureaucrats. Bureaucracies are composed of specialists who have the time, skills and information to manage matters related to public policies. They help executive carry out the governmental tasks, thus becoming a central figure in the policy subsystem.

Interest groups are collections of people or organizations that come together to advance their desired political and policy outcomes in politics and society. They get to influence policy processes using the resources at their disposal. One of the most important resources of interest groups is knowledge: specifically information that might be unavailable or less available to others.¹⁴³ In addition to this they offer contributions to the campaigns and candidates that they believe will advance their causes. Through these two instruments interest groups can gain important positions in the policy-making process.

Political parties serve important functions in the policy process, as they provide a way of transmitting political preferences from the electorate to the

¹⁴³Ivi.p.63

elected bodies. They also help elected officials and their supporters to create policy ideas that can help appeal to voters and shape legislation.

Research organizations include researchers working in universities and think-thanks. When researchers' studies are conducted with the purpose of participating in the political debate, their function becomes similar to that of think-tanks with the difference being that they maintain only academic and scholarly interests in the matter. State and local government bodies often rely on their expertise and advice. Think-tanks on the other hand are independent organizations engaged in a multidisciplinary activity aimed at influencing public policies, which also stand to gain from one outcome rather than another. Many think thanks are associated with an ideological perspective on the basis of which they provide information that policy-makers and other relevant actors can use to develop better policies.¹⁴⁴

The opinions and roles of mass-media in the policy–process vary from being considered important to being regarded as marginal. Certainly the media represent a crucial link between the state and society allowing them to influence government and society preferences on policy problems and on the proposed solutions. They have an important role in the agenda setting state as they can help elevate issues to greater public attention.

Further participants to the policy process are the citizens, who vote or are interested parties in a problems' resolution. They are called stakeholders and they try to influence the administration using different channels such as television, radio, newspapers and internet. Facts, perceptions and the risk of damage to reputations can be a very effective means of influencing policy making.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴Thomas A. Birkland, *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*, Routledge, 3rd edition, New York, 2015, p.88

¹⁴⁵M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, *Come studiare le policitche pubbliche*, op.cit.pp.58-65

2.2 The European Union as a policy actor

Policy is usually seen as a state function when actually it can just as well operate beyond the borders of the nation-states. The officials in charge of the policy process often discover that they need to reach “upwards” to the international level, ‘sideways’ to business groups and non-governmental organizations, and “downwards” to local communities and social groups.¹⁴⁶ A perfect example can be observed within the development of policy at a European level, through the European Union.

Public policies frequently cross national borders, as does the diffusion of policy ideas and alternatives, through the translational actions and discourses of academics, politicians, international organizations, and think-tanks. New regional bodies emerge with the ability to make rules that can override or complement national government authority. “The European Union is perhaps the most important agent of change in contemporary government and policy-making in Europe.”¹⁴⁷ It is a complex and unique policy actor. Its multinational, neo-federal nature, the openness of decision-making, the weight of national-political administration elites within the process, creates a multi-dimensional policy-making system.¹⁴⁸

Policies within the EU have been historically focused around the process of building common policies and collective legislation, with an explicit goal of creating new regimes in a multitude of social areas.¹⁴⁹ The member states and the EU have assumed a shared responsibility over a growing

¹⁴⁶Hal K. Colebatch, Robert Hope, Mirko Noordegraaf (eds), *Working for Policy*, op.cit.p.22

¹⁴⁷H. Wallace, W. Wallace, M. Pollack, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 5ed, 2005, p.3

¹⁴⁸J. Richardson, *Actor Based Models of National and EC Policy-Making: Policy Communities, Issue Networks and Advocacy Coalitions*, in H. Kassim, A Menon (eds.), *The EU and National Industrial Policy*, Routledge, London, 1996, p.27

¹⁴⁹H. Wallace, W. Wallace, *Overview: The European Union, Politics and Policy-Making*, in Knud Erik Jørgensen, Mark Pollack, Ben Rosamond (eds), *Handbook of European Union Politics*, Sage Publications, London, 2007, p.339

range of topics across the spectrum of public policies, from foreign to security policy, citizenship and immigration, internal market and common commercial policy, labour market regimes, thus establishing a catalogue of collective activities.

The European policy process always takes place in a context where there are multiple locations for addressing policy issues, numerous actors ranging from local to global dimensions, across processes from formal to informal.¹⁵⁰ This international policy environment has created the need for negotiations and collaborative relationships. “.. EU policy-making is a collective exercise involving large numbers of participants, often in intermittent and unpredictable ‘relationships’”.¹⁵¹ The development of the EU has led to the development of new and distinct policy processes and forms of practice, and, as a result policy work has to adapt to new challenges, to more fragile links between political and bureaucratic activity and sometimes to more ambiguity about the outcomes.¹⁵²

There is an ongoing and very productive policy process that has led to the formulation of an enormous mass of EU public policies and to a flow of much technical and detailed EU legislation. These results emerge from a vast range of actors, institutions, problems and ideas. In practice, the EU policy process appears to be a classic case of ‘bounded rationality, because the cognitive and computational capacities of decision-makers are limited, decision-makers consider only a very small number of alternative solutions to organizational problems.

It is difficult to formulate a reliable description or a theoretical model of the policy process inside the EU: ” At best the EU policy process might

¹⁵⁰H. Wallace, W. Wallace, M. Pollack, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, op.cit.p.78

¹⁵¹J. Richardson, *European Union: power and policy-making* (3rd ed). Routledge, Oxon, Oxford, 2006, p.23

¹⁵²Hal K. Colebatch, Robert Hope, Mirko Noordegraaf (eds), *Working for Policy*, op.cit.p156

exhibit some stable pattern of cross-national coalition building; at worst it may exhibit some of the extreme aspects of a garbage can model of decision making”¹⁵³

2.2.1 Policy-making models in the EU

Policy-making in the EU is not carried out through a single process. The EU has a wide array of policy spheres, which it has constantly extended over the years, generating various, often contrasting modes of policy-making. The EU institutions with their different characteristics and patterns of behaviour produce different outcomes, with significant variations depending on the policy domain and period. Although these can be categorized and analyzed in various ways, one useful starting point is Helen Wallace’s¹⁵⁴ classification of five policy modes, which can be found across day-to-day policy initiatives in the EU: the community method, the distributional mode, the regulatory mode, policy coordination and intensive trans-governmentalism.

The traditional community method emerged as the prevalent policy process on the agenda of the European Economic Community, when the main perception was that of a single pre-dominant Community method of policy-making, exemplified by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Other policy areas of competence over which the Community was given jurisdiction included competition policy, trade and fisheries. The Community Method is characterized by a strong role for the European Commission (EC) in policy design and execution and subsequent monitoring. An empowering role is given to the Council of Ministers through strategic bargaining. Decisions are reached through qualified majority voting and Commission proposals can only be rejected by unanimous decisions. National agencies operate as the

¹⁵³Richardson J., *Actor Based Models of National and EC Policy-Making: Policy Communities, Issue Networks and Advocacy Coalitions*, op.cit. p.27

¹⁵⁴H. Wallace, W. Wallace, M. Pollack, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, op.cit.pp.77-89

subordinate partners of the commonly agreed regime and there is a distancing from representatives at both national level and the European Parliament (EP) although the latter's influence has increased over time through the use of the co-decision procedure.

This model constitutes a form of supranational policy-making in which powers were transferred from the national to the EU level, with a central and hierarchical institutional process with clear delegation of powers and aimed at positive integration.

The relatively small capacity of the Commission and the implementation issues have led in time to a disuse of the traditional community method and to a much more explicitly role of national or local agencies in operating Community policies. Instead of operating through a centralized and hierarchical institutional process, the Commission works with multiple partners at national and local settings. By the end of the 1980s two successors of the traditional community model emerged and became current: the regulatory mode and the EU distributional mode.

Policy-making in the EU proceeds mostly through the means of regulations, so much so that the EU has been called a "regulatory state"¹⁵⁵ in its pursuit of allocative efficiency. Wallace argues that during the 1990s regulation displaced CAP as the predominant policy paradigm among many EU policy practitioners. Within the EU, this form of policy-making is characterized by the following features: the Commission is the architect of regulatory objectives and rules; the Council is the forum for agreeing on minimum standards and the direction of harmonization, complemented by mutual recognition of diverse national standards in different countries; the European Court of Justice (ECJ) acts to ensure that rules are applied; the

¹⁵⁵G. Majone, "The European Community between Social Policy and Social Regulation", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.31, No.2, 1993, pp.153-170.

European Parliament is a forum for considering the regulation of non-economic goals; there is engagement of a broad host of actors to be consulted about the structure and content of rules.

The EU developed a regulatory framework that combined international standards with state differences. As regulations cannot be achieved simply by rule-making but also requires detailed knowledge and intimate involvement with the regulated activity, a series of agencies were created with this purpose, most of which advise the Commission on technical aspects of regulation but do not possess the authority to take a final and binding decision themselves. The emergence of new bodies, with their reliance on the establishment of norms, benchmarking and use of soft law seem to be a kind of policy co-ordination with neither Commission nor national agencies enjoying primacy. Instead, they interact and co-operate at the transnational level. From an administrative and legal stand point the European Commission is relatively small and lacks the resources and manpower, relying on the member state for their share of implementation when it comes to the regulatory method. This soft form of power, relying on coordination between national and supranational institutions, has become a distinctive form of policy-making within the European Union.

Over the years, the EU policy process has been involved in distributional policy-making, allocating resources to different groups, sectors, regions and countries, explicitly and intentionally at times or as a result of policies designed for different purposes at others.

This mode of policy-making is characterized by the Commission devising programs in conjunction with local and regional authorities benefiting from such participation; member governments agreeing to a budget with redistributive consequences; the European Parliament being an additional source of pressure for regional politics. The development of this form of regional politics was made through the structural funds, whereby money

would be distributed to local and regional bodies to spend on training and employment, in order to fix regional imbalances. This mode has been viewed as 'multi-level governance' although the term is used more generally to designate the diffused form of politics within the EU.

The significance of this form of policy-making may have declined for several reasons. Other policy areas, competition for funds, and enlargement may have precipitated a relative decline in this distributional mode of politics since the amount of structural funds per capita has been far less for the accession countries than it had been for lagging member states and regions at the time of the introduction of the internal market and the Maastricht Treaty.

The fourth type of policy mode, policy coordination, was introduced in the EU as a mechanism of transition from nationally rooted policy-making to a collective EU regime. It was developed in the absence of a strong mandate of the EU to accomplish matters in a particular area. The Commission used this technique to develop light forms of cooperation and coordination in areas adjacent to core EU economic issues in order to make the case for direct policy powers.

This form of policy-making is distinguished by the following features: the Commission as developer of networks of experts, by the involvement of the Council through convening high level groups to deliberate and, by the broad involvement of actors from civil society.

In the 1990s, policy coordination received a boost thanks to developments in monetary and employment policy. Preparations for monetary union first cantered on a set of convergence criteria agreed at Maastricht to prepare for the monetary union. As the monetary union and macro-economic convergence became more intensive, this element of EU activity was largely managed by policy coordination rather than the traditional

community method. A second impulse in the direction of policy coordination came from the Lisbon Strategy adopted in March 2000, which specifically identified and elevated the open method of coordination (OMC) as a distinctive policy technique, with the use of 'soft' policy incentives to shape behaviour. OMC was seen as a way to engage member governments, stakeholders and civil society in benchmarking and coordination. A third factor that helped promote policy coordination was the recognition of cross-country variations in policy and economic performance, making it harder to argue for uniform policy models applicable across the whole EU, especially in light of the future enlargement.

Many innovations within EU foreign, monetary and justice policy originated mainly through interaction of members states with relatively little involvement by EU institutions. This kind of extra-EU activity has been extended in a practice that Wallace characterizes as 'intensive trans-governmentalism'. This policy-mode usually touches upon sensitive areas of state sovereignty such as monetary or security policy which lie beyond the core competencies of the European Union.

This process of intensive trans-governmentalism comprises the following features: an active involvement of the European Council in setting the overall direction of policy; the predominance of the Council of Ministers in consolidating co-operation; a marginal role for the Commission; the exclusion of the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice from involvement; the involvement of a distinct network of national policy-makers.

Intensive trans-governmentalism has been one of the most important and dynamic forms of policy-making within the EU for the last decade, because it introduces sensitive areas of state sovereignty into a collective regime that has dynamically transformed the institutional characteristics of the EU. This policy-mode is not easily understood as inter-governmental because member-states are clearly unsure of what their interests and

preferences are in terms of trans-national co-operation over security or foreign policy, although they are aware that they are affected by common policies and need to wield some influence. It is also not a supra-national approach because member-states are wary of ceding power to some supranational body yet are still willing to submit to some form of collective regime.

The EU is just like any other decision-making organization. Over time it changes its procedures in the light of past practice and, it has a capacity for policy learning that leads to a continuous process of policy adjustment.¹⁵⁶ This review of the EU policy making shows that the more hierarchical methods of governance like the Community method have encountered some intrinsic difficulties that have impeded its success. Other methods of policy making have developed, such as the regulatory mode or policy coordination, together providing a typology for exploring the shifting patterns of EU policy-making and the challenges on the agenda of policy-makers.

2.2.2 Types of policies in the EU:

As observed in the section above, the EU presents a process of policy-making that has developed well rooted norms that have become ingrained in the system over time. In terms of the type of policies¹⁵⁷ that the EU formulates and following Lowi's classification, it is generally accepted that the most common category is that of regulatory policies. The EU has primarily engaged in regulatory activities, earning the title of regulatory state, with the regulatory output being driven by supply and demand factors. On the demand side, the imperative of creating a single market putting pressure on EU member states to adopt a common and harmonized system of

¹⁵⁶J. Richardson, *European Union : power and policy-making*, op.cit.p.25

¹⁵⁷Eva G. Heidbreder, *The Heart Of Political Steering: The Eu's Arenas Of Power As Template For A Governance Typology*, Paper presented at the Eleventh Biennial International Conference European Union Studies Association, Los Angeles, April 23-25, 2009, pp.12-17

regulations. On the supply side the Commission has seen regulations as a way to enhance its policy competences despite the financial limits of its budget.

Some examples of binding acts within the EU are regulations, directives and decisions, which allow for little interpretation on the part of the member states, with the possibility of sanctions from the Commission and the European Court of Justice in situations of non-compliance. Hard regulations are accompanied by a variety of tools in the form of non-binding agreements that leave considerable discretion to the nation states in terms of how to transpose the regulatory policies: recommendations, framework decisions. In addition to this, the EU has developed the so called soft law, which relates to rules of conduct that are not legally binding but have nonetheless a legal scope, guiding the conduct of the institutions, member state and individuals. There has been an evolution regarding the political relationships within the regulatory arena. In order to raise the legitimacy of the EU regulation, the Commission is involved in promoting the consultation of non-state actors, developing an intergovernmental cooperation.

Regarding the redistributive policies there are very few examples in the EU, since the EU works on a balanced budget based on states' contributions determined with relation to a fixed percentage of the GDP of each member. Lacking an independent power to tax and spend, the EC had no alternative but to develop as an almost pure type of regulatory state.

Distributive policies are important in the EU policy-making, although not very common. The EU has, under the pretext of market integration, competition and sound fiscal policy, assumed the role of a regulator of distributive policies. The way in which the Community budget is dispersed creates patronage relationships with specific beneficiaries, because money is allocated mostly in a disaggregated way to regional recipient units that makes it impossible to clearly identify winners and losers. An example of the

distributive arena is the amount of EU budget spent on the Common Agriculture Policy, on the Cohesion and Regional Policy, and on social and education policies or science and technology research.

The formal treaty articles of the EU are expressions of constituent policies, creating powers for certain actors, creating institutional rules, decision making arrangements and in general terms constituting the fundamental basis for EU governance. The goals of the EU are established in the treaties as are the instruments to achieve them, policies and decision-making processes. The treaties, EC law and the Court's jurisprudence establish the constitutive norms of the system and ensured that the EU is rule-bound.

2.2.3 Competence distribution:

There is an expansion of the area of expertise of the EU in terms of legislation and policy making, related to the expansion of its territorial scope and to the developing needs of the ever growing population residing under its banners. In the policy area, while most of the proceedings are of regulatory type, incursions have also been made into interstate distributive policies, an example being the Socrates program, and into interstate redistributive policies such as the structural funds. The EU has acquired for itself the policy-making attributes of a modern state along an ever increasing range of sectors. The EU policy-making system creates implication for the autonomy of the nation-states and in a complex structure that involves a wide range of actors as well as two co-existing policy subsystems, the domestic one and the EU system.

Drives towards competence expansions on the part of the European Union are seen in its continuous redefinition of external territorial boundaries and acquisition of new members, but especially in the institutional competition between the Commission, the Council of Ministers, Parliament

and the European Court of Justice, all trying to enhance their institutional stand and extend their competences. In the treaties the legal definition of competences of the EU presents certain ambiguities, with a combination of treaty specific and enumerated powers and of functional needs that may require special action giving the Community considerable room to manoeuvre.¹⁵⁸

The EU bureaucracy is mostly 'central' and dedicated to policy formulation, and despite its limited size it presents some of the characteristics of a large-scale administrative organization. "...It is so far the only structure that successfully established cross-national effective networks"¹⁵⁹ The Community needs the assistance of national bureaucracies and needs to guide their activities, developing a functional network across national borders that also fosters the formation of transnational functional governance.

The competences of the EU institutions¹⁶⁰ are enumerated in the treaties and decided unanimously by the Member States. However there are numerous ways in which the Commission and even the Parliament can foster the redefinition and expansion of their original tasks, before they come to be formally enumerated in the treaties and in various principle of legal interpretation by which the ECJ can achieve similar effects. Thus the competence distribution within each treaty is subject to contentious discussions due to the plurality of rules and to the complex definition of the legal statuses of acts. In recent years the term 'governing' has been increasingly replaced, in political science discourse with the term "governance" , and this notion has also taken a pre-eminent position in EU research. Specific to the EU policy framework, governance has a twofold

¹⁵⁸Stefano Bartolini, *Restructuring Europe: centre formation, system building and political structuring between the Nation State and the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p.134

¹⁵⁹Ivi.,p.137

¹⁶⁰Ivi.,pp.148-160

approach, vertical and horizontal. The former refers to a distinction between the European authority dimension and the national sphere of action or more generally the member states. The horizontal division of competences is caused by institutional competition between Commission, Council and Parliament concerning the definition of the legal status of the acts, the decision rules to be applied, and the role of the ECJ. It expresses an overrun of the traditional notion of governing, a governance dimension not restricted to state actors, but including private actors, lobby groups, interest groups, NGOs.

With respect to the vertical division of powers, the EU treaties present a failure to institutionalize a clearly defined division of competences between the EU and the nation-states. This ambiguity has probably resulted from the desire to avoid a federal solution of itemizing the competences that belong to the EU, the joint competences and those that pertain to the Member states alone.

The subsidiarity principle of decision-making within the EU calls to the notion that the EU should govern as close as possible to the citizen, and engage in regulation only when absolutely necessary and when it is able to intervene more effectively than member states to complete some fundamental aims of treaties. The formalization of the principle of subsidiarity is made in article 5 of the Community Treaty that states that in areas that do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community will take action, in accordance with this principle, only if the proposed objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states. The Amsterdam Treaty further states that for any proposed Community legislation the reason for concluding that it can be better achieved by the Community must be substantiated by quantitative and qualitative indicators.¹⁶¹ In addition, the Treaty of Lisbon

¹⁶¹Stefano Bartolini, *Restructuring Europe: centre formation, system building and political structuring between the Nation State and the European Union*, op.cit.150-151

innovates by associating national Parliaments closely with the monitoring of the principle of subsidiarity, and by giving an explicit reference to the regional and local levels in the provision concerning the principle, which renders this new approach to subsidiarity more inclusive than it was within the former treaties.

The EU also has a horizontal separation of powers in which the three branches of government take the leading role in the legislative, executive and judicial functions. However what is specific to the EU is that no one institution enjoys full monopoly over any of these functions, with the legislative role being shared by the Parliament and the Council, agenda setting role for the Commission and executive functions shared by the Commission, the member states, and in some areas by independent regulatory agencies. In EU the distinction between legislative and executive power is difficult to clearly define. There is a very high level of institutional competition imbedded in the system with the relations between the EP, the Commission, the Council of Ministers and the ECJ in continuous flux.

The Commission has some features of an executive institution such as administrative bureaucracy to prepare decisions, monitor, implement and enforce them. It is appointed by a different body, namely the European Council and it has a principle of responsibility towards the EP which can dismiss it with two thirds of censure vote. What makes the Commission come short of a government is the lack of constitutional competences concerning the institutional infrastructure and its exclusion from vast areas of EU decision making in the former 2nd and 3rd pillars. Although the Commission has a power of initiative that allows it to become agenda setter, it has a less central role in certain areas.

The Council is sometimes seen as a second state-based legislative chamber reacting to legislation from the Commission and sometimes as a branch of the dual EU executive. It is however an atypical body in each of

these two roles: as a legislative institution there are numerous restrictions to its right to initiate legislation in several areas, while in its executive role it lacks the bureaucratic architecture necessary to process administrative preparation of decisions and it is not appointed by a different body, its composition is fixed and made up of ex-office members rendering it politically non responsible to another body. For the most part the Council negotiates and tries to find consensus over detailed proposals for EU action, often on the basis of a draft from the Commission. In these types of topics the EP is co-legislator with the Council and the decision-making outcome depends on the interactions among the three institutions involved. The formal rules of decision-making vary according to the policy domain, sometimes unanimity, sometimes qualified majority vote (QMV).

While there is uncertainty regarding the executive-legislative relations and executive responsibility within the EU, there is no doubt that the European Parliament is a purely legislative arena. Through its co-decision role with the Council, it became a co-legislator, with the list of matters subject to its communitarian procedure being continuously increased since the Maastricht Treaty. The legislative powers of the EP have grown progressively since the 1980s, from the non-binding consultation procedure established by the EEC Treaty, to the creation of the cooperation procedure and the creation and reform of the co-decision procedure.

The institutional competition also extends to the political agenda of the EU that does not exist as such but is rather a result of the competition. "The fusion and diffusion of legislative and executive powers and roles have over time, contributed decisively to the erratic formation of the agenda, to the increasing complexity of the policy formulation process, and to the diversification and contentiousness of the legal bases and decisional rules of

the EU acts.”¹⁶² The agenda is sometimes dominated by national events, like a national agenda, sometimes decided by the Council, sometimes by the Commission and others by the capacity of the EP to negotiate its support in exchange for policy initiatives. The European Council has progressively expanded its power of decision thereby substantially, if not formally, encroaching into the power of the Commission. The EP’s increased powers have also made it a co-agenda setter in certain areas. The EU agenda setting process is especially problematic because of its transnational nature and because of the state and non-state actors involved in the EU policy process. The EU policy agenda is also susceptible to outside or extra-territorial influences such as international standard setting boards, or non-EU states.

Within the EU policy a number of levels can be determined and the policy process itself goes through various stages. Different models of analysis might be useful at different levels within the EU. If the EU policy-making process were to be conceptualized in five stage (agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, evaluation) different conceptual tools would need to be used in order to understand the process.

There is thus a plurality and complexity of the decisional procedures constituting the main feature of the institutional competition. There are two different types of decision-making within the EU that are often opposed to each other. First the communitarian method characterized by the monopoly of the Commission I legislative initiatives, the frequent use of the qualified majority vote in the Council, the co-decisional role of the EP and the uniformity of interpretation provided by the ECJ. The communitarian method represents the principle that the general interest of the EU is better served when all its institutions can exercise their competencies in the production of

¹⁶²Stefano Bartolini, *Restructuring Europe: centre formation, system building and political structuring between the Nation State and the European Union*, op.cit.160

legislation. Secondly the intergovernmental method that takes away the power of legislative initiative from the Commission, except in a few areas where it is shared with the Council, is characterized by the use of unanimity vote, the consultative role of the EP, and the limited Court intervention. This method is based on the idea that the general interest of the EU is better served when the interest of each single member state is protected. There is however a series of mixed decisional procedures along the continuum of these two poles, with the transference of a decision from the intergovernmental sphere to the community sphere and vice versa.

The variety of decisional procedures, complicated and complex, reflects the ongoing competition among institutions and the changing power balance between them. The policy formation stage also reflects this competition, as it features a series of complex linkages between Commission, EP and Council, each surrounded by numerous committees. As the initiation of legislation, the Commission uses a large network of consultative committees of experts in order to create a proposal to be submitted to the opinion or amendments of the EP. At this point the negotiation starts, involving the Council and its sector groups specialized in the policy area. Once the new norm is formally adopted, the next stage is regulation on the part of the Commission within the range of executive competences delegated by the Council, activity that also involves a large set of consultative, regulative and management committees.

European public policy is thus based on the presence of multiple networks at any level of governance. The proliferation of agencies operating for EU policies and programs and the diffusion of arrangements for policy operation delivery has increased over the past years. This is a specific

feature of the policy process, especially of the implementation phase and likely to produce fragmentation in the institutional structures.¹⁶³

The EU policy process works only by mobilizing a large number of public and private actors, from different nations and policy domains and persuading them to move from the status quo to a new policy settlement. At the supranational level, the EU Commission fulfils its legislative and regulatory functions in an institutional environment dominated by dense networks consisting of Commission officials, scientific experts, private interests, NGOs and other key actors.¹⁶⁴

2.3. The inclusion of civil society: Participants in EU policy-making

As Evers and Laville argue “the third sector has historically been integral to conceptualization of the polity and to social provision in Europe”.¹⁶⁵ A wide range of non-governmental actors are involved at a national and EU level and beyond.

The European Union can be viewed as the most developed post-national polity as well as one of the most prominent models of multi-levelled governance, with a policy making process that involves an often complex interplay between different actors, institutional and non institutional, governmental and non-governmental. In EU governance the role of civil society, perceived as the whole of organized interests, is crucial as it cooperates in policy making through formal or informal channels, by influencing the decision making process through the social and civil dialogues. There is considerable fluidity, ambiguity, unpredictability and

¹⁶³H. Wallace, W. Wallace, M. Pollack, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, op.cit.p.77

¹⁶⁴J. Richardson, *European Union : power and policy-making*, op.cit.p.6

¹⁶⁵Adalbert Evers, Jean-Louis Laville *Defining the Third Sector in Europe* in *The Third Sector in Europe*,op.cit.p.180

complexity to the development of EU policy-making towards the third sector and to their relationship as well.

The third sector organizations have entered the EU scene relatively late, remaining excluded from the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and from the competencies of the European Economic Community (EEC). Despite the establishment of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) under the terms of the treaty, the organs of the EEC conceptualized civil society mostly in terms of all those groups representing organized interests, and their role was therefore mostly seen as that of providing consultancy and feedback to EEC policy making in the context of a “social dialogue.” It was not until the 1980s that the non-profit sector emerged as a recognized actor in the EU policy process, receiving firstly an official mention in the Fontaine Report¹⁶⁶, which endorsed the ally role of the non-profit in helping create the new Europe: "Europe needs inspiration to take a further step towards its destiny as a Community. Non-profit organizations are an opportunity to be taken in this respect".¹⁶⁷

In the 1990s several initiatives were launched by the Directorate General XXIII¹⁶⁸ (DG XXIII) of the European Commission, with its “Social Economy” unit in charge of attending to the third sector. All of them were characterized by inertia, delays and downgrading, as DG XXIII divided its attention between mutual societies, co-operatives and associations, indicating the specific features of the sector in face of economic integration rather than on establishing a strong dialogue with these organizations.

¹⁶⁶Jeremy Kendall, Helmut K. Anheier, “The third sector and the European Union policy process: an initial evaluation”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6:2,1999, p.283

¹⁶⁷European Communities, European Parliament. Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights on non-profit making associations in the European Community (Rapporteur: Mrs N Fontaine). Working Documents, Series A, 8 January 1987, (Document A 2-196/86)

¹⁶⁸DG XXIII - *Directorate-General for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises of the European Commission*, now replaced by Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission (or DG ENTR)

However, the process leading to the enactment of the Maastricht Treaty and to establishing a specific political identity for the newborn EU brought a new understanding of the role of civil society, as the source of a European public opinion in the making and as a privileged actor in fostering the union's democratic legitimacy.¹⁶⁹

As a result, a few policy making initiatives¹⁷⁰ relevant for the third sector were proposed in the following years. One of the most tangible and specific proposals of the Fontaine Report was that concerning the need for a legal instrument that could enable the third sector entities to operate with greater ease transnational. In 1992 the European Association Statute (EAS) was proposed as a draft legislation, which later became part of a larger package, presented by the Commission to the Council and containing detailed proposals for internal decision-making in the proposed European association. Despite the intent little progress was made and the EAS together with other parts of the package finally stalled. Later, Declaration 23 annexed to the Maastricht Treaty, although not formally part of the corpus of European Law, still managed as an expression of political will to put on the agenda and to stress the importance of "co-operation" between the EU and charitable associations and foundations, "as institutions for social welfare establishment and services"¹⁷¹. This was an important step and reference point towards future policy-making in this field.

In 1996 the concept of civil dialogue was coined by DG V, responsible for social policy and with a long experience in consulting with social partners. Together with the Committee of Social and Employment Affairs of the EP,

¹⁶⁹<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo9780199743292-0022.xml> accessed at 02.07.2015

¹⁷⁰Jeremy Kendall, Helmut K. Anheier, "The third sector and the European Union policy process: an initial evaluation", op.cit., pp.289-300

¹⁷¹The Maastricht Treaty. Final Act and Declarations: http://europa.eu/eu-law/decision-making/treaties/pdf/treaty_on_european_union/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf accessed at 02.07.2015

DG V launched a first European Social Policy Forum, to be held every two years, that brought together over a thousand NGOs in the social field with the objective of building a stronger social dialogue in Europe. The idea of “civil dialogue” was then annexed to the Amsterdam Treaty as Declaration 38, stating that :” The Community will encourage the European dimension of voluntary organizations with particular emphasis on the exchange of information and experiences as well as on the participation of the young and the elderly in voluntary work.”¹⁷²

Previous to the Amsterdam Treaty, the Commission presented a Communication on “Promoting the role of voluntary organizations and foundations in Europe”, drafted by DG V and DGXXIII. The Communication of 1997 describes the importance of voluntary organizations as they play a “role in almost every field of social activity. They contribute to employment creation, active citizenship, democracy, provide a wide range of services, play a major role in sport activities, represent citizens’ interests to various public authorities and play a major part in promoting and safeguarding human rights as well as having a crucial role in development policies.”¹⁷³ The Communication was little more than a descriptive account of the situation of voluntary organizations and it ended up gathering slim support from other Community institutions, from national politicians or even third sector organizations.

In the 1999 opinion “The role and contribution of civil society organizations in the Building of Europe” the EESC introduced the term “organized civil society” and “organizations of the civil society” in the EU talk, defining them as “the sum of all organizational structures whose

¹⁷²Treaty Of Amsterdam Amending The Treaty On European Union, The Treaties Establishing The European Communities And Related Acts, http://www.ispesl.it/dsl/dsl_repository/sch35pdf08marzo06/sch35treatyofamsterdam.pdf accessed at 02.07.2015

¹⁷³<http://aei.pitt.edu/6976/> accessed at 02.07.2015

members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens”¹⁷⁴ In terms of their composition civil society organizations are said to include the so-called labour-market players, (i.e. the social partners), organizations representing social and economic players, NGOs which bring people together in a common cause (such as environmental organizations, human rights organizations, consumer associations, charitable organizations, educational and training organizations), CBOs (community-based organizations, i.e. organizations set up within society at grassroots level which pursue member-oriented objectives) such as youth organizations, family associations and all organizations through which citizens participate in local and municipal life and religious communities.

The Commission reacted to the increased demand for the institutionalization of the civil dialogue with a Discussion Paper published in 2000: ‘The Commission and non-governmental organizations: building a stronger partnership’. Its goal was “to give an overview of the existing relationships between the Commission and NGOs including some current problems. Secondly, it aims to suggest possible ways to develop these relationships by considering the measures needed to improve and strengthen the existing relationship between the Commission and the NGOs.”¹⁷⁵ It also referred to the multifunctional character of NGOs and to their capacity to contribute to “participatory democracy”, “interest representation of specific groups and specific issues”, policy discussions, project management and “European integration”.

¹⁷⁴ http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/ces851-1999_ac_en.pdf accessed at 02.07.2015

¹⁷⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52000DC0011> accessed at 03.07.2015

In 2001 the Commission presented a White Paper on European Governance¹⁷⁶ highlighting the importance of civil society organizations as links of communication between the EU and citizens, and stressing their importance in providing a channel for feedback, criticism and protest and for promoting democracy at a national level. It was thus far the most important initiative in laying out the Commission's general objectives and strategy towards the third sector. Through formulation and explicit policy program, the paper aimed at rendering policy-making more inclusive and accountable, proposing four major changes: more involvement of citizens, more effective definition of policies and legislation, engagement in the debate on global governance, and finally the refocusing of policies and institutions on clear objectives.¹⁷⁷ The most important impact of the White Paper has been the incremental elaboration of the Commission's consultation regime with voluntary inclusions of organized civil society and with participation featured as a key concept.

In the past few years the concepts of 'civil dialogue' and 'civil society' have found a place into the EU discourses, most recently in the Lisbon Treaty which further enhances the European Social Dialogue and institutionalizes citizens' initiatives. For the first time the Lisbon Treaty has acknowledged civil society to be a relevant actor in EU affairs and has called upon the EU institutions to maintain a dialogue with civil society. We can now see the beginning of third sector entrepreneurship within the EU institutions, especially European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, through transnational network creation and mobilization, through

¹⁷⁶Annette Zimmer, Matthias Freise, *Bringing Society back in: Civil Society, Social Capital and the Third Sector*, in William A. Maloney, Jan W. van Deth, *Civil Society and Governance in Europe From National to International Linkages*, Edward Edgar Publishing, Cheltenham, 2008, p.36

¹⁷⁷http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/1_avrupa_birligi/1_6_raporlar/1_1_white_papers/com2001_white_paper_european_governance.pdf accessed at 03.07.2015

attempts to provide space for third sector in regulations and structures where it previously did not exist.

There are many benefits to the integration of civil society and civil society groups in the various levels of European and national public sectors and collaborative projects. These include public sphere communication, information acquisition and diffusion, aggregation of preferences, policy improvement, and the ability to represent public sector users at various territorial levels.¹⁷⁸

As outlined above civil society is seen as a possible solution to legitimacy, accountability and other underlined problems related to efficiency in a constantly enlarging EU. These are reasons put forward particularly by the Commission for which co-operation with civil society organizations is advisable and useful. Advantages are linked to output legitimacy and therefore to gains of efficiency and effectiveness but also to input legitimacy, seeing that civil society organizations have the capacity of bringing European policy-making closer and more accessible to the people: "the official bodies of the EU have reaffirmed the role of civil society, especially as a remedy for the much-lamented democratic deficit."¹⁷⁹

A further important reason for including civil society in the policy making process is the information and knowledge they can provide and that otherwise could be difficult to obtain from an institutional level. An effective policy has to be based on good technical, social and political information and seeing that the EU's policy is highly technical, it relies heavily on informational assets and expertise. "Civil society groups, through their scientists and through their grassroots bases, can often provide information that counterbalances that information provided by lobbyists and can

¹⁷⁸Carlo Ruzza, *Organized civil society and political representation in Civil society and international governance*, op.cit.p.54

¹⁷⁹Debora Spini, *Civil Society and International governance*, op.cit.p.26

complement the often limited understanding of social and territorial issues in specific contexts that would be difficult and expensive to study.”¹⁸⁰ Ideally these institutions input their knowledge and information in the European legislative process and influence the democratic legitimacy of the EU, through information exchange, expertise and policy projects, in order to seek solutions to European problems.

As stated previously the importance of distributive policies has significantly grown under the framework of European social policy which encompasses actors on the national and most significantly on the sub-national level. The implementation and monitoring is often done via private actors including non-profit organizations. In this area their contribution can be essential: “The third sector may be viewed above all in terms of potentially employment-creating organizations, especially in countries with above average unemployment rates, which would fit with the European Commission’s focus on social policy as a ‘productive factor’, or it may be viewed as a means of achieving further cost containment in service delivery via the mechanism of contract.”¹⁸¹

Therefore in the public sector, organized civil society performs functions of advocacy, policy pressure, information provision, minority representation, monitoring of policy-making and implementation, and articulating connections with EU institutions, making sure that socially relevant issues translate into the policy agenda. “Due to their multifunctional character, civil society organizations provide the opportunity to combine policy making with elements of participatory democracy that makes them

¹⁸⁰Carlo Ruzza, *Organized civil society and political representation in Civil society and international governance*, op.cit.p.50

¹⁸¹Adalbert Evers, Jean-Louis Laville *Defining the Third Sector in Europe* in *The Third Sector in Europe*, op.cit.,183

very attractive for any approach trying to strengthen multi-level democratic governance”.¹⁸²

2.4 Conclusion:

This chapter aimed at presenting the most relevant aspects of public policy-making starting with definitions, types, process and actors involved, in order to subsequently analyze how and if these features are mirrored in a supra-national setting.

The EU is an important example of post-national polity characterized by the concept of “multilevel governance” which implies that sub-regional, regional, national and supranational authorities interact with each other, on the one hand across different levels of government and, and on the other, with other relevant actors within the same level. The competence distribution within the EU is characterized by a sort of institutional competition while the policy process is the setting for an ever widening agenda, in line with the territorial expansion of the EU. This structure has an impact on what is considered a relevant issue, on how decisions are taken, how they are implemented and on the number of stakeholders involved.

The multilevel institutional complexity characterizing the EU involves social NGOs, who contribute or ought to contribute to policy-making in order to enhance legitimacy of the inputs through participation, thereby improving policy outputs. In balancing member, national, European and international developments, interests and strategies, co-operative action is difficult to achieve but it is sought by both EU institutions and civil society organizations, with a number of institutional declarations, consultations and creation of formal or informal networks.

¹⁸²Annette Zimmer, Matthias Freise, *Bringing Society back in: Civil Society, Social Capital and the Third Sector*, op.cit. p.41

The inclusion of civil society and non-profit actors in the EU policy-making process and their collaboration in instances of implementation will be further observed in the following chapter in regards to European Youth Policies and to the European Voluntary Service in particular.

Chapter 3

Youth policies and programmes in the EU. The role of Non formal learning and European Voluntary Service

The youth field is by definition multidisciplinary and transversal. Youth can be defined¹⁸³ as a period of transition from a condition of dependency to a condition of autonomy which allows young people to take responsibility for their lives. Youth policies are designed to manage human potential, providing answers to crucial aspects of the process of social integration of young people. "Youth policy is concerned with participation and citizenship and with combating social exclusion and promoting social inclusion. It is concerned with ensuring that young people have access to information by which they can make informed choices. It is also concerned with multiculturalism and minorities, with mobility and internationalism, with young people's safety and protection, and with promoting equal opportunities."¹⁸⁴

In order to improve and develop the living conditions, participation and integration for young people, youth policies produce strategies and practices that can address these challenges. Educational and youth integrated policy measures are adopted in order to achieve this, together with other tools such as: non-formal learning, voluntarism, associative life, participation

¹⁸³ *Youth Policies in the European Union. Structures and Training*, European Commission, Studies nr.7, Office for Official Publications for the European Commission, Luxembourg, 1995, p.65

¹⁸⁴ *Supporting young people in Europe: principles, policy and practice*, The Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy 1997-2001 – a synthesis report, Council of Europe Publishing, October 2002, p.8

opportunities, consultation, adult support, information and counselling, risk prevention.¹⁸⁵

Across the European Union, each member state is responsible for developing its own education, training and youth policies and for deciding the contents of the teaching, and the levels of government at which education is dealt with, with many decisions further delegated to universities, schools, training establishments, etc. Although the emphasis attached to these priorities is different in different member states, there are nevertheless common trends and needs concerning young people across Europe. An important aspect of education is the European dimension, which means that learning should involve crossing borders.¹⁸⁶ Cooperation at European level is desirable because economies are closely interlinked and a European labour market has been developing in recent years, making mobility and language skills of growing importance, as well as avoiding social exclusion, promoting multicultural composition and the role of youth in civil society. The EU has a key role in providing a context for addressing youth issues through its role in supporting specific matters concerning access to education, training and the labour market.¹⁸⁷

In comparison with other policy areas at a European level, the concept of “youth” is a relatively recent phenomenon. Youth policies at an EU level have received formalization only some fifteen years ago with the consultations undertaken in view of preparing the White Paper on Youth of 2001.¹⁸⁸ However, with the first programme activities in the sector in 1989 and the promotion of European cooperation in the youth field, today we can

¹⁸⁵ *The European Union explained: Education, training, youth and sport*, European Commission Directorate-General for Communication Publications, Manuscript completed in March 2014, p.4

¹⁸⁶ *Ivi.*, p.5

¹⁸⁷ *European Research on Youth. Supporting Young People to participate fully in society*, Directorate General for Research Socio-economic and Humanities, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2009, p.19

¹⁸⁸ *Ivi.* p.15

look back at roughly twenty five years of youth related programmes in the EU.¹⁸⁹

3.1 EU Youth policies: a timeline

Article 149.2 of the Maastricht Treaty (now Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), extended the scope of EU policies to include the youth field, “encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio educational instructors”.¹⁹⁰ On the basis of this article, various European level actions related to young people have been developed in recent years in the fields of education, employment, vocational training and information technologies. These programmes introduced the European dimension and support to European citizenship in their objectives, placing high priority on inclusion, participation in education and training, intercultural education. EU member states have also begun to cooperate on issues related to youth exchanges and mobility.

Prior to this, the activities of European institutions in the youth field were mainly focused on the consideration and implementation of specific programmes like “Youth for Europe” launched with a Council decision in 1988, and promoting youth exchanges in the Community, that was then facing an economic crisis with youth unemployment reaching 20%. The programme was developed in three consecutive phases and lasted until 1998, responding to young people’s call to take part in European life and intensify experiences and interactions between member states.

A year before, the Erasmus programme established the scheme that allowed European students to get to know other countries during their

¹⁸⁹<http://www.juventudenaccion.injuve.es/opencms/export/download/noticias/25ansEUYouth.pdf> accessed at 29.07.2015

¹⁹⁰The Maastricht Treaty. Final Act and Declarations: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12002E149> accessed at 02.07.2015

studies, meet young people from other cultures and experience different university systems. This has led to the expansion of the idea of cross-border youth exchanges and to the realisation of the importance of non-formal experiences and learning. A second generation of programmes, YOUTH, SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI, launched in 2000 had a further significant impact for people experiencing mobility in Europe.¹⁹¹ European Youth programmes have contributed to a large degree in the consolidation of civil society and to the professional development of youth work in general, having an impact not only on young people and the youth sector but also on the policy side.

Such programmes have influenced the development of more formal EU policies in the youth field. A series of widespread consultations were held throughout the 90s, establishing further cooperation, political work and debate directed at reaching optimum consensus on youth issues between the then 15 states, in order to move beyond the existing EU programmes. As a result a White Paper on Youth was published and adopted in November 2001, with the intent of promoting active citizenship among young people and setting out a framework for cooperation among the various actors in the youth field in order to better involve young people in decisions that concern them.¹⁹² Drawing on the experience of policy-making gathered from European and member state levels, the White paper identifies the major challenges faced by youth such as the lack of confidence in the decision-making system and in the traditional forms of participation in public life and youth organizations. The Paper also establishes the need for adequate responses in order to support the development of inclusive societies, calling for the advancement of policies at a European and national level and of

¹⁹¹Griet Verschelden, Filip Coussée, Tineke Van de Walle and Howard Williamson (eds), *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today*, Council of Europe Publishing, July 2009, p.11

¹⁹²Ivi.p.12

active engagement at member states and regional levels in order to identify implementation methods.¹⁹³ Furthermore, it states that a participatory youth policy approach needs to be mainstreamed through all policy sectors if it is to affect young people's lives in a meaningful way.

The White Paper thus proposed a new framework consisting of two components: increasing cooperation between EU countries and taking greater account of the youth factor in sectorial policies. The open method of co-ordination (OMC) was adapted to the youth sector and a proposal was launched to EU member states to increase collaboration with the Commission and the European Youth Forum on priority areas such as: youth participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth and quality standards for youth work. The White Paper also proposed to take the youth dimension into account in a larger degree when making other relevant policies, strategies or action plans such as in education and training, employment and social inclusion, health and anti-discrimination: "All the other subjects which were mentioned during the consultation exercise, such as employment, education, formal and non-formal types of learning, social integration, racism and xenophobia, immigration, consumer affairs, health and risk prevention, the environment, equal opportunities for men and women, etc. will require close coordination with the various authorities, at both national and European level...The European Commission will ensure that guidelines concerning young people will be taken more into account of in these policies and forms of action"¹⁹⁴ The White Paper also stresses the interconnectedness between formal and non-formal education and the importance of non-governmental youth organizations in promoting citizenship and social inclusion in the youth field: "

¹⁹³ *European Research on Youth. Supporting Young People to participate fully in society*, op.cit.pp.15-16

¹⁹⁴ European Commission White Paper A New Impetus For European Youth, http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijazghazagh/downloads/white_paper.pdf accessed at 29.07.2015

Formal learning in schools, universities and through vocational training centres and non-formal and informal learning outside of these settings are equally essential in developing the skills that young people need today.”¹⁹⁵

Despite its many innovations, the weakness of the White paper is that the secondary status of youth policy is reproduced by a concept of participation that remains largely procedural, while substantial issues such as economic and social autonomy are not brought up.¹⁹⁶

In June 2002, on the basis of the White Paper, the Council of the European Union established a Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field, which had three main priorities: active citizenship for young people, social and occupational integration and including youth dimension in other policy matters. It further stated the endorsement of the four thematic priorities set out by the White paper, and stresses the importance of the OMC in reaching the goals: “Young people, whether organised or not, as well as youth associations as representatives of youth, should be associated with the cooperation framework both at the European and national level.”¹⁹⁷

The framework was later updated in 2005 to take into account the European Youth Pact, focused on themes such as employment, integration and social advancement, aimed at promoting participation of all young people in education, employment and society, prioritizing social inclusion of vulnerable youth, tackling the validation of non-formal and informal learning,

¹⁹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁹⁶ *EU Research on Social Sciences and Humanities Youth Policy and Participation. Potentials of participation and informal learning for young people's transitions to the labour market. A comparative analysis in ten European regions*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007, p.119

¹⁹⁷ 2002/C 168/02 Resolution Of The Council And Of The Representatives Of The Governments Of The Member States, Meeting Within The Council of 27 June 2002 at http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijazghazagh/downloads/framework_eu_coop_en.pdf accessed at 29.07.2015

developing a “Youthpass”¹⁹⁸, implementing the Europass decision ¹⁹⁹ and ensuring that fewer people leave school prematurely. This was the first time that the “youth” issue got specific attention from the European Council, stating that: “the destiny of Europe increasingly depends on its ability to foster societies that are child and youth-friendly.”²⁰⁰ The European Youth Pact responds the problem of high levels of youth unemployment by proposing work with and for young people to ensure their participation in every aspect of social and economic life. The Council also advanced recommendations to EU and Member States to implement concrete policies, such as: monitoring policies for the sustained integration of young people into the labour market, endeavouring to increase the employment rate of young people, giving priority under national social inclusion policies to improving the situation of the most vulnerable young people – particularly those in poverty – and to initiatives to prevent educational failure, inviting employers and businesses to display social responsibility in the vocational integration of young people.²⁰¹

In this context of initiatives set to improve employment, education and participation, the European Commission made a further commitment towards young people, aiming at promoting their social inclusion and professional

¹⁹⁸Youthpass is the instrument of validation and recognition for the Youth in Action Programme. Through the Youthpass certificate, the European Commission ensures that the learning experience gained through the Youth in Action Programme is recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal learning

¹⁹⁹Established in 2005, Europass is a portfolio of five different documents and an electronic folder aiming to contain descriptions of the entire holder’s learning achievements, official qualifications, work experience, skills and competences, acquired over time. All documents share a common brand name (Europass) and logo.

²⁰⁰COM(2005) 206 final Communication From The Commission To The Council on European policies concerning youth Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship, http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijazghazagh/downloads/youth_pact_en.pdf accessed at 29.07.2015

²⁰¹*Youth and Work, European foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions*, 2011,p.3 at <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/foundation-findings/2011/labour-market-social-policies/foundation-findings-youth-and-work> accessed at 30.07.2015

integration²⁰². The result was the “EU Strategy for Youth: Investing and Empowering ” announced by the Commission in 2008 and published in 2009, a communication that proposed a new strategy for European youth policy. It adopted a cross-sectorial policy approach to youth issues and strengthened cooperation in policy-making at all levels. In line with the EU’s vision for young people, based on two approaches investing in and empowering youth, the proposed new strategy paid particular attention to youth with fewer opportunities. The main goals presented by the strategy were to create more opportunities in youth education and employment, improve access to full participation of all young people in society and to foster solidarity between youth and society. Under the framework “Creating more education and employment opportunities” for young people, the suggestions were that non-formal education be better integrated to complement formal education, that education provide the skills demanded by the labour market and that creative skills be promoted among young people. The aim “fostering mutual solidarity between young people and society” proposed the promotion of more volunteering opportunities for young people, including cross-border, with an adequate recognition of the non-formal education.²⁰³ In this instance, EU programmes and funds, most notably the Youth-in-Action programme²⁰⁴, was used to support youth policy and to provide opportunities for young people, and measures taken to ensure the widespread availability of information about these opportunities.

²⁰²Griet Verschelden, Filip Coussée, Tineke Van de Walle and Howard Williamson (eds), *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today*, op.cit., p13

²⁰³COM(2009) 200 final Communication From The Commission To The Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions. An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering .A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities, http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijazghazagh/downloads/investing_empowering_en.pdf accessed at 30.07.2015

²⁰⁴Decision No 1719/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 established the ‘Youth in Action’ programme for the period 2007 to 2013 Official Journal L 327 , 24/11/2006 http://www.juventudenaccion.injuve.es/opencms/export/download/noticias/25ans_EUYouth.pdf accessed at 30.07.2015

In 2009, the Council endorsed a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), based on the Communication 'EU Youth Strategy: Investing and Empowering', which included the application of the open method of coordination and mainstreaming of youth issues into other policies, and the European Youth Pact adopted by the March 2005 European Council as one of the instruments contributing to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives for growth and jobs. By reinforcing cooperation and sharing good practices, the EU Youth Strategy further stated that "In the period up to and including 2018, the overall objectives of European cooperation in the youth field should be to: create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market; and to promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people."²⁰⁵, branching out in the fields of Education and training, Employment and entrepreneurship, Health and well-being, Participation, Voluntary activities, Social inclusion, Youth and the world, Creativity and culture.

The strategy is rooted in the following instruments: evidence-based policy-making; mutual learning; regular progress-reporting, dissemination of results and monitoring; structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations and mobilisation of EU programmes and funds. This strategy sees youth work as a support to all fields of action and cross-sectorial cooperation as an underlying principle. The nine-year strategy is divided into three cycles. Towards the end of each cycle, an EU Youth Report is drawn up assessing results, and proposing new priorities for the next three-year cycle.

²⁰⁵2009/C 311/01 Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) at http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijazghazagh/downloads/renewed_framework_.pdf accessed at 30.07.2015

The 2012 Youth Report²⁰⁶ focused on the challenges faced by young people as a result of the financial crisis and calls for stronger actions on employment, social inclusion, health and well-being of young people. It includes a summary of how the EU Youth Strategy has been implemented at national and EU level since 2010 and a comprehensive analysis of the situation faced by young people. It thus places the EU Youth Strategy at the centre of Europe 2020 and sees Youth in Action and its successor Erasmus Plus as important contributors to the achievements of the objectives of the strategy.

A large part of the problems that youth policy initiatives usually deal with have to do with the consequences of youth unemployment, a phenomenon that has recently reached worrying proportions. Unemployment is a social problem with serious impact on the lives of young people. A large part of unemployed youth is made up of people with no qualifications who have left the education system too early, people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, or at risk groups that have trouble inserting themselves in the labor market and require a policy that takes into account their problems and needs.²⁰⁷ There are also growing difficulties related to the transition from school and training to the labour market, that now deals with unemployment at a large scale, with marginalization and even social exclusion. As a result, it can be observed that activities in the youth field are more and more focused on employability and better transition into the labour market.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/eu-youth-report-2012_en.pdf accessed at 30.07.2015

²⁰⁷ *Youth Policies in the European Union. Structures and Training*, European Commission, op.cit. pp.104-105

²⁰⁸ Verschelden, Filip Coussée, Tineke Van de Walle and Howard Williamson (eds), *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today*, op.cit., p.14

3.1.1 Youth initiatives in response to youth unemployment

The recent financial crisis has led to the exposure of structural weaknesses and to an upsurge in youth unemployment that has reached 20% of the EU as a whole and more than 50% in some member states. This has been mostly detrimental to young people of working age, with youth unemployment rates being twice as high as adult ones. However there are further factors that contribute to this negative trend, such the lack of skills, poor education, and what is generally referred to as a skills gap, a mismatch between the skills being required by an employer and those possessed by the applicants.²⁰⁹ “Young people in Europe continue to experience great difficulties in the labour market. While the youth unemployment rate has started to decrease in a few Member States, overall 23% of young job-seekers aged 15–24 in the EU28 could not find a job in January 2014. The number of young people who were not in employment, education or training (the so called NEETs group) in 2012 increased to 14.6 million, representing 15.9% of the entire population of those aged 15–29”²¹⁰ These figures point to structural problems in the labour market but also to a lack of proper transition mechanism from education to employment.

As stated in a Commission Communication from 2012²¹¹, “being unemployed at a young age can have a long-lasting negative impact, a <scarring effect>”. Therefore, developing more targeted and individualised actions for youth job-seekers is a priority for the future, as enabling young people to enter the labour market is very important not only for the individual unit but for the economy as a whole.

²⁰⁹ *The European Union explained: Education, training, youth and sport*, op.cit., p.3

²¹⁰ *Mapping youth transitions in Europe*, European foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions (Eurofund), Luxembourg Publications Office of the European Union, 2014, p.1

²¹¹ COM(2012) 727 Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions Moving Youth into Employment, Brussels 5.12.2012

A measure aimed to improve this situation is that of European Social Fund (ESF), an instrument that supports youth employment measures at a European level. The Commission's proposals for the 2014-2020 Multi annual Financial Framework highlights the role of the ESF as the EU's key instrument for investing in human capital, proposing that at least 25% of future cohesion funding is allocated to the ESF and that at least 20% of it is earmarked for social inclusion policies. Youth employment can be addressed under a number of ESF investment priorities, and specific attention has been proposed to the sustainable integration of NEETs in the labour market.

A further improvement of the current situation according to the Commission Communication could be given by increased youth mobility, which could offer more employment opportunities for young people: "More favourable labour market outcomes can be observed in countries where a higher proportion of students undertake quality traineeships or work placements as part of initial education and training or in countries with well-established apprenticeship systems. Geographical mobility can also help resolve local mismatches between supply and demand for young workers.

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The substantial differences existing between youth unemployment levels, coupled with a rise in vacancy rates in some Member States, highlight that intra-EU mobility can give young people access to more employment opportunities. Transnational traineeships and apprenticeships offer many advantages in this regard, together with the possibility of trying out working in another country without immediately committing to long-term employment. However, these options are not yet widespread, in contrast to the openness towards mobility generally shown by young people and to the success

²¹²ivi.p.3

enjoyed by programmes aimed at studying abroad, such as Erasmus and Leonardo.

A step in this direction is accomplished through the EURES decision of November 2012, of transforming the European jobs network into a result-oriented matching and placement instrument that will be expanded to also cover work-related apprenticeships and traineeships”.²¹³ The development of ‘Your first EURES Job’²¹⁴ mobility initiative to help EU nationals aged 18 to 30 to find work in another Member State is of direct relevance to young people, supporting them in locating and taking up jobs, work experience, apprenticeships and traineeships in other EU countries. Activities are founded at an annual basis, since 2012 and the most recent evaluation report of 2014 shows improvements in responding to labour market needs by focusing on youth unemployment through the instrument of mobility.

The Youth Opportunities Initiative²¹⁵ (YOI) is a set of measures taken between 2012 and 2013 to drive down youth unemployment as a part of the larger Youth on the Move education and employment initiative. EU Structural Funds were mobilised to increase support for youth and financial resources for policy measures and investment projects are now being funded, in order to address the different short-term and structural problems behind the youth employment crisis.

With its initiative ‘Youth on the Move’, the Commission has set out how the EU can reach the EU 2020 targets by improving education and training systems, making stronger policy efforts to combat youth unemployment and promoting – both at national and European level – greater mobility within the EU for education and work:” to expand career and life-enhancing learning opportunities for young people with fewer

²¹³ |vi.p.15

²¹⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1160> accessed at 31.07.2015

²¹⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1006> accessed at 31.07.2015

opportunities and/or at risk of social exclusion. In particular, these young people should benefit from the expansion of opportunities for non-formal and informal learning and from strengthened provisions for the recognition and validation of such learning within national qualifications frameworks. This can help to open the doors to further learning on their part”.²¹⁶ The initiative’s strategies include concrete recommendations addressed to Member States, new legislative initiatives, better information tools for young people and promoting greater involvement on the part of business.

The Commission is making European Social Fund technical assistance available to help set up of apprenticeship-type schemes, cross-border learning mobility and social innovation projects targeting youth. It is also increasing volunteering opportunities and financing cross-border traineeships and entrepreneur exchanges. Among the other actions promoted are: Erasmus & Leonardo Da Vinci – 130,000 company placements in 2012 in other EU countries for university-level and vocational student, Erasmus for Entrepreneurs – 600 placements for young entrepreneurs in small businesses in other EU countries, European Voluntary Service – 10,000 volunteering opportunities across all EU countries, now all key actions of the new Erasmus plus programme.

The EU recognizes voluntary organizations and youth NGOs as indispensable partners often assigning them tasks such as coordination and implementation of some aspects of youth policies, preparation of some programmes designed to encourage young people to take initiative, creation of support mechanism to make it possible for young people to enhance their participation in the economic, political and social life of the community or country.

²¹⁶ *Youth and Work*, European foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, op.cit, p.3 at <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/foundation-findings/2011/labour-market-social-policies/foundation-findings-youth-and-work> accessed at 30.07.2015

Youth policies thus converge towards providing young people with possibilities of mobility, allowing them to meet young people from other member states and countries and to understand the value and particular features of different cultural practices and traditions. Furthermore they take concrete initiatives to help young people and in particular disadvantaged youth, to become integrated in society, by breaking down social inequalities, offering alternatives and reducing marginalization for certain groups. While certain EU programmes such as Erasmus Placement, Socrates and Leonardo are addressed mostly to university trained youth, EVS combines the two features described above and is open to a wider set of young people, through non-formal learning and volunteering.

3.2 Non formal learning: European Voluntary Service

The EU has adopted a broad and comprehensive approach to learning, which includes a whole range of different learning methods and environments: formal, non-formal and informal, as key instruments in providing support for young people, validation and evaluation of youth organizations and their contribution. Formal learning is typically provided by an education or training establishment, in an institutionalized environment, and leads to certification. It is structured in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support, and it is purposive from the learner's perspective. Non-formal learning²¹⁷ on the other hand, means learning outside the formal school or training settings and takes place in a variety of environments and situations, through planned activities involving some form of learning support, such as structured online learning; in-company training; youth work, programmes for early school-leavers to impart literacy or work

²¹⁷European Commission White Paper a New Impetus for European Youth, http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijazghazagh/downloads/white_paper.pdf accessed at 29.07.2015

skills.²¹⁸ It is not provided by an education or training institution although it may be staffed by professional learning facilitators such as youth trainers or by volunteers that organize and plan the activities but seldom frame them according to conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects. Non-formal learning typically does not lead to certification or conventional assessment documents, but it is structured, purposive and voluntary.

Non-formal learning as an approach is important because it promotes the acquiring of essential skills and competencies that are necessary in work, studies and life in general, while increasing young peoples' social skills and level of participation in communities. Non-formal learning has been successfully applied by NGOs and the public sector to improve the employability of young people, motivating the learning of skills needed to apply for a job or training. There are many principles of youth activities in the field of non-formal learning: the voluntary and self/organized character of learning, the motivation of participants, a supportive learning environment, the evaluation of success and failure in a collective manner, the participatory and learner-centred approach.²¹⁹ Non-formal has the potential of becoming a complementary learning method to formal education, making for a more direct relationship with real life situations, a more transparent exposure to values and political interests.

However there is often a lack of understanding of the benefits of non-formal learning as a whole particularly in youth activities, thus the need for a strengthened awareness of key persons and institutions in society, of the

²¹⁸ *The European Union explained: Education, training, youth and sport*, European Commission Directorate-General for Communication Publications, Manuscript completed in March 2014, p.6

²¹⁹ *Pathways 2.0 Towards Validation And Recognition Of Education, Training & Learning In The Youth Field*, Council of Europe and European Commission Youth Research, Strasbourg and Brussels, 2011
at http://pjpeu.coe.int/documents/1017981/3084932/Pathways_II_towards_recognition_of_non-formal_learning_Jan_2011.pdf/6af26afb-daff-4543-9253-da26460f8908 accessed at 15.08.2015

main players such as social partners, NGOs in order to promote learning and enhance social recognition of this type of education.

The European Commission and the Council of Europe share the same values and philosophy regarding education, training and learning in youth activities as a part of voluntary and civil society activities and on the validation and recognition of such activities. The main motivation is to ensure social inclusion and encourage solidarity, active citizenship, volunteering, as well as improve employability as a result.

All education and training activities promoted by the European Union plead for a better validation of non-formal learning and state the need for its better social and formal recognition. The lifelong learning strategy identifies assessment and recognition of non-formal learning as one of the key priorities and calls for the establishment of methodologies, systems and standards based on exchange of experience and good practice. The Copenhagen Declaration²²⁰ asks to give priority to the development of a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning with the aim of ensuring greater compatibility between different approaches.

The Council of Europe adopted, in 2003, a Recommendation on the promotion and the recognition of non-formal education/training of young people that states: "skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning can play an important role in enhancing employability and mobility, as well as increasing motivation for lifelong learning"²²¹

²²⁰Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training at http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/copenhagen-declaration_en.pdf accessed at 16.08.2015

²²¹Rec(2003)8, Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people at <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=21131> accessed at 16.08.2015

The final Declaration²²² following the 8th Conference of ministers responsible for youth within the Council of Europe focuses on the Councils' priorities, among which social inclusion for young people receives primacy. This mission statement translates into supporting the integration of excluded young people and ensuring young peoples' equal access to education, training and working life particularly through the promotion of non-formal education and learning. The implementation of these priorities relies on intergovernmental and international cooperation on youth policy development, multilateral youth cooperation and "intercultural learning as a non-formal education/learning method particularly relevant for promoting intercultural dialogue and combating racism and intolerance."²²³

The Council Recommendation in the youth policy field from 2008, emphasizes volunteering as a means to enhance young people's professional skills and competences, employability, sense of solidarity and foster active citizenship: "voluntary activities constitute a rich experience in a non-formal educational and informal learning context which enhances young people's professional skills and competences, contributes to their employability and sense of solidarity, develops their social skills, smoothes their integration into society and fosters active citizenship."²²⁴

The EU supports cooperation projects between youth organisations worldwide. These projects aim to improve the quality and recognition of youth work, non-formal learning and volunteering in different regions of the world and particularly in developing countries. The White Paper on Youth stresses

²²²MJN-8(2008)4 Declaration, "The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020", 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, Kyiv, Ukraine 10-11 October 2008 at https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG_Coop/Min_Conferences/2008_Kyiv_CEMRY_Declaration_en.pdf accessed at 16.08.2015

²²³Ibidem.

²²⁴C(2008) 319 Council Recommendation of 20 November 2008 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2008.319.01.0008.01.ENG accessed at 16.08.2015

that: “youth associations, social workers and local authorities in many countries are involved in in-depth work with young people. While continuing to be innovative and non-formal, and as a part of the overall package of lifelong learning measures, this work would benefit from a ...greater complementarity with formal education and training”.²²⁵

Programmes in the field of education, training and youth have provided a setting for exploring ways in which young people can be supported in their education and training through initiatives such as Socrates and Leonardo Programmes and the Lifelong Learning Programme. In the process of developing their citizenship, social solidarity and specific competences by means of non-formal or informal education, the European Voluntary Service serves as a broad framework targeting young people.²²⁶

3.2.1 European Voluntary Service (EVS):

The programmes in the field of youth, education and training, introduced the concept of volunteering where young people are encouraged to support initiatives of benefit to the quality of life of European citizens. The 1998 Decision No 168/98/EC of the European Parliament and the Council, established the Community Action Programme "European Voluntary Service for Young People",²²⁷ opened to all young people regardless of their social, educational or cultural background, aged between 18 and 30. Projects can last between 2 and 12 months and are set in place through a sending organization (SO) in the volunteer's country of residence and a host organization (HO) for the period of service abroad. EVS covers a variety of

²²⁵European Commission White Paper A New Impetus For European Youth, http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijazghazagh/downloads/white_paper.pdf accessed at 29.07.2015

²²⁶European Research on Youth. Supporting Young People to participate fully in society, Directorate General for Research Social-economic and Humanities, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2009, p.15

²²⁷European Parliament Decision No. 168/98/EC <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L .1998.214.01.0001.01.ENG> accessed at 17.08.2015

fields such as culture, youth, sports, children, cultural heritage, animal welfare, environment, development cooperation etc.

With a particular focus on inclusion and respect for diversity this programme involves young generations in twofold experiences: the acquisition of skills through non-formal or informal learning and the development of their active citizenship. The aims of the programme as expressed in the joint decision are: “ ... to encourage mobility and solidarity among young people as part of active citizenship, to promote, and give them the chance of acquiring, informal educational experience in a variety of sectors of activity, which may be one of the foundations of their future development, and to promote, through their participation in transnational activities of benefit to the community, an active contribution on their part to the ideals of democracy, tolerance and solidarity in the context of European integration and to cooperation between the European Community and third countries.”²²⁸

As presented in the EVS Charter²²⁹, the principles to be ensured by the programme are: the non-formal learning and intercultural dimension, through a clear definition of a learning plan for the volunteer; the benefit to and the contact with the local community; the service dimension through a clear definition of the non-profit-making character of the project and the volunteer tasks, the full-time service and active role of the volunteer in implementing the activities. Because a lower socio-economic background is a big barrier to volunteering and to voluntary service, EVS is set up as a free of charge programme for the volunteers, except for a possible contribution to the travel costs. A further important feature of the programme is the accessibility and Inclusion provided when recruiting EVS volunteers. The

²²⁸Ibidem

²²⁹European Voluntary Service Charter, version 1 of 2005 at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/mobility/european-voluntary-service_en.htm accessed at 17.08.2015

organisations maintain the overall accessibility of EVS for all young people, without prejudice related to ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc.

EVS relies on a strong partnership and shared responsibilities between sending organisations, host organisations and volunteers. Support is guaranteed to volunteers before, during and after the EVS activities, in particular in crisis prevention and management but also for issues regarding insurance, visa, residence permit, travel arrangements and all the EVS administrative procedures. The volunteers are also guaranteed participation in an EVS training cycle and ensured proper evaluation measures at the end of their activities. The training cycle is coordinated by the National Agency of the host country, and consists of activities that support volunteers in the learning process through an on-arrival training and a mid-term evaluation. These elements are crucial for the stability and well-being of the volunteer as well as for the success of the project. All the logistical aspects and documents such as work contract (activities, mission, tools, rights, obligations and duties, vacation days), decent accommodation, food, pocket money, insurance, public transport, certain EVS cards, specific needs, tutor, project coordinator are also covered by the project as is the comprehensive health insurance for the entire period of volunteering abroad and language training in the country of destination.

EVS is a powerful learning experience for young people, stimulating their sense of initiative, autonomy, responsibility, coupled with a strong dimension of competences-development and values-acquisition. EVS also has a positive impact for participants and for the hosting communities, as reflected in the March 2011 survey²³⁰. On the basis of volunteers' testimonies, the study states that as a result of EVS, young participants: feel

²³⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/evs-impact_en.pdf accessed at 18.08.2015

more confident to move around on their own in other countries for purposes of study, internship, work, travel, etc. (76% replied "definitely"; 19% "to some extent"); have a clearer idea about their professional career aspirations and goals (76%); they plan to engage in further educational opportunities (87%) and also believe that their job chances have increased (75%); feel more aware of common European values (85%) and are more committed to the inclusion of disadvantaged people (81%). Furthermore, organisations involved in EVS declared that the EVS project was perceived as enrichment by the local environment/community (86%).

In 2000 EVS became part of the EU Youth programme²³¹ which was set up to combine in one instrument several activities that existed in previous programmes such as Youth for Europe and the European Voluntary Service, for the period 2000-2006: "This Decision establishes a Community framework intended to contribute to the development of transnational voluntary service activities [...] the participation of young people in voluntary service activities is a type of informal education leading to the acquisition of additional knowledge, whose quality should be largely based on appropriate preparatory measures, including those of a linguistic and cultural nature. It helps to determine the future direction of their lives, to broaden their horizons and to develop their social skills, active citizenship and balanced integration into society from the economic, social and cultural points of view, including preparation for working life, and promotes awareness of true European citizenship."²³² The Commission and Member States seek to guarantee complementarity between European voluntary service activities and the various similar national schemes. The decision is also based on the objectives defined by the Commission in its communication "Towards a

²³¹Decision No 1031/2000/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2000 drawing up the "YOUTH" Community Action Program, Official Journal L 117 , 18/05/2000 at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32000D1031> accessed at 20.08.2015

²³²Ibidem

Europe of knowledge " and hence tends to favour the creation of a European educational area, cooperation policy in the youth field, including European voluntary service and youth exchanges both within the Community and with third countries.

The Commission later extended EVS under the "Youth in Action" programme (YiA) from 2007 to 2013 and introduced new structuring elements. The "Youth in Action" adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2006²³³ focused on the most important aspects of non-formal education, learning methods and mobility, promoted intercultural dialogue among European youth, and encouraged the inclusion of all young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities, by supporting a large variety of activities, including youth exchanges, transnational voluntary service as well as training and networking for youth workers.

Throughout its duration the YiA programme was divided into five sections. As action 2 of Youth in Action- Developing solidarity and tolerance through voluntary activities abroad to the benefit of local communities, EVS became more visible and effective and met the increasing demand from young people. In total close to 31 000 young people have participated in the European Voluntary Service under Youth in Action, bringing the total number of volunteers to more than 55 000 since the creation of this scheme.

EVS is thus an important non-formal learning experience for young people, with a view of enhancing their skills and competences in terms of future employability prospects as well as their active citizenship and participation. The volunteers' progresses are documented by means of an EVS certificate or Youthpass, which confirms the participation of volunteers and describes their specific EVS project. The strategy of validation and

²³³Decision No 1719/2006/EC of the European Parliament and Council at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52006PC0228> accessed at 20.08.2015

recognition of non-formal learning is embedded in the Youthpass developments. The aim of this strategic approach is to raise awareness and support a professional public debate concerning the individual, social, formal, and political dimensions of recognition of non-formal learning and youth work. The certificate describes what volunteers learned during their project using the Key competences for Lifelong Learning as a framework: communication in mother tongue, communication in foreign language, mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology, digital competences, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression.

The EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering (2010-2018) strengthens youth volunteering, by developing more voluntary opportunities for young people, making it easier to volunteer by removing obstacles, raising awareness on the value of volunteering, recognising volunteering as an important form of non-formal education and reinforcing cross-border mobility of young volunteers. It also works towards Enhancing skills recognition through Europass and Youthpass and Recognises contributions of youth organisations and non-structured forms of volunteering.

With the proclamation of the European Year of Volunteering in 2011, volunteering became an even more important and relevant issue in Europe as an " active expression of civic participation which strengthens common European values such as solidarity and social cohesion. Volunteering also provides important learning opportunities, because involvement in voluntary activities can provide people with new skills and competences that can even improve their employability."²³⁴ The CE Communication on EU policies and

²³⁴http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/european-year-of-volunteering/index_en.htm accessed at 20.08.2015

volunteering²³⁵ of the same year adds a further dimension to the volunteering activities, concerning the national policies which should be in line with the EU strategy while still maintaining the culture and traditions of each state, as an essential feature of the development of a favourable context for volunteering.

The most recent programme generation proposed by the European Commission unites the programmes for education, youth, and sports in an innovative framework. Erasmus Plus is the current programme developed by the EU in light of the enhanced role of education to the well-being of citizens. It aims at increasing people's personal development and job prospects. It supports all sectors of education and training, as well as non-formal learning for youth, volunteering and grassroots sport. It replaces several previous programmes, with streamlined and simplified application rules and procedures. The new programme also increases funding significantly, thus it also boosts opportunities for cooperation between education institutions as well as between the worlds of education and work.²³⁶ The programme is composed of 3 key actions, the first of which Key Action 1 focuses on learning mobility: support for studying, working, teaching, training or developing professional skills and competences abroad. It includes mobility in vocational education and training, Youth mobility and exchanges and European Voluntary Service.

Within Erasmus Plus, EVS offers an ideal opportunity for young people to develop skills by contributing to the daily work of organisations in areas such as social care, the environment, non-formal education programmes, ICT, culture and many others. It is also a chance for them to grow in self-confidence, feel more engaged as citizens and experience

²³⁵COM(2011) 568 final Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions Communication on EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Cross border Voluntary Activities in the EU, Brussels, 20.9.2011 at http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1311_en.pdf accessed at 20.08.2015

²³⁶*The European Union explained: Education, training, youth and sport*, op.cit.p.3

another way of life. The main features of the programme are maintained: a volunteering activity can last up to 1 year and participants can volunteer to support all kinds of causes, either within or outside the European Union. Youth exchanges are open to young people aged between 13 and 30 and EVS is open to young people aged between 17 and 30.²³⁷

3.3 Conclusion:

The youth policies are among the few examples of distributive policies within the EU, for which we can observe that benefits are concentrated to a specific group, while the costs are widely diffused. The EU disperses part of its budget to specific beneficiaries, in this case to young people, organizing specific activities and services addressed to them. Within this field, the EU recognizes voluntary organizations and youth NGOs as indispensable partners often assigning them tasks and important roles in the policy-making process. In the case of the EVS programme, NGOs take part in the coordination and implementation phase of the projects, and also contribute to the preparation of some programmes designed to encourage young people to take initiative, in the creation of support mechanism to make it possible for young people to enhance their participation in the economic, political and social life of the community or country. NGOs also have a role in the evaluation phase of the programmes. They regularly present reports of their activities related to EVS projects to the National Agencies who assess them and on the basis of this feedback take the final decision in the accreditation process. On their part National Agencies process the data and report back to the European Commission that uses the received information to evaluate the success rate of the programme, improvements to be made possible renewal of the framework.

²³⁷ Ivi.p.10

The EU has made a priority out of enabling young people to play an active role in society and its institutions and to that end, providing them with information, guidance and support. The youth policy agenda is working towards ensuring young people social inclusion, participation, active citizenship and the development of useful skills for future job insertion.

In this context volunteering receives a lot of attention from EU institutions that promote it as “ a form of social participation, an educational experience and a factor in employability and integration.”²³⁸

Recognition of non-formal learning has also become increasingly important at a European level in the past years with youth policies and initiatives in the youth field contributing to this development. Participating to Youth in Action is seen as a strong learning experience, which can create bridges to formal education and training. EVS stands out for its role in enhancing citizenship, solidarity and mutual understanding among young people through cross-boarder voluntary work, which involves providing a service to a local community but also receiving regular training and a strong personal and task-related support.

The next chapter will focus on the evaluation of the EVS programme, through the case study of the Spanish NGO, AFAIJ. The assessment will be made in terms of overall volunteer participation, perceived impact of the experience on participants and general outcomes of the programme.

²³⁸European Commission White Paper A New Impetus For European Youth, http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijazghazagh/downloads/white_paper.pdf accessed at 29.07.2015

Chapter 4

European Voluntary Service: an account of participation and evaluation of the impact on volunteers. Case study AFAIJ

My six month internship inside the Spanish NGO AFAIJ, based in Madrid, represented the starting point for my thesis and interest regarding youth policies and programmes and non-formal learning. My activities as a trainee were focused on the implementation of the EVS programme, which as a result I will try to evaluate in the following pages.

The main objective of this study is to assess the extent to which the EVS programme achieved its objectives with a focus on participation and on exploratory interviews, on the experiences of volunteers and processes of motivation and demotivation. The assessment is done in both quantitative (number of participating youth) and qualitative terms (interviews).

The study is conducted on the basis of collected information on the number of volunteers participating in the EVS programme between 2010 and 2014 in AFAIJ, in relation both to those young people from Spain who did their voluntary work elsewhere (sending perspective), and those young people from abroad who did their voluntary work in Spain (hosting side). The data will establish the predominant age groups of the participants, gender, country of origin or host country, project duration and type. An interview administered to host volunteers only, at the end of their stay in Spain, will further establish the impact the programme had on the participants in terms of personal growth and acquired skills.

Both the data and the interviews are entirely provided by AFAIJ. The NGO developed them in order to keep track of the volunteers involved in

sending and hosting projects throughout the years, and in order to determine the efficiency and success of the hosting projects based on feedback from the participants. This systematic activity is used as the base for the annual reports that AFAIJ submits to the Spanish National Agency.

As a premise I find it necessary to explore AFAIJ's activities and background in order to understand the association's long-standing involvement in the youth sector and in the European Voluntary Service programme.

4.1 AFAIJ: mission and activities

AFAIJ is a Spanish Non-Profit Association established in 1999, whose aim it is to promote the development of young people by means of activities of social interest which promote voluntary enlistment, non-formal education, cultural exchange and youth mobility.

Article 1 of AFAIJ's statute²³⁹ states that : "With the name Asociación para la Formación y Actividades Interculturales para la Juventud, a non-profit association is established under the Organic Law 1/2002 of 22 March , and complementary norms , having legal personality and full capacity to act ." Article 3 further asserts that" The Association is apolitical, non-profit and aims to work for and with young people through the implementation of activities and programs that contribute to their development." In 2006 AFAIJ was declared a Public Utility Association by the Interior Ministry of Spain, and currently it is also an observer member of AVSO (Association of Voluntary Service Organizations).

AFAIJ works together with a multitude of countries around the world. Although it mostly collaborates with organizations located in Europe, it has in

²³⁹<http://www.afaij.org/node-22-recensioni> accesses 01.09.2015

recent years managed to broaden the geographical scope of its projects to neighbouring states, and other countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

AFAIJ's team is composed of two full time employees in charge of carrying out each of the programs developed inside the association. In addition to this, AFAIJ relies on the support of volunteers to carry out its activities: one full time volunteer that during the school year permanently participates in specific administrative or project related tasks; volunteers from the EVS program are hosted by the association and given a specific training for periods of 9 months, as well as interns through the former Erasmus Placement program, currently Erasmus Plus traineeship, for a period of minimum 6 months.

The mission of AFAIJ is to promote awareness of national and international volunteering opportunities, and to support the training of young people by facilitating the dissemination and exchange of views and experiences on cultural, educational, artistic, environmental issues, current events, political or historical. This serves as a forum for the training of its members and associates, in a permanent atmosphere of peace and tolerance, thereby facilitating relationships between different cultures and nationalities and a deeper cooperation between peoples.

AFAIJ promotes educational programs that are part of the process of life-long-learning, on issues of development, vocational training and social promotion, with particular attention to the condition of young people and women in developing countries and in Spain. It therefore implements programs that contribute to personal and professional development of young people through non-formal education, youth mobility and intercultural learning. Through its activities, AFAIJ is involved in the study and information exchange on issues concerning the youth world, in collaboration with the authorities and national and international associations in charge of cultural exchanges, volunteering and educational projects. AFAIJ also undertakes

programs and activities that support the employment and promotion of employability of young people as well as the development of their capacity for initiative, active participation and entrepreneurship.

Specifically AFAIJ works in the following fields. It manages and implements International youth exchanges which promote intercultural education and social integration of the participants. AFAIJ organizes youth exchanges, co-financed by the European Union, for young people between the ages of 13 and 30, who are interested in participating in intercultural activities. These exchanges help participants to get in contact with different lifestyles which allow them to better understand and to respect new ways of living and different cultures. International training courses and seminars are set up with the aim of creating links and partnerships between organizations working in the youth field, so as to exchange ground work experience, good practices, and acquire new tools and non formal learning methods in working with European and local programmes.

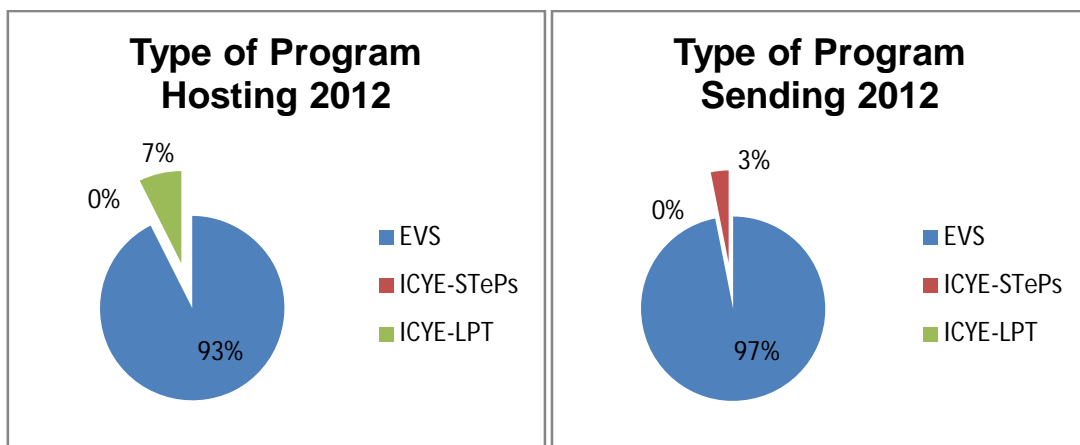
AFAIJ is also an information point for young people and associations who want to gather knowledge about the working opportunities in the field of international cooperation, solidarity work, job camps, as well as training activities that exist internationally. The association also organizes, in the frame of responsible tourism, Solidarity Trips to African countries in order to raise awareness on the great North-South inequalities, and create opportunities of intercultural dialogue while shaping travellers to become a source of information on improving cooperation projects.

Perhaps the most significant area of interest of the association is the promotion and implementation of national and international voluntary service programs. AFAIJ promotes Voluntary Service of young people by carrying out tasks of selection and training of candidates, information, follow-up activities and the assessment of the specific projects. AFAIJ provides the sending and receiving of young people interested in doing volunteer work,

social activities and humanitarian interest, while acquiring an informal educational experience and deepening the knowledge of different cultures and foreign languages.

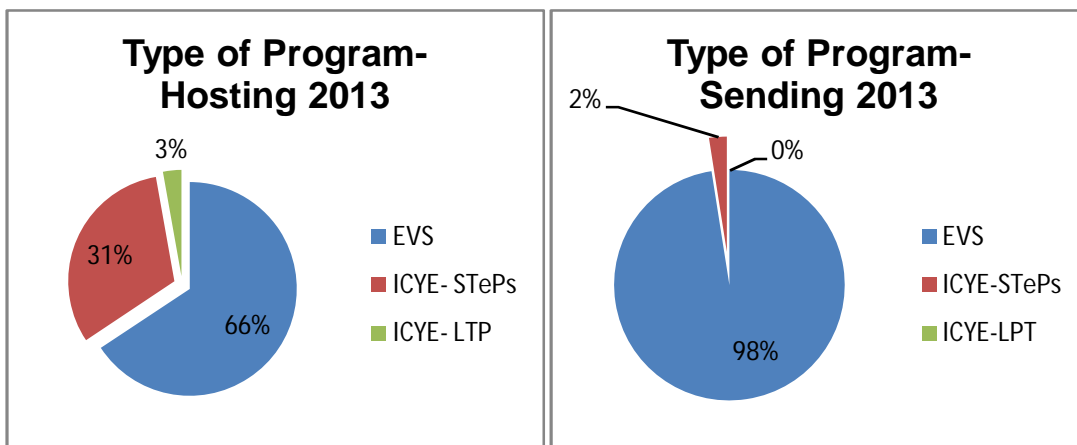
The international volunteering projects fall primarily into two types of programs. One is addressed to young people over 18 and offers long term (LtP) or short term (STePs) volunteering activities abroad through the privately funded ICYE network. The other is the European Union financed European Voluntary Service.

The activities report of the association over the last 3 years show that the EVS program has been the most popular with young people collaborating with AFAIJ, in both a hosting and sending capacity.



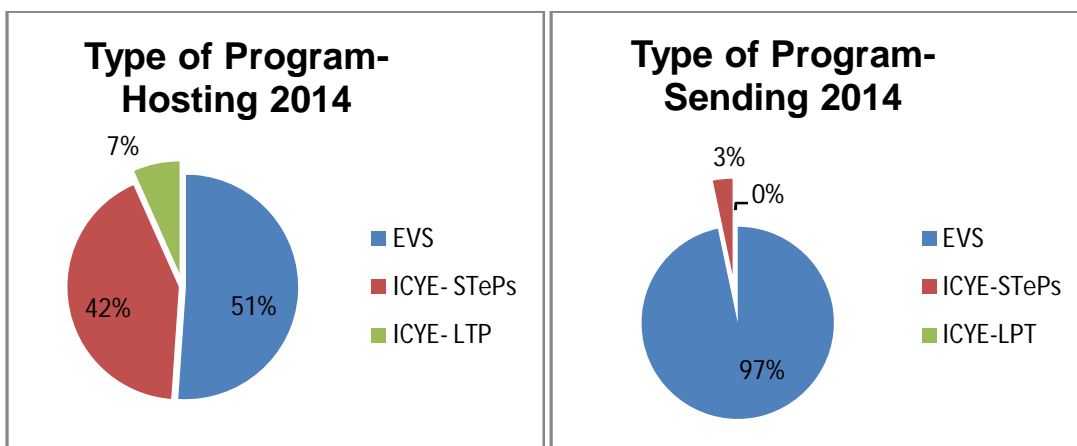
Graphic 1 (N=27)

Graphic 2(N=32)



Graphic 3 (N=35)

Graphic 4 (N=39)



Graphic 5 (N=45)

Graphic 6 (N=30)

Charts of the percentage of volunteers involved in International Voluntary programs, hosting and sending, and the type of program chosen for the period 2012-2014.

It can be observed from the charts above that from a sending perspective EVS maintains its position as the favoured program among Spanish volunteers (sending), with the figures remaining constant for the three years considered. In regards to the hosting area on the other hand, things vary a bit. Although EVS remains the most chosen activity, 2013 and 2014 see an increase in ICY volunteers hosted in Spain. This however does not equal a decrease of adhesions to the EVS program, since the number of

hosted EVS young people remained roughly the same in this time frame (25 for 2012 and 23 for 2013 and 2014). Instead a general increase in the numbers of hosting participants was registered, with the surplus that can be ascribed to the participation of ICY volunteers.

Within the EVS program AFAIJ is accredited by the Spanish National Agency as a hosting (HO), sending (SO) and coordinating organization (CO). Because a solid partnership between EVS sending, receiving, coordinating organisations and the volunteer is the basis of every EVS activity, AFAIJ works to adequately match the volunteer profile and the project and tasks involved. This model not only gives the volunteer an adequate non-formal learning experience but also establishes a partnership between the organizations involved, local authorities and other initiatives.

As a sending organisation AFAIJ is in charge of the preparation and support of the volunteers before, during and after the EVS activity. It also offers support to the potential volunteers in finding the most suitable project for them, on the basis of their profile, which results from their Application Form. The association is in charge of pre-departure training, preparing the volunteer on the general framework of the project, offering a few language classes if possible, and tips on how to adapt to a new culture and how to respond as positively as possible. Permanent contacts between the organization and the volunteers are maintained by e-mail, phone, and web chat in order to ensure the success of the project and any assistance needed. Upon the volunteers' return, meetings are organized in order to create a dialogue about their experience and to help them reintegrate into their home community. Final evaluation of the project is also set up at the volunteer's return in Spain. The volunteer is encouraged to promote and share his/her EVS experience and learning outcomes thus helping in the development of future projects within the community. Guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities can also be provided at this time.

As a host organisation AFAIJ ensures safe and decent living and working conditions for the volunteers throughout the entire activity period. As far as logistical issues are concerned, as a SO, AFAIJ ensures suitable accommodation and meals or a food allowance, covering also the holiday period for the volunteers. Local transport is also ensured, provided that means of local transport are available for the volunteers, and finally an allowance is given to the volunteer on a weekly or monthly basis. AFAIJ also facilitates the participation of the volunteers in the on-arrival training and mid-term evaluation. It further provides adequate personal, linguistic and task-related support, project framework, including the identification of a mentor, offering supervision and guidance to the volunteer through experienced staff. An important aspect of this function is creating a proper environment for the volunteer including a welcoming, friendly and integrative attitude, tolerance, dialogue, special intercultural evenings or events that give the volunteer the opportunity to integrate into the local community, to meet other young people, to socialise, to participate in leisure activities. Openness for volunteer's initiatives and encouragement in developing his or her own project is also important, allowing for their personal ideas, creativity and experience to be integrated. Finally at the end of the volunteering period, the team also offers assistance and support to the volunteer in completing the Youthpass.

When acting as a coordinating organisation AFAIJ assumes the role of applicant and carries the financial and administrative responsibility for the entire project in front of the National or Executive Agency. The CO doesn't necessarily have to be a SO or HO in the project and in EVS projects involving only one volunteer, either the SO or the HO is also the CO. There can be only one CO in an EVS project. In this capacity, AFAIJ coordinates the project in cooperation with all sending and hosting organisations, and distributes the EVS grant between all of the organizations involved. AFAIJ works on finding adequate volunteers for partner associations, foundations and organizations all across Spain, that do not have the resources or

capacity to manage this aspect of the volunteering process. It has the role of facilitating the implementation of the project by offering administrative and logistical support to both the volunteer and the host organization throughout the duration of the activities, including insurance plans, visas etc. AFAIJ also acts as a mediator if conflict arises inside the host project, and maintains a tight communication with the volunteers, offering support and assistance at any stage of the project. It ensures that the volunteers attend the full EVS training and evaluation cycle and completes and issues, alongside the sending and host organisations and the volunteer, the Youthpass Certificate for those volunteers who want to receive it at the end of their EVS.

4.2 EVS participation in AFAIJ:

This section of the evaluation has the purpose of observing the participation to the EVS program as mirrored in the activities of a non-profit association. Using statistics and data from AFAIJ it is possible to analyze the outcomes in terms of the number of participants, gender distribution, average age, nationality or country of residence and host country, which are all relevant elements in determining the range of influence that the program has. The main themes of the projects and average duration as well as the successful completion of the activities are also important factors in determining the success rate of the EVS program.

The objective of the program is to contribute to the education of young people by encouraging their active participation and involvement in society through voluntary activities abroad. The European framework for voluntary service is open to all young people, the only restriction being that of age. Accessibility and inclusion is an important feature when recruiting EVS volunteers, as the program aims at reaching all young people between the ages of 17 and 30, without prejudice related to background, ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc.

From 2010 to 2014 AFAIJ worked with just over 250 EVS volunteers in sending and hosting projects. In processing the data, the following criteria was considered: gender- male or female; age divided into five groups: under 18, 18 to 20, 21 to 24, 25 to 27 and 28 to 30; country of origin for host volunteers and Spanish autonomous community of residence for sending volunteers as well as hosting country for outgoing participants; type of project; duration of project: long term or short term.

2010

In 2010 AFAIJ managed 43 EVS projects in total. It was the sending organization for 30 young Spaniards who enrolled in the EVS program and participated in projects in Europe, Africa and Latin America. The share of male volunteers was 53% while that of females was 47% which shows an even distribution among genders for 2010. Among the five age groups considered, there were no under aged participants, and it was found that 40% of the volunteers were between 24 and 27 years old at the start of their projects, while 30% registered in the 28 to 30 category. The remaining two age groups were represented equally among participants.

As far as geographical distribution is concerned, the volunteers came from a variety of autonomous communities in Spain: Cataluña, Andalucía, Madrid, Castilla la Mancha, Castilla Leon, Extremadura and Valencia. The projects they chose for their EVS experience spread across three continents. The hosting countries and the percentage of volunteers for each of them are as follows: Germany, Italy, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland 6, 67% each; the UK, Denmark, Romania, Greece, Turkey, Colombia, Kenya, Mozambique, Ghana and Nigeria, 3, 33% each; Costa Rica 13, 33% and Portugal 20%.

Among the various types of EVS sending projects, environmental and children and youth themes were the most popular, as shown by the fact that 33, 33% of volunteers participated in each of these activities. Culture and

communication projects attracted 10%, while Disability projects were joined by 13, 33%. The remaining three types of projects HIV/AIDS, Reconstruction and working with Refugees gather just 3, 33% of youth, corresponding to one participant each.

In terms of duration, both short term projects and long term projects were registered. Eight projects lasted two months or less, one lasted three months, while the remaining twenty-one were long term activities and were distributed as follows: twelve six month projects, one seven month project, five nine month projects, one eleven month project and two twelve month projects.

In 2010 AFAIJ hosted 25 volunteers from various countries, of which 13 started their activity in 2010 and 12 had started their EVS projects in 2009 but have completed them in 2010. A relatively equal distribution between genders was registered, with 54% male volunteers and 46% female. The majority of participants were between 18 to 20 and 25 to 27 years old in a percentage of respectively 38% and 46%; 15% of the volunteers were in the 21 to 24 age group, and none was over 28.

The data gathered shows a varied provenance among volunteers that goes beyond the European borders. The largest number of young people volunteering in Spain through AFAIJ in 2010 came from Germany 38, 46%, followed by Poland with 15, 38% and Italy, Austria, Denmark, Turkey, India and Indonesia with 7, 69% each.

The hosting projects fell in the following categories: Environmental with a 15% participation rate, Disability and impairment 15%, Children 23%, Youth 8% and HIV/AIDS 39%. These were all long term EVS projects that lasted from a minimum of 6 months to a maximum of 10. Two of the programmes had six month duration; five of them lasted seven months; three were eight month projects, two were nine month and one ten month long activities.

2011

In 2011 AFAIJ focused its activity primarily on the revitalization of voluntary activities among Spanish and non Spanish young people inside the country and abroad. During this year activities referring to volunteering had even greater significance since 2011 was the European Year of Volunteering. AFAIJ oversaw the implementation of 37 new EVS projects in both a sending and hosting capacity.

20 sending projects were put in place in various areas, in European countries as well as neighbouring ones and other states around the world in Africa, Asia and Latin America. 8 volunteers finalized their activities abroad in 2011, bringing the total number of supervised projects to 28.

The gender ratio was again fairly balanced amongst the volunteers with a 55% male and 45% female participation. The predominant age groups in this case were the 21 to 24 and the 25 to 27 ones, with a rate of 40% and 45% respectively. The 28 to 30 category was covered by 10% of the youth while the 18 to 20 by only 5%.

The volunteers in this group came from different parts of Spain such as Madrid, Extremadura, Castilla Leon, Valencia, Castilla la Mancha. The host countries for the projects also spread across various regions starting with Europe: Italy 10%, Poland, Slovakia and the UK 15% and Greece, Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Norway and Germany 5% each. India, Colombia and Indonesia also hosted young Spaniards in a proportion of 5% each.

The type of sending projects that brought in most volunteers in 2011 were related to Education, with a 30% participation rate, followed by Art and culture, Disability, Youth and Health which registered 15% each and Communication and Environment with 5% per head. Amongst these projects,

one was short term with duration of two months, while the others were long term activities: one lasted five months, eight projects were completed in six months, three in nine months, one in eleven and finally six in twelve months.

In 2011 AFAIJ managed the placement of 27 volunteers in Spanish social projects, from various European, Latin American and African countries. 17 participants started their activities in 2011 and another 10 young people completed their projects during the year.

The gender distribution was unequal in this group, with 88% of female volunteers and just 12% male youth. With regards to the age, the majority of partakers in the EVS programs were between 21 and 24 years old, in a ratio of 52%. The resting figures show 18% of volunteers in the 18 to 20 age group, 6% in the 25 to 27 and 24% in the 28 to 30 category.

Most of the volunteers hosted in Spanish projects in 2011 were European, with just one participant from Indonesia and two from Turkey. The remaining volunteers came from Germany 18%, Italy and France 12%, Bulgaria, Estonia, Belgium, the UK, Czech Republic, Portugal and Poland with 6% each.

In the time frame considered, 52% of the host projects implemented were in the field of caretaking for people with HIV/AIDS, followed by 18% Disability, 12% Environmental and Education and 6% related to Culture and communication. Amid these projects, four were short term, with duration of three months, five lasted six months, six of them lasted seven months, one for eight months and one for nine.

2012

The total number of projects managed by AFAIJ in a sending and hosting capacity for 2012 was 57.

The sending of 32 Spanish volunteers was put in place this year, to different projects across a number of European and non European countries. Aside from this, 10 volunteers completed their activities this year, bringing the total of supervised projects in the sending area to 42.

The majority of volunteers involved in sending projects were female, a figure that is equivalent to 63% of the total participants, while the resting 37% corresponds to the male partakers. The average age of the volunteers proved to be higher than in previous years, with 47% in the 25 to 27 age group and 38% in the 28 to 30 segment. The resting figures are 3% for the 18 to 20 and 12% for the 21 to 24 category.

A large part of the sending volunteers came from Madrid, close to 65%, while the remaining participants were residents of other Spanish autonomous communities such as Valencia, Galicia, Extremadura, Castilla la Mancha, Canarias and Andalucia. The countries that hosted the projects spread across a wide area covering three continents and are as follows: Italy with a 25% participation rate, Poland with 9%, Bolivia, Bulgaria, China, Lithuania, Malta and Turkey with 6% each and Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Colombia, France, India, Honduras, Peru and Switzerland with a registered 3% each.

The type of projects that the Spanish volunteers applied for in 2012 were diverse, covering the subsequent areas: Education 25%, Disability 19%, Art and Culture and Environmental projects 10% each, Culture and Communication 9%, Fair trade, Social inclusion, Multiculturalism 6%, Healthcare, Communication and information and Elderly citizens with a 3% rate each. These activities were completed in different time frames: three projects lasted one month, two for one month and a half, one for three months and one for four. The remaining activities were long term and seven of them spread across six months, another seven over nine months, one

lasted eight months; five projects were finalized in ten months and another five in twelve months.

In 2012 the number of volunteers hosted in Spanish social projects, through AFAIJ was of 25, plus an additional eleven who finalized their projects during this year, bringing the total of administered projects to 38.

Inside this group, 60% of the volunteers were female and the remaining 40% male. The registered ages of the participants were fairly balanced between age groups, with 20% in the 18 to 20 segment, and 24% for the 25 to 27 and 28 to 30 groups. A slightly higher figure was present in the 21 to 24 segment, with 32% of partakers.

In 2012 AFAIJ collaborated with organizations from 4 different continents in the hosting section of EVS. The volunteers hosted in Spain came from a variety of different countries in Europe: Poland 16%, Germany and Italy 12%, Turkey 8%, Switzerland, Norway, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, the UK, France, Denmark with 4% participation rates each; African volunteers were hosted by AFAIJ in a proportion of 8%, coming from Ghana and South Africa, as were Latin American participants from Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru with 4% each, and one volunteer from India.

One significant figure for this year concerns the type of projects selected by the incoming volunteers. More than half of the participants (56%) gravitated towards a project of support to people suffering from HIV/AIDS, inside one of the four structures of Basida, an association that has been a long time partner of AFAIJ. Other young volunteers worked within Educational projects (20%), Culture and communication (8%), Environmental (4%) and aiding Disabled people (12%). The majority of these programs were long term, with duration of six months for twelve of the activities described. Three eight month long projects were in place as well as five nine month

ones. There were also three short term programs among the activities described, that lasted up to three months each.

2013

AFAIJ managed and administered the sending and hosting aspects of 63 projects in 2013, the highest figure observed thus far in the study. As follows, a progressive increase in the number of EVS activities developed can be observed in the time-frame 2010-2013.

For the sending section of the program, AFAIJ supervised 40 projects for 2013. The male volunteers participating amount to only 31% of the total number of partakers, while female volunteers registered as 69%. The average age of the Spaniards enrolled in the program is higher than in previous years, with a 54% in the 28 to 30 age group and a 26% in the 25 to 27 segment, followed by 18% between the ages of 21 and 24 and only 2% aged from 18 to 20.

Young people from a variety of regions of Spain were involved in sending projects, most coming from Madrid (23) but also from Andalucia, Baleares, Canarias, Castilla la Mancha, Castilla Leon, Rioja, Valencia, Pais Vasco and Extremadura. The host countries for these volunteers were relatively scattered, with 16% of participants developing activities in Italy, and 13% in Portugal. Other countries hosted from one to a maximum of two volunteers each and are as follows: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Ecuador, France, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Iceland, Kenya, Malta, Mexico, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Tanzania and Ukraine, Argentina.

A large number of volunteers enlisted in projects related to Childhood and Youth (43%), Disability (12%) and Community development (12%). Other areas of interest were embodied by Social exclusion projects, Environmental, Health related, Educational and care for the Elderly. Most of

these activities were long term; twelve of them lasted for a year, eight for eleven months, six for nine month, seven for six months, one for ten and two for eight months. One project was completed in five months and another was a short term program lasting two months.

AFAIJ was in charge of 23 EVS hosting projects in 2013. Of the volunteers taking part in the activities, 70% were female and 30% male. As far as age distribution is concerned, 48% of hosted volunteers were between the ages of 28 to 30, 35% were in the 18 to 20 segment, 13% were between 21 to 24 years old and 4% between 25 and 27.

The participants to the EVS projects, per country were as follows: three from Germany, three from Italy, two from Kenya and two from Mexico. From the remaining countries there was one volunteer per head: Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Poland, the UK and Switzerland.

The projects that they took part in were in different part of Spain, including the AFAIJ office for two of the volunteers, and were varied in type and duration. 56% of the activities were related to the support to people suffering from HIV/AIDS, in the Betesda foundation in Madrid and in one of the four Basida housing centres, located near Madrid, in Castilla la Mancha and Castilla Leon. Five of these projects lasted for six months, two of them for nine months, two for eight months and four for seven. 26% of volunteers worked with Children and minors, inside the Alicia Koplowitz foundation in Madrid, for a period of eight months in the case of one volunteer and of six months in the case of five other volunteers. Working with Disabled people registered 9% participation rate, for projects that lasted nine and seven months. Culture and communication also attracted 9% of the total hosting volunteers, in projects lasting nine and six months, inside the office of AFAIJ.

2014

In 2014 AFAIJ was in charge of 52 EVS projects, involving the sending of 29 volunteers and the hosting of 23.

Gender distribution among the sending projects was homogenous, with 55% male and 45% female participants. Almost half of them, 48%, were between the ages of 25 and 27, 28% between 28 and 30 and 24% in the 21 to 24 segment, leaving the 18 to 20 segment empty.

The largest number of volunteers that enrolled for EVS projects abroad came from the autonomous community of Madrid (43%), followed by volunteers from Andalucia, Castilla Leon, Castilla La Mancha, Galicia, Aragon, Cantabria, Extremadura and Murcia. Their host countries covered a large geographical span: Italy was the host for nine projects; Ukraine hosted five, Tanzania and Croatia three, Sweden and Belgium two; and Poland, Finland, Czech Republic, Holland and Vietnam one each.

The types of projects chosen by the volunteers were varied and covered the following fields of activity: Childhood and youth (21%), Information and Communication (17%), Society and culture (17%), Disability (14%), Education (14%), Environment (14%) and Elder citizens (3%). The duration of the activities was short term for three projects lasting one month, seven projects lasting two months and one project lasting three months. The resting programs had a longer term: three five month projects, one six month projects, four eight month long activities, two nine month and two twelve month projects and six lasting twelve months.

In 2014 AFAIJ welcomed 23 volunteers from European and non European countries, inside different Spanish social interest projects. An additional 14 host projects were completed during this time, making the total of managed projects 37.

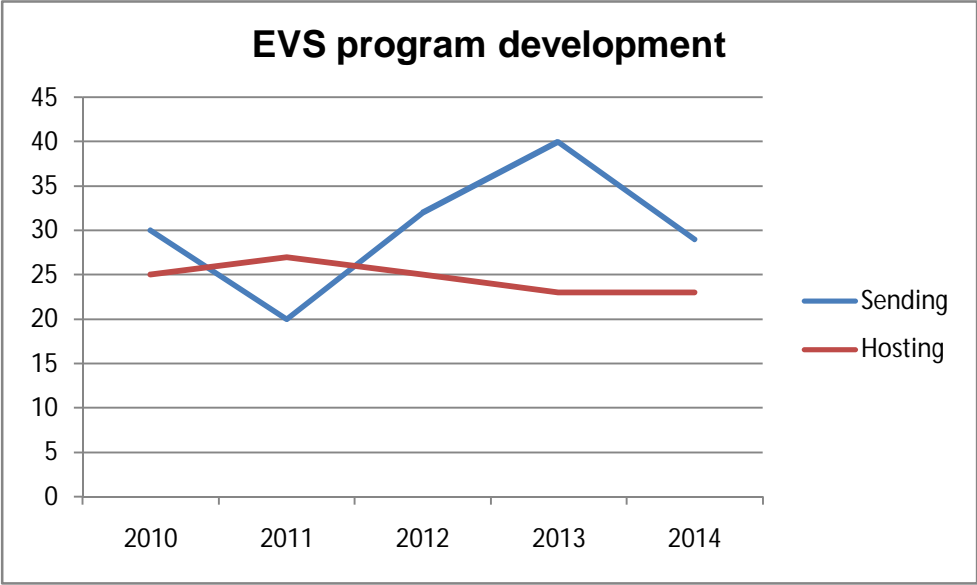
Female volunteers in hosting projects were 65% of the total number of participants, while male volunteers accounted for the remaining 35%. The average age of the partakers proved smaller this year, with 35% between 18 and 20 years old, 43% between 21 and 24, and 13% and 9% for the 28 to 30 and 25 to 27 segments.

The countries participating in EVS projects through their volunteers were Italy with six participants, Germany with four, Austria with three, Iceland and Denmark with two each and Sweden , Finland, Slovakia, Lichtenstein, Turkey and Argentina with one each. The volunteers took part in activities in the fields of: Disability (22%), HIV/AIDS (39%), Culture and communication (9%) and Minors (30%). The type of hosting organization varied accordingly: Betesda Foundation, Basida, AFAIJ, and Alicia Koplowitz Foundation. The projects developed within these structures were all long term, going from six months for nine of the projects, to seven months for other six activities, eight months for four projects and nine months for an additional four.

Overall results:

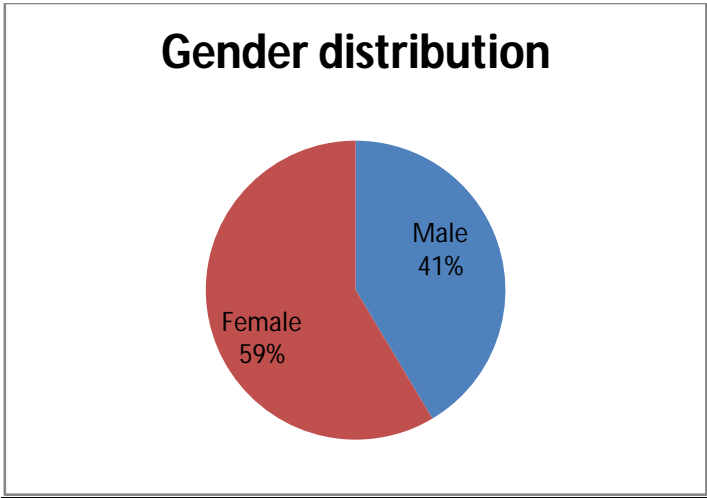
As a result of the above account of the participation of young people in EVS projects managed by AFAIJ for the period 2010-2014, for both hosting and sending, the following evolution and trends could be observed.

The chart below shows the evolution of the EVS project in the hosting and sending areas for the time frame 2010-2014. What is striking about this result is the fact that there is a relatively constant trend for the hosting projects, while the sending projects tend to vary more over the years. This may be due to the fact that the offer of hosting projects remained basically the same across the time-frame examined, with AFAIJ maintaining the same partners as coordinating organization. Meanwhile, the sending actions depend on the preference of inquirers, on the availability of projects in the desired area or country, and are therefore more prone to fluctuations.



Graphic 7 (N=251)

As far as gender distribution is concerned, across all actions, female volunteers constituted the majority of the participants (59%) in relation to the male volunteers (41%).



Graphic 8 (N=251)

A similar result was explained in an AVSO report from 2007²⁴⁰. The study reports a 75% female participation in EVS between 1996 and 1999, including the pilot phase of the program, due to compulsory military service still in place for males in some countries and also because of the types of projects available, such as childcare that might be more appealing to women. Although these considerations are no longer current, the data is meaningful because it points to changes in participation of both genders among EVS volunteers and towards a possible equality in gender distribution.

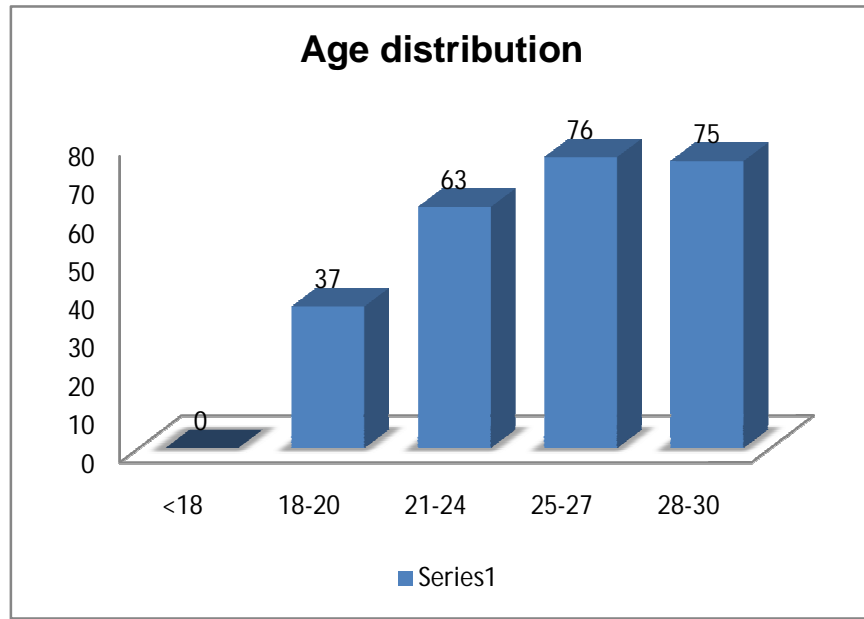
This means that the figures gathered in the table below are an evolution in this direction.

Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Male	23	13	25	19	24	104
Female	20	24	32	43	28	147

Table 1 Gender distribution per year

The average age of participants is quite high, as shown in the chart below. The biggest concentration of volunteers is between the 25 and 27 year bracket, followed by the 28 to 30 age group and closely behind by the 21 to 24 category.

²⁴⁰AVSO, *The impact of long-term Youth Voluntary Service in Europe. A review of published and unpublished studies*, July 2007, available at https://www.academia.edu/2893624/The_impact_of_long-term_youth_voluntary_service_in_Europe_A_review_of_published_and_unpublished_research_studies accessed at 10.09.2015



Graphic 9 (N=251)

More to the point the average age of Spanish volunteers enrolling in EVS projects is higher than that of participants from other countries as reported in the next table. Most Spaniards register in the 25 to 27 and in the 28 to 30 age groups. This, as opposed to volunteers of other nationalities who chose Spain as a host country and whose numbers are more equally proportioned between the groups.

This trend could be explained given the high unemployment rate registered in Spain over the last few years, which prompts many young people to search for alternatives to traditional employment, after finishing their studies. Eurostat figures show a progressive increase in youth unemployment (15 to 25 years old) that goes from a rate of 41, 5% in 2010 to a maximum of 55.5% in 2013, followed by a slight decrease in 2014 with a

percentage of 53.2.²⁴¹ When considering the over 25 age class the numbers are still higher for Spain than for other EU countries: 17.8% in 2010, 19.2% in 2011, 22.5 in 2012, 23.8% for 2013 and 22.3 for 2014.²⁴²

Age- Spanish volunteers (Sending)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
18-20 years old	4	1	1	1	0	7
21-24 years old	5	8	4	7	7	31
25-27 years old	12	9	15	10	14	60
28-30 years old	9	2	12	21	8	52
Age -other nationalities (Hosting)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
18-20 years old	5	3	6	8	8	30
21-24 years old	2	9	8	3	10	32
25-27 years old	6	1	6	1	2	16
28-30 years old	0	4	5	11	3	23

Table 2

Regarding the type of projects chosen, most participants enlisted in projects with a strong social component and service aspect. The most popular themes, as reported in the table below were: working with children

²⁴¹Eurostat, Youth Unemployment available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Youth_unemployment accessed at 22.09.2015

²⁴²Eurostat, Unemployment rate by sex and age groups - annual average, %, available at <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> accessed at 22.09.2015

and minors, assisting people with HIV/AIDS, supporting disabled people, environmental initiatives and educational programs.

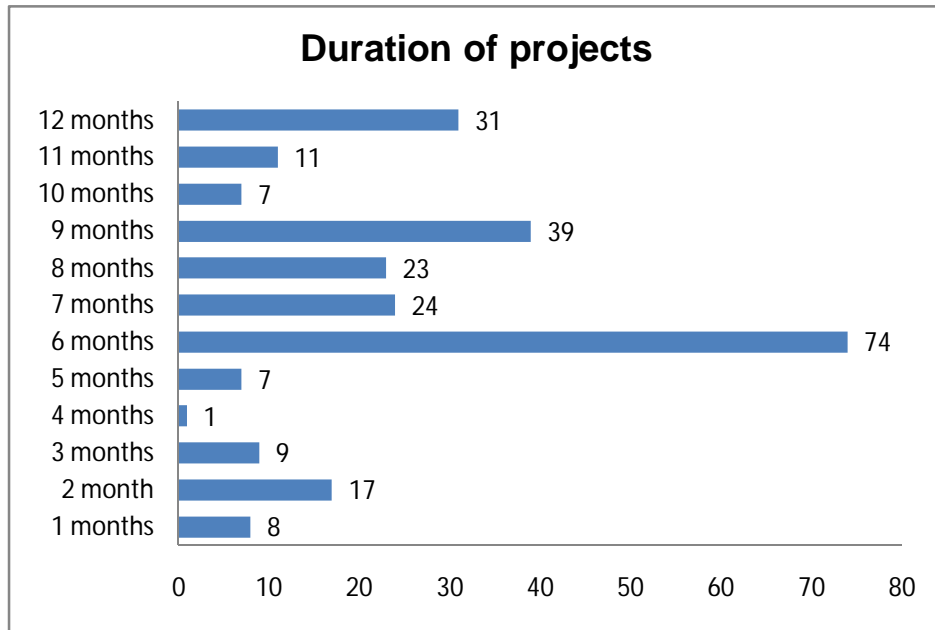
Main themes of projects	Number of volunteer	Percentage of volunteers
Communication and information	7	3%
Health	7	3%
Elderly people	4	2%
Cultural exchanges	2	1%
Social inclusion	5	2%
Fair trade	2	1%
Environment	26	10%
Arts and Culture	6	2%
Disability	37	15%
Culture and communication	18	7%
Education	26	10%
Children/Minors	52	21%
Community development	5	2%
Reconstruction	1	less then 1%
Refugees	1	less then 1%
HIV/AIDS	51	20%
Youth	1	less then 1%

Table 3

Voluntary service is a special kind of voluntary activity which is particularly intensive, temporally structured, either full time or for a specific predetermined amount of time. The duration of the projects as recorded below shows a preference for long-term projects rather than short-term ones.

EVS projects in particular are organized in a long term perspective based on the belief that the impact on the volunteers is grater in the log run: "The longer and more intense the engagement, the more sustainable the

learning process²⁴³. Short term projects are available but in a lesser number, and this is a possible explanation for the results presented in the chart.



Graphic 10 (N=251)

4.3. Perceived impact of EVS on host volunteers:

This part of the study is based on the personal perceptions of the AFAIJ host volunteers on what has been the impact of EVS in their lives and how they relate to the experience in terms of positive or negative outcomes. When referring to the impact of EVS the meaning is the extent and nature of the positive or negative changes that it brings about in the lives of the volunteers, weather planned or unforeseen. An important aspect of impact evaluations is measuring the effects of a program or activity, making sure that those effects are in fact produced by said activity.

²⁴³G. Mutz, E Schwimmbeck, *Voluntary activities and civic learning: findings for a preparatory survey for a European case study*, in H. Williamson, B.Hoskins, P. Boetzelen, *Charting the landscape of European Youth Voluntary Activities*, Council of Europe, 2005

The data reviewed primarily stands from self-reported information gathered from interviews with the volunteers, rather than from more objectively-measured outcomes. The results should thus be understood as the participants' personal perception about the volunteering period and about the changes that EVS brought in their lives. The questions administered to the volunteers by AFAIJ are open-ended, allowing the respondents to write in their answers.

The number of interviews employed in this section is 36. The population of interest surveyed was made-up of host volunteers participating either in projects for which AFAIJ acted as coordinating organization or more directly as hosting organization, in the period 2010-2014. On the sending side, the impact was more difficult to identify because the evaluation of completed projects abroad was not performed through interviews or questionnaires, rather it consisted of establishing a dialogue upon the participant's return. It can be observed thus, that the follow-up once the volunteer has returned to the sending country is less systematic.

The fundamental aims of the project as enumerated by the Commission are to provide young people with an intercultural non-formal learning experience, encouraging their social and occupational integrations, and to contribute to the development of local communities. Volunteering is presented as one of the most effective instruments for people's non-formal education, through which they can acquire knowledge, skills, competences, personal growth and experience, characteristics that are seen as able to potentially improve employment opportunities: "Taking part in the European Voluntary Service (EVS) is a truly non-formal learning experience, which enhances the participants' professional skills and competences and thus makes them more attractive to potential employers. At the same time, it increases their sense of solidarity, develops their social skills and promotes active participation in society. One of the key features of EVS is the training

and evaluation it provides, guiding young volunteers through a non-formal learning process before, during and after their period of service abroad.”²⁴⁴

The number of questions addressed in the interviews varies between 12 and 15 and although their form slightly changed throughout the years, they were constantly structured according to the operational dimensions and areas of interest of the inquirer, so as to obtain the most significant information. The starting point is meant to gather knowledge about the participants' situations prior to the enrolment in EVS in terms of previous volunteering experiences or other relevant background information. Next, the motivation and reasons for enlisting in an EVS project were inquired as well as the expectations the volunteers started with. A group of questions referred to the reason for choosing that specific program, the tasks performed and the level of involvement of the volunteers in their projects along with the amount of power of initiative that they were given. The volunteers were also asked what they considered to be the most significant contribution of the project, to the community in general in term of social change, and to their lives. In addition to this, the participants were requested to identify the biggest challenge they faced during their experience and how or if they were able to overcome it. An important part of the record focuses on finding out if the participants in the program felt they had, as a result of the EVS project, learned something, acquired certain skills that they consider necessary in life, whether informal skills, team work, communication or leadership abilities. The final questions concentrate on the future plans of the participants regarding employment or study opportunities and on finding out how much EVS has influenced their initiatives and decisions both academically and professionally. A specific question referred to the usefulness of the

²⁴⁴European Commission, EVS training and quality cycle guideline and minimum quality standards. Erasmus Plus Programme 2014 available at https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2466/EVS_TEC_Guidelines_and_minimum_quality_standards.pdf accessed at 10.09.2015

experiences for future work projects. The volunteers were finally asked to rate their overall EVS experience and to consider if they would recommend the activity to someone else.

Prior volunteering experiences:

As stated previously, the EVS program is addressed to all young people between the ages of 17 and 30, regardless of prior experience in the field or of degrees obtained. It was therefore interesting to observe that a large amount of the participants interviewed had volunteered in the past in their home countries, or had been involved in social projects in some degree or another. When asked about previous volunteering experiences, more than half declared that they had worked as volunteers before, in some cases having years of experience, as a Mexican volunteer recounts: "I have been collaborating with a youth association in my home country for five years, in the field of cultural exchanges, where I was the first contact for the incoming volunteers"²⁴⁵. For others, the previous experiences were short term and less structured than the EVS one, in which case they stressed the difference between the two situations and the uniqueness of the European volunteering framework. Other participants, although first time volunteers, stated that they had worked previously, if even for brief periods of time, in the fields of their EVS projects: "Before coming to Spain I had never volunteered, but I had worked for two weeks one summer with people with disabilities. This is what encouraged me to search for a volunteering opportunity in the social sector"²⁴⁶.

Social participation and pro-active involvement is mentioned as an objective in the EVS program, which aims to lead towards active participation of young people in social life. While this may in fact be the case, it is

²⁴⁵In Annex, interview 15

²⁴⁶See Annex, Interview 16

legitimate to assume that a large part of the participants had a sense of civic engagement even prior to their EVS enrolment.

Motivation and expectations:

Understanding why young people choose to enrol in the EVS program is important because on the one hand it helps policy and decision-makers define the target group and their interests better, and on the other side it determines the success of the program in terms of fulfilled expectations. It can also give answers to what participants predicted to learn during EVS, an aspect that can be roughly verified at the end of their experience.

The volunteers answered the questions: “ Why did you choose to be a volunteer within the EVS program?” and “How did the option of participating in EVS occur to you? What was your motivation and what expectations did you have?”. The results of the inquiry shed light on a few important dimensions of their decision making, with personal benefits and altruistic social motivations as the most significant ones.

European voluntary projects are geared towards offering help and support to communities, to a category of disadvantaged individuals or more generally to contribute to important social goals. For the young people enlisting in the activities however, other narrower motives are also present, such as wanting to learn a foreign language and other practical skills, wanting to live abroad for a few months, getting to know another culture and interacting with new people.

For the majority of young people taking up EVS, the most important things are choosing something in relation to their interests, choosing the country which usually is connected with a desire to learn the language and the possibility of acquiring new skills and knowledge.

A part of the volunteers had had previous study experiences abroad through the Erasmus program and wanted to continue living in other countries: "My motivation was to live abroad again, for at list six months, since I already experienced this through the Erasmus program"²⁴⁷; "Two years ago I was an Erasmus student in Turkey and loved it. After graduation, before starting work, I wanted to acquire another international experience and a friend recommended EVS"²⁴⁸.

An attractive aspect for many participants who were hosted by AFAIJ was that of living in Spain and learning or improving their knowledge of the language. This is true in some degree for every participant, even in the presence of other important reasons: "I always liked Spain and I thought that learning Spanish could be very useful, although I am convinced that the most important thing is the project itself"²⁴⁹. A volunteer from Germany explained: "for me, Spain has always been a very interesting country for its culture and environment. I thought that EVS could be a good opportunity to get to know it better. Besides, I wanted to enjoy this year and have time to reflect on my future"²⁵⁰. Similar to this point of view was that of a participant from Norway who in her own words ".wanted to do something different and have a new experience in life. I also wanted to learn Spanish and enjoy the nice weather"²⁵¹. Others saw it as an opportunity to "live an adventure", " to get to know a new place."

For non-European participants the cultural aspect of the experience was even more important as stated by a few volunteers from Indonesia, Kenya or Turkey who felt " EVS is a very good opportunity to get to know

²⁴⁷ See Appendix, Interview 15

²⁴⁸ See Appendix, Interview 11

²⁴⁹ See Appendix, Interview 6

²⁵⁰ See Appendix, Interview 5

²⁵¹ See Appendix, Interview 8

another world that is culturally very different, especially from my country”²⁵²;
“I saw it as a chance to go to Europe and live there for a while”²⁵³; “I wanted
to experience a new culture, meet new people, enjoy a new lifestyle and
learn a new language. Volunteering was a great way to meet these
desires”²⁵⁴, “I was looking for a good opportunity to travel and live in a
different culture as well as to learn a new language.”²⁵⁵

Personal growth and development is one of the strongest motives
that volunteers gave for their options to be part of an EVS project, with
“finding out about myself” being frequently mentioned. A volunteer confessed
she was looking for a “possibility to grow as a person and for an opportunity
to be confronted with new ideas and reevaluate previous ones”²⁵⁶. Another
volunteer spoke of her expectations that participating in the program could
“radically change me as a person, improving my social abilities and capacity
of interacting with others. I also wanted to experience what it means to work
and focus energies on something without the prospect of gaining money”²⁵⁷.
Many volunteers mention leaving home and becoming independent as a
means for self discovery and as an important reason for going abroad for a
long term project: “I did EVS because I wanted to gain more experience
outside of my country and the fact that it is a free of charge program gave me
the chance.”²⁵⁸; “After finishing school I wanted to leave my country and to
discover new things, learn the language and culture of another place, but
also know myself better and live an adventure”.²⁵⁹

Another reason for choosing EVS, often communicated by
participants, is the project’s connection with previous volunteering and work

²⁵²See Appendix, Interview 1

²⁵³See Appendix, Interview 21

²⁵⁴See Appendix, Interview 22

²⁵⁵See Appendix, Interview 3

²⁵⁶See Appendix, Interview 28

²⁵⁷See Appendix, Interview 23

²⁵⁸See Appendix, Interview 7

²⁵⁹See Appendix, Interview 17

experiences. A polish volunteer opted for the project “Youth in communication” in AFAIJ because he had studied communication and journalism in university and had some know-how in graphic design, internet publishing, all skills that coincided with the tasks at hand. One volunteer explains the choice of working within her project came from the previous training acquired in this field, “I wanted to work with children, because I have some experiences with them and also I have studied psychology and am interested in working with children from troubled backgrounds and try to help them ”.²⁶⁰

The experience acquired from working in EVS projects is also often perceived as a valuable item in the resume and an asset for future professional endeavours. It seems that young people believe that participation in EVS increases job opportunities, so part of the reasoning revolves around the expectation of acquiring relevant job skills. A volunteer from Peru, working in an association that cares for people with HIV and at risk of exclusion said: “I had many expectation and all of them were related to the same issue, to broaden my outlook and my knowledge about HIV, to learn more about this disease medically speaking, but also learn little things that could help me in my professional life”²⁶¹. Another participant shared: “ My expectations were to know how NGOs work in Spain and learn more about issues related to the interculturalism and inter-cultural dialogue, to contribute my views and my experiences in my Organization back home”.²⁶²

For some volunteers the option of taking part in their EVS projects stands from indecision regarding their future plans. Many participants take up these activities immediately after high school when they do not have any specific plans for the future, or after graduating from university when they

²⁶⁰See Appendix, Interview 24

²⁶¹See Appendix, Interview 13

²⁶²See Appendix, Interview 20

have no relevant career prospects. This was the case for 20 year old volunteer from Sweden who said " I always knew that after school I wanted to do something different and experience new things"²⁶³; "I definitely did not want to immediately continue with my studies at the university, I needed a break and to go in search of new experiences"²⁶⁴ shared another participant from Germany.

The personal dimension seems to dominate the motivations in a lot of the answers of the volunteers, however there is also a reasonable amount of altruism that characterizes some of them and that goes beyond their personal interests and towards positively impacting communities or other people in a larger way. For a young girl from Japan "volunteering is a way of life"²⁶⁵, for someone else " it is the only way to make a difference, to change society, to act outside the laws of the market and to do something just because someone else needs it."²⁶⁶ A young volunteer from Austria said: "I wanted to do social work because I think it's important for people to help others who are in difficult situations. I wanted to work with children and young people".²⁶⁷ One partaker responded 'I am a volunteer because I want to help others and thus promote peaceful coexistence in the world. From my point of view, society can only function if people are willing to help each other. For me it is also important to be willing to help without waiting for a reward.'²⁶⁸

The vocational component emerged especially in answer to the question "Why did you choose this specific project? " A Mexican volunteer working with people suffering from HIV/AIDS explained:" One motivation has been the experience of collaborating in an organization that manages intercultural programs through volunteerism and plus I wanted to learn more

²⁶³See Appendix, Interview 2

²⁶⁴See Appendix, Interview 10

²⁶⁵See Appendix, Interview 14

²⁶⁶See Appendix, Interview 20

²⁶⁷See Appendix, Interview 27

²⁶⁸See Appendix, Interview 17

about how to help people at a disadvantage or who are in vulnerable situations. I think this is an interesting project that caught my attention because currently there is still discrimination against people with HIV / AIDS but we all in general deserve and have the same rights. I think one of the reasons why there is such discrimination is ignorance and that causes fear and prejudice. I wanted to have a closer experience which could help me better understand the situations that they go through, so in the future I can convey my great experience and support in my country.”²⁶⁹

The personal and social dimensions are often times combined, at the roots of the decision to volunteer aboard, as one participant admitted: “for me it was an opportunity to do something good for others, but I understood this later. At first I was focused more on what I wanted to get out of participating in EVS - learning things related to my profession , living in Spain , getting to know new places and people. Towards the end of my stay I understood that above all, this project is about helping disadvantaged people and about giving back to the community that hosted me.”²⁷⁰

What is interesting to notice in fact, is that in the answers reported above there is no single motivation or reason for enlisting in EVS, rather the decisions stand from a variety of considerations of personal, professional, or social nature” I decided to be a European volunteer because I wanted to see another European country, improve my Spanish and promote cultural exchange as well as help vulnerable people”²⁷¹; “..learning a new language, working before starting university, trying to find out if supporting people with disabilities is something I can specialize in for my professional life, living an

²⁶⁹See Appendix, Interview 18

²⁷⁰See Annex, Interview 19

²⁷¹See Appendix, Interview 26

experience abroad in a beautiful country, giving something back voluntarily,²⁷² are an Austrians' participants motivations for choosing EVS.

Level of involvement in the projects

The volunteers were asked to identify the level of freedom they were given in their projects, in terms of initiating and implementing personal activities inside the preexisting framework.

As expected the answers varied greatly because of the diversity of projects the participants were part of. Most of them said that their host organization had been open to their ideas and that they were able to develop their own initiatives: "My organization was open to all my propositions and personal projects. However time flew by so fast that generally I didn't find much space to do extra things. My activities were varied and aside from the daily tasks, I had the opportunity to teach polish classes to Spanish volunteers, help the organization with managing some events and participate in other classes and workshops"²⁷³ explained a volunteer from AFAIJ. Similarly a participant working in a non-profit organization that cares for children from disadvantaged backgrounds responded: "I was given the chance to develop my own activities, but they days passed so quickly that there was little or no time for things outside the usual routine of the children."²⁷⁴ Another volunteer working with children in the same project expressed his satisfaction about the activities he was able to implement, namely organizing a calendar, cooking traditional food from his country and carving a pumpkin for Halloween.

Other volunteers gave examples of their contributions to the projects: "I had the opportunity of making a workbook for people with mental

²⁷²See Annex, Interview 35

²⁷³See Annex, Interview 11

²⁷⁴See Appendix, Interview 8

disabilities which was useful for their rehabilitation”²⁷⁵; “ One of the things I love most is dancing so I was happy to be able to set up a dance class for the residents”²⁷⁶.

In other cases volunteers told the interviewer they were not interested in developing personal initiatives, and one person said she was not given the chance to implement new ideas. However other volunteers from the same project, while agreeing on the rigidity of the schedule, reported they had had the possibility to organize a craft shop one afternoon a week in one case, and a music class in the other.

There is some evidence that volunteers benefit more from certain degree of freedom and initiative in their placements as well as autonomy in their responsibilities and that this has the potential of contributing to the development of professional and soft skills. The different responses observed, point to the fact that the volunteers’ involvement depends in an equal manner on openness and availability of the host organization and on the interests and assertiveness of the participants.

Learning process and skills acquired:

There is a lot of evidence that voluntary service can break down prejudice and increase, tolerance, intercultural competence and language skills. The volunteers were asked to answer the question “What did you learn as a result of your EVS project?”, in order to determine if the outcomes of their experiences match the expectations they had at the beginning.

The vast majority of volunteers, when asked if they got new skills and knowledge during their projects, said that they had. Among the most common

²⁷⁵See Appendix, Interview 15

²⁷⁶See Appendix, Interview 18

outcomes arising from participation in EVS, to which volunteers made reference, was learning a new language.

In a Eurobarometer study from 2012 on “Europeans and their languages”²⁷⁷, the European citizens interviewed said that foreign languages are very important in their working lives. The majority of Europeans (54%) are able to hold a conversation in at least one additional language, and believe that improvement in language skills should be a policy priority, as expressed by 77% of respondents. Against this background all sources agree that European voluntary service increases language skills.

Language training was made available to all volunteers by the host organization, and the interviews reveal it was significant in most cases. Expectations to learn a new language were partially or fully fulfilled for a large part of the volunteers, with most of them at least mentioning it as a direct outcome of their experiences. A volunteer from Poland shared: “ I learned a lot of things! I learned Spanish from zero and reached a medium - high level and even learned some basic phrases in other languages.”²⁷⁸

Another important dimension referenced is that of “interpersonal skills” with a very important outcome being the capacity to live in a different culture. Among the different characteristics that the volunteers say they have developed due to EVS, it is striking to see how many emphasize the personal gains in terms of being more assertive, communicative, tolerant, open toward others and self aware: “I have gotten to know new cultures and have experienced what a cultural shock is. One of the most important things for me is what I've learned about relationships and about myself.”²⁷⁹; “I have learned many things. Not only did I learn Spanish language and culture but

²⁷⁷Eurobarometer, Europeans and their languages, at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf, accessed 15.09.2015

²⁷⁸See Appendix, Interview 11

²⁷⁹See Appendix, Interview 21

also how to live without my family or friends from Sweden. This EVS project is also very important for my personal development. I can now say that I am much more independent, more open to other cultures and sure of myself. I've also learned how to work with people with disabilities and handle some situations with them."²⁸⁰ One volunteer especially emphasizes the independence and insight she gained through the EVS experience: " I consider myself a more independent person now that I have gotten used to handle many things on my own. Another value that I learned during my EVS is to find my own identity. Living and talking with many people from different places made me more aware of the importance of culture, which reflects the identity of a person and his way of thinking".²⁸¹

The majority of participants believe that intercultural learning was of major impact in their training: " Volunteering is a social learning process for life, which offers a strong and important impact on the people who make these types of projects. I have learned many things: how to work in a team of people with backgrounds and personalities very different from mine, how to manage my time and money, some Spanish language and culture and especially I've learned to know myself better than ever."²⁸² A participant from Germany talked about self discovery: " The best part of my project was when I realized that I am a selfless person and that I enjoy taking care of people with severe mental or health problems and give them a little light in their lives"²⁸³

Depending on the project they were part of, volunteers declared that they were taken aback upon arrival, but that the support framework put in place seems to have fulfilled its purpose of helping them accommodate, as did the efforts made by the National Agencies and host organizations. " I

²⁸⁰See Appendix, Interview 2

²⁸¹See Appendix, Interview 33

²⁸²See Appendix, Interview 4

²⁸³See Appendix, Interview 29

really like my project because there is a friendly atmosphere among workers and I also enjoy the work I do”²⁸⁴. One volunteer speaks about his activities explaining: ” The most important part the experience is the people you find in your project. I do not like to interact with narrow-minded people in general, but here I found everyone was open, curious. The first months were pretty tough, but I received a lot of support and in the second half of my project I liked all my tasks. Working with disabled people, after half a year on my EVS project , the word "normal" for me now has a slightly different meaning”²⁸⁵; “I've learned to live with people with diseases and work alongside them. I have learned a lot about HIV/AIDS and how people live with their disease”²⁸⁶ said one volunteer working with terminally ill people. A volunteer from Indonesia working in the same project admitted: “I had some doubts at the beginning not knowing a lot about this condition, I understood that misinformation is very common in these situations and that it is what leads to prejudice and fear. Learning about this made my fears and doubts completely disappear.”²⁸⁷

This reconnects to what some of the volunteers indicated as a result of their EVS experience, broadening of their horizons and developing values such as tolerance, openness and respect. Volunteers also indicated that they had acquired a better understanding of certain subjects like youth, issues relating to disabilities, disease and ecology. A volunteer from Turkey shares: “ In addition to culture, language and the customs of the people, I have also learned a lot about myself. I learned more about our ability to have patience with residents and how to solve a problem by myself or with the help of one

²⁸⁴ See Appendix, Interview 34

²⁸⁵ See Appendix, Interview 16

²⁸⁶ See Appendix, Interview 7

²⁸⁷ See Appendix, Interview 1

of the community. I have also learned a lot about HIV and how the disease can affect people physically and psychologically.”²⁸⁸

European Voluntary Service puts a strong emphasis on the learning experience of the volunteers. Some of them realized they had acquired on-the-job experience, organizational skills, social and communication skills and spirit of initiative through the activities performed in their projects. “ I learned many different things. In my project I learned how to work in a team, or with a lot of different people. I have also learned to be more spontaneous in the project and in my personal life, but also more responsible, how to organize my time and pocket money.”²⁸⁹

European citizenship:

Based on the responses of the hosted volunteers to questions related to their EVS experience, motivation, expectations and skills acquired, it is accurate to assume that the program leads to an increase in the level of professional values, skills, tolerance and even in active citizenship. This however does not necessarily translate into a European feeling of citizenship, which was not mentioned by volunteers among the outcomes.

A general objective of the program is to promote young people’s active citizenship, which also involves promoting their European citizenship. Therefore EVS “... aims to develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, thus contributing to strengthening social cohesion and to promoting active citizenship.”²⁹⁰

Although EVS may succeed in the former part of this statement there are few indications of a rise in the European feeling of citizenship among

²⁸⁸ See Appendix, Interview 3

²⁸⁹ See Appendix, Interview 5

²⁹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/mobility/european-voluntary-service_en.htm
accessed at 29.09.2015

volunteers and little or no mention of the European dimension other than inter-cultural learning, in the responses given by participants.

Career orientation and reducing indecision:

As observed in the previous sections, one of the most significant aspects of EVS as reported by volunteers is career orientation, bringing about new career perspectives or the skills necessary for future job related endeavours. There is not however much positive evidence of the fact that a former EVS volunteer is able to find employment more easily than someone else. The reflection is rather made on the fact that EVS seems to reduce career indecision among the participants and contribute to their overall personal-growth which might lead to an increased employability. Participation in EVS helps young people define their interests more clearly, in choosing a job or a field of studies or simply in maturing and preparing for the future.

The volunteers were asked to answer the question: "Do you think that your EVS experience will help you in future work projects?". Before returning home a participant from Germany shared "I think the skills and experience I have gained will facilitate me to find a job, and adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and new situations."²⁹¹ A volunteer from Indonesia answered : "I am sure this experience will help me in future jobs, of course the preparation, skills and knowledge I got here will be a good addition for my resume and what I do in my future work plans."²⁹²

In the field of voluntary work in general, there is a growing and inherent formalization and professionalization of volunteering²⁹³ favoured by European based programmes, especially by EVS. Volunteers are able to

²⁹¹ See Appendix, Interview 5

²⁹² See Appendix, Interview 4

²⁹³ <http://ncvoforesight.org/drivers/professionalisation-of-volunteering> accessed at 20.09.2015

develop workplace skills as part of their training, courses and general activities. They are aware of what they expect to get out of the volunteering activities and a large part of it is related to personal and professional growth. Volunteering can also be loosely interpreted as a means of providing professional experience and training in the social or non-profit sector. A volunteer shares: " when I return to Lithuania I will look for an NGO similar to Basida (project) because I want to continue my work in the field. Besides, I still want to volunteer in a foreign country, and I will seek another project to do in the future."²⁹⁴

As transpired through the answers of the volunteers, participation in EVS most influenced their personal development. We can assume, however, that personal development influences educational and occupational choices. Volunteers are more open and equipped for new experiences. Sometimes they decide to study subjects they would never have chosen before or they become convinced that occupational choices they made were right.

EVS impacts young volunteers by giving them a change to try out a career that they either considered for the future or they wanted to experience before embarking on a different professional path. The training also gives participants some sort of orientation which helps reduce career indecision and time loss: " I have changed a lot during my projects because now I understand the realities of working with people that have HIV or some sort of disability and as a result I am interested in continuing working with these people."²⁹⁵

One aspect that needs clarifying is that there is no objective measure that allows us to say that EVS leads to employment. It is difficult to establish a relation between the participation in the European volunteering framework

²⁹⁴See Appendix, Interview 16

²⁹⁵See Appendix, Interview 21

and the probability of getting a job, due to a lack of systematic follow up and the difficulty and scale that such a study would require. However it is made clear from the volunteers' testimonials that the program provides them with a set of inter-personal, social and cultural skills that constitute an important package in helping them integrate socially and professionally.

Therefore, being employable is not a question of having a degree or a diploma, but it is a combination of capacities that are not exclusively taught in school and to which the EVS experience contributes a lot. A participant shares " I am not sure what my work plans are but I know that my experience here will prove very useful".²⁹⁶

Future plans:

The hosted volunteers were quizzed about their plans for the future, and although there were a few registered cases in which volunteers were not sure what they were going to do next, the vast majority of all interviewed young participants expressed some idea about their forthcoming projects, be it academic or professional: "I will start my master's degree shortly and if possible, I will also begin teaching philosophy in schools"²⁹⁷, shared a volunteer from Italy. As stated previously this can be an indication that EVS reduces indecision. A participant from Germany explained: " I just applied for a placement in a school as an occupational therapist. After my EVS I clearly want to improve the lives of people with disabilities, through movement, art, singing or dancing. After I finish my studies I can see myself working as an occupational therapist full-time".²⁹⁸

The volunteers' future projects as gathered from their responses mainly refer to finding a job or to continuing their studies. In addition to this

²⁹⁶See Appendix, Interview 9

²⁹⁷See Appendix, Interview 30

²⁹⁸See Appendix, Interview 29

many said they would like to pursue other volunteering activities as well: “ I would like to find a place in Italy where I can keep on volunteering for a few days a week. It is very important for me now to continue gaining experiences that can help me maintain an objective view on life, on what I am and what I have to give”²⁹⁹, responded one volunteer before returning to his home country. “ I would like to continue volunteering, but I know it is going to be difficult to reconcile this with my studies. Nonetheless I will find a way to continue working in international volunteering projects”³⁰⁰, shared another participant.

A few volunteers talked about their upcoming enrolment in university or about other academic degrees they are planning to acquire. A 20 year old participant says: “ I will enlist in university in the fall in Sweden. I am still not sure what I will study, but I like international relations, politics or foreign languages.”³⁰¹ A Kenyan participant told the interviewer “I will continue my degree in Tourism and will probably keep on doing volunteer work”³⁰², while his colleague from the same country shares “I want to spent some time with my family before starting work as a travel consultant and perhaps start studying as well”³⁰³. An Argentinean volunteer plans on finishing her master’s degree, an Italian participant felt inspired by his projects to start a University career related to education and disability, while others are focusing more on their professional prospects. “I have a job interview set up for when I return to Norway, and I am sure that this volunteering experience will prove to be an asset”³⁰⁴, “I will go back to my job in India and try to continue volunteering on the side”³⁰⁵.

²⁹⁹See Appendix, Interview 15

³⁰⁰See Appendix, Interview 36

³⁰¹See Appendix, Interview 2

³⁰²See Appendix, Interview 21

³⁰³See Appendix, Interview 22

³⁰⁴See Appendix, Interview 8

³⁰⁵See Appendix, Interview 23

Overall evaluation of the program:

Finally the volunteers were asked to assess their experience and to underscore the best moments and the most difficult situations with which they were faced.

An overwhelming amount of participants considered EVS to have been either a good or very good experience. It becomes clear from the responses that the majority of the volunteers felt that EVS had a positive influence in their lives. It made them more self-confident, independent, and capable of dealing with problems. "This is a learning experience that will mark my whole life."³⁰⁶, "EVS can help you discover a new world and enrich your life"³⁰⁷, "Amazing, the whole experience, the lessons I have learned, the people I have met. Perhaps one of the most valuable things is the new language, I learned very quickly"³⁰⁸; "A very important part of my life and personal growth"³⁰⁹, are a few of the phrases used by volunteers to describe the impact the program had on them.

The feedback received from the volunteers when it comes to the positive outcomes was constant. The main impact, as perceived by them, was related to cultural learning. Most volunteers did to some extent learn the language of the host country; they went through a significant personal development and increased their self-confidence, becoming more independent and ready to take on responsibility. A participant refers to her projects as: "... a fundamental and invaluable experience. I can now appreciate the reality more clearly; I am more aware and grateful for what I have. Besides listening to the stories of the residents I could reevaluate my

³⁰⁶See Appendix, Interview 32

³⁰⁷See Appendix, Interview 12

³⁰⁸See Appendix, Interview 27

³⁰⁹See Appendix, Interview 31

own. What the project has brought me in terms of security in myself and my abilities in interpersonal relationships is invaluable!”³¹⁰

Aside from the personal and intercultural aspects reported, a number of additional factors influenced the positive impact of the program, namely, a balanced approach between the personal development and community benefit, preparation and training, development of a work programme and the quality of support and mentoring provided during the service. The skills of a more “technical” nature developed throughout the duration of the projects are also important elements reported by the participants, along with the capacity of taking initiative, of organizing activities, integrating in a work dynamic.

The possibility for the participants of developing their sense of initiative and creativity depended in a large degree on the emphasis given to personal development by the host organisation. “I consider this experience to have been enriching in every aspect of life, because every day I learned something new and lived something unforeseen. It is difficult to highlight a special moment, but my contact with the local people, especially the friendliness and how they want to help, impressed me. I want to absorb this kind of help in my behaviour and give the same kindness that I receive to others.”³¹¹

Almost all volunteers gave a positive review of the program and of their projects, but that opinion was of course not unanimous. There were a few accounts of volunteers that were dissatisfied with some aspects of their activities or projects, but the negative aspects did not radically impact their experience or opinion of the EVS program.

³¹⁰See Appendix, Interview 15

³¹¹See Appendix, Interview 17

Among the factors influencing positive impact, the preparation phase was of great importance. On the reverse, when the expectations of the volunteer did not coincide with the actual situation in the host organisation, due to a lack of communication and misunderstandings, problems were more likely to occur. The quality of the training provided proved essential for the future success of the projects as did the capacity of host organisations to be flexible when it came to language training, the overcoming of immediate communication problems and other issues prone to arise in the phase of adjustment.

Having worked in a project supporting people with intellectual disabilities, a volunteer from Austria talks about the most difficult part of her experience: ' 'At first I think I was not informed of many things that happen in the residence and in general things that I had to do, how I could help , and what the work rhythm was. I also had no training course to learn how to work here. So the worst part was seeing the patient having a crisis, without knowing to do and not knowing what was happening at the time. It would have helped if I had been given some information about this beforehand. But if I have to summarize EVS in a phrase I would say: You learn most from problems and challenges. ‘³¹²

Another volunteer living and working in a support home for people with HIV/AIDS explains:” The strongest challenge for me was to adapt to living and working in the same place and trying give a rhythm to my life. I felt that there was no dividing line between work life and social life and I had difficulties to track and manage time to work, learn Spanish in a short time, manage my spare time, etc.”³¹³ A participant from Germany shared: “ the

³¹²See Appendix, Interview 35

³¹³See Appendix, Interview 31

most difficult thing for me was getting used to the food, to the idea that I couldn't cook for myself, but had to abide by the dinner and launch hours.”³¹⁴

When asked if they would recommend the EVS program to other young people, all participants responded affirmatively: “Volunteering is something I recommend to everyone”³¹⁵, “I could talk a lot about EVS and I would generally urge everyone to try it”³¹⁶; “Of course! EVS has established an international network helping young people volunteer and gain experience aboard. I already recommended the program to others and I will continue doing so”³¹⁷. One volunteer added: “It was a beautiful experience, which I highly recommend. My project is a bit special, it is very difficult, and maybe not for everyone, but I generally advise doing EVS to anyone who is still thinking about it or hesitating.”³¹⁸

These responses further demonstrate the beneficial aspects and positive impact perceived by volunteers as a result of their participation in the EVS program.

4.4 Conclusion:

The current chapter presented a report of the participation of volunteers in EVS projects through AFAIJ, a Spanish non-profit organization. Focus has been put on gender distribution, age, nationality of participants and host country, type and duration of the projects chosen. The results for the years 2010-2014 showed a larger number of women volunteering than man, the highest concentration of participants aged between 25 and 27 years old, especially in the case of Spaniards, and a pronounced interest for long-term projects with a strong social component.

³¹⁴See Appendix, Interview 26

³¹⁵See Appendix, Interview 8

³¹⁶See Appendix, Interview 11

³¹⁷See Appendix, Interview 5

³¹⁸See Appendix, Interview 19

The second part of the study concentrated on information gathered from interviews presented to host volunteers at the end of their EVS projects. Emphasis was placed on the participants' previous volunteering experiences, motivation for joining the program and expectations, competences and skills acquired, career orientation, future plans and finally their overall assessment of the program.

Based on the information gathered from volunteers it would be factual to say that European voluntary service is an attractive option for many young people because it combines individual development (language, cultural, international and professional experiences) with the feeling of 'making a contribution'. This overwhelmingly positive evaluation of the program by volunteers may serve as a proof of the program's value and benefits.

Chapter 5

EU youth policies and EVS: Conclusions

Throughout this thesis the most important aspects of civil society and the non-profit sector have been presented as well as the relation established between the third sector and the state. Relevant aspects of public policies and public policy making have also been observed, from a theoretical stand point firstly, and in a supra-national setting later, looking into the way the European Union develops them. In particular the youth policies of the EU received attention, including an account of the most important institutional initiatives that established the youth field within the EU policy agenda and a timeframe of the most relevant actions and programs.

The EU has adopted key instruments in providing support for young people, with non-formal education activities of which the European Voluntary Service is a perfect example. The main objective of this thesis is to develop a better understanding about processes and outcomes of non-formal learning activities in the youth field through an analysis of the European Voluntary Service program. The paper assessed the extent to which the EVS program achieved its general objectives of ensuring the participation of youth in society while contributing to the development of their personal and professional skills and competences in view of increasing their employability as well as their active citizenship. On the basis of data and interviews collected from Spanish NGO AFAIJ, for the period 2010-2014, information was analyzed and interpreted, regarding participation in the program and the impact of the experience on young volunteers.

5.1 Public policy-making between theory and practice. Civil society involvement in European initiatives

The most relevant aspects of public policies and of policy-making starting with definitions, types, process and actors involved were presented in the second chapter. Policy makers focus their actions on the impact and sustainability of the measures they establish to implement policies and on the results. For this reason, among the stages of the policy cycle described, evaluation is a fundamental one. It can help answer questions about the viability of a program, the benefits it brings to the citizens, improvements needed etc.

The demand for policy evaluation comes from a need of control and supervision that has grown in the last decades, in the attempt to give reassurance on the outcome of public policies and their capacity to produce results. The context in which policy evaluation affirmed itself is one where power is exercised through problem analysis, exploration of solutions and measurement of the overall results. The evaluation of public policies is meant to retrospectively analyze processes and results, so as to expand the cognitive capacity³¹⁹ of policy makers, institutions and other parties involved, through the gathered knowledge. Policy evaluation is an instrument that by administering systematic judgements geared to revise information, discovers new perspectives, identifies problems as well as helps devise solutions to resolve them. Evaluation basically performs two types of functions which are expected to generate positive effect. The first one is the learning function³²⁰, helping the policy-maker understand previous errors, identify obstacles and unforeseen constraints, explore solutions or come up with new hypothesis. The second function refers to the accountability³²¹ aspect of policy-making and should have the effect of bringing more awareness of their actions to the

³¹⁹ Andrea Lippi, *La valutazione delle politiche pubbliche*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2007, p.18

³²⁰ Ivi. p.40

³²¹ Ivi. p.45

actors involved, making them more responsible of the results of their endeavours. The goal of each policy is to ultimately generate an impact³²², make a change in the world, and affect or modify behaviour. This means that each programme has a purpose together with a theory about change and a more or less precise strategy to achieve it.

Within the European Union, evaluation has been given a major step forward when the European Commission decided to systematically evaluate the European Structural Fund spending. As the EU's structural funds are now being evaluated within their five-year program cycle, the evaluation of EU policies and programs has significantly influenced and pushed ahead the development of evaluation at large. The European-wide "PISA" study³²³, a major international evaluation exercise on the national educational system, is an example of the role and potential of evaluation as an instrument of policy making. There have also been a number of studies on various aspects of youth programmes in the past, partly commissioned by European institutions, partly resulting from national initiatives or scholars' papers.

There is a so called policy-network in place, at national and supra-national levels, that refers to the actors associated with the policy sector. The formal and informal relationships that make-up the policy network involved in the decision and implementation stage of policies is an important part of the process. In a modern pluralistic society, the policy process is complex and involves many participants, official and unofficial who have a role in shaping its outcome. Policy actors are individuals or organizations that carry out the actions capable of influencing the outcomes of the decision process.

³²²Ivi.p.32

³²³Hellmut Wollmann, *Policy Evaluation and Evaluation research*, in Fischer, Gerald J. Miller, Mara S. Sidney (eds), *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis. Theory, Politics and Methods*, CRC Press, Boca Raton, 2007, p.397

The thesis analyzed the role of civil society and non-profit actors in their various phases of development as well as their relations with the business sphere and especially with the state. The third sector has over time, exponentially grown in size and role, acquiring a standing as one of the most important components of the decision-making process in many European societies, a fact that encourages its relationship with the state. The contribution that civil society brings to the delivery of a range of public services is increasingly welcomed by the population and by the political formations and institutions and “ has over the years led to the creation of a voluntary sector that is throughout Europe highly institutionalized especially in relation to local authorities in several EU countries”³²⁴.

The EU recognizes the role of NGOs and non-profits as indispensable partners in actions such as coordination and implementation of some aspects of youth policies. A European Commission document notes civil societies’ role in providing a voice for the excluded and information for better policy formation: “the role of NGOs in representing the views to the European Institutions of specific groups of citizens (such as people with disabilities, ethnic minorities) or on specific issues (such as the environment, animal welfare, world trade). In particular, many NGOs have an ability to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged and to provide a voice for those not sufficiently heard through other channels.”³²⁵

The intensified contact between youth organizations, NGOs and individuals has led to a process of European co-operation and of reflection on the nature of the diversity which characterizes the social and youth services in Europe.

³²⁴Carlo Ruzza, *Organized civil society and political representation*, in David Armstrong, Valeria Bello, Julie Gilson and Debora Spini, *Civil Society and International Governance*, *op.cit.* 64

³²⁵(COM/2000/0011) Commission discussion paper "The Commission and non-governmental organisations: building a stronger partnership", <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52000DC0011> accessed at 25.09.2015

5.2 Mobility and non-formal learning in the European context: EVS

There is a slow identity building process in place at a regional institutional level within the European Union, which is based non only on cultural criteria, but on common themes, the promotion of symbols such as the European flag, the anthem and even the Euro zone. In addition to this are the common educational and mobility programs such as the Jean Monet action and Erasmus program and the variety of actions meant to diffuse knowledge and information about the EU itself.³²⁶ European based programs are an opportunity for participants to understand the variety of European cultures, to overcome prejudice and stereotypes.

The youth policies are among the few examples of distributive policies within the EU, for which we can observe that benefits are concentrated to a specific group, while the costs are widely diffused. The EU disperses part of its budget to specific beneficiaries, in this case to young people, organizing specific activities and services addressed to them.

Beginning in the 1980s, the EU has launched a variety of youth-oriented programs, in order to enhance youth mobility and cross-boarder exchanges. The Erasmus program developed in 1987 was followed by the “Youth for Europe” in 1988. It was the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 that included formal European competencies in the field of education, vocational training and youth in the Union’s founding treaties. These programs have influenced the development of more formal EU policies in the youth field, establishing further cooperation and debate of youth issues. The European Commission plays a crucial role in the youth area of policy making, as made clear through its 1995 White Paper on teaching and learning and the White

³²⁶Valeria Bello, *Collective and social identity*, in David Armstrong, Valeria Bello, Julie Gilson and Debora Spini, *Civil Society and International Governance*, op.cit.p.33

Paper on Youth of 2001. The former introduced, as part of its objective to combat social exclusion, the European Voluntary Service program, as a pilot action in 1996 and as a fully established youth program since 1998. Through the latter, the Commission identified the encouraging of voluntary service as one of the four key pillars for the development of youth policy in Europe, and adopted the OMC to establish a uniform standard across member states.

Many initiatives in the youth field have implemented international activities for young people, often around the topics of intercultural learning, mutual understanding, participation and European citizenship. An important point on the youth policy agenda is making it possible for young people to be included in society, to express their opinions about the way society is organized and to develop structures that allow them to participate in the decision making process. However, the programmatic aims set by European Youth policies and programs, such as the former YiA, Erasmus Plus and EVS have been increasingly confronted with the economic situation in some European countries where unemployment rate among young people reaches close to 50%.

Traditional pathways of transition to the labour market no longer exist, as education does not lead directly to employment, leaving young people to search for alternatives to improve their skills and gain professional experience. Adding to this crisis there are also significant skills mismatches on Europe's labour market. Many young workers hold formal qualifications above those required by the job they are able to get, but at the same time their skills are less likely to be the right ones compared to older workers. The number of young people not in education, employment or training (so called 'NEETs') has increased over the last few years; this group also includes young people with higher levels of educational attainment.

Therefore, as of late, key points in the EU youth programmes are employability, empowerment, improvement of occupational and social

positions and validation and recognition of competences gained in non-formal learning settings. Non-formal learning is the key method of education of the youth field and is often better integrated to complement formal education, providing the skills demanded by the labour market and the creative skills promoted among young people.

To this end, the issuing of a certificate at the end of the European Voluntary Service is recognised as a useful first step for recognition of European voluntary activities. Since 2004 the EVS certificate has been an effective non-formal recognition tool, with a European format, modalities and annexes, which contain a place for detailed description and evaluation of the skills gained through the voluntary work. The Youth Pass is a way of validating the non-formal learning resulting from the European Voluntary Service activity, evaluating, assessing and recognizing learning progress and outcomes.

The learning dimension is a fundamental part of volunteering program, focusing on non-formal education as a relevant part of youth work with links to informal and formal education. The European Voluntary Service is thus, a youth mobility non-formal education programme, in which equal importance is given to experience and competences gained by volunteers. European Voluntary Service was established in July 1998 and has been one of the most successful programmes promoted by the European Union, under the "Youth for Europe" initiative firstly, Youth in Action second, and currently as a part of the Erasmus Plus program. The main objective of the programme is to reinforce social and occupational inclusion of young people while also helping local communities. The objective is that during their period of voluntary service volunteers get new social and professional experiences, improve their knowledge and develop personal skills. International mobility and volunteering is important in view of enhancing intercultural competences

and contributing to the personal development of participants and to active citizenship.

5.3 EVS participation and impact: Findings

The aim of the research based analysis developed in the fourth chapter of the thesis, was to assess the core issues related to the influence of EVS on volunteers, on their educational and occupational choices.

The empirical research is focused on volunteers who participated in European Voluntary Service between 2010 and 2014 in AFAIJ, in relation both to those young people from Spain who did their voluntary work abroad (sending perspective), and those young people from other countries who did their voluntary work in Spain (hosting side). In the first part of the research the focus was placed on the participation, and the outcomes were analyzed in terms of number of participants, gender, predominant age group, nationality and host country, main themes of the projects and duration. On the basis of interviews administered to host volunteers only, the second part of the chapter concentrated on the motivation of young people to participate in EVS, on their expectations in terms of gaining particular skills and knowledge, and on the learning outcomes emerged as a result of their period of voluntary service.

Through the account of volunteer participation in EVS projects in AFAIJ, a series of information emerged related to the profile of the volunteers, regarding gender, age, nationality, type and duration of the projects chosen.

The research revealed a relatively constant trend of EVS hosting projects for the years 2010-2014, and a significant variation of the number of sending projects for the same timeframe. The reason for this is the fact that the host project available for the period considered remained unchanged,

with AFAIJ maintaining the same partner associations and the same range of activities. On the other hand, the sending actions were predisposed to more fluctuations because they depend in a large degree on the availability of projects abroad that can suite the inquirers' preference and the desired area or country.

The results for the years 2010-2014 showed a larger number of women volunteering than man, across all actions, with a 59% female participation and a 41% male presence. This has been a constant in EVS project throughout the years, as explained in an AVSO report of 2007, however the situation is progressively moving towards a more equal distribution between genders. The difference registered can also be explained when looking at the types of projects most chosen by volunteers. Working with children and minors registered as number one in the preferences (21%), a theme that is traditionally more likely to appeal to women than to man. Other projects chosen by volunteers were: assisting people with HIV/AIDS (20%), supporting disabled people (15%), environmental initiatives (10%) and educational programs (10%). This evidence points to a strong social component of projects chosen by volunteers.

In terms of duration, short term projects while available, are less common and EVS projects are generally organized in a long term perspective based on the idea that the benefits of the experience are grater in the log run, both on the volunteer and on the community. The results of volunteer participation thus confirmed a pronounced interest in long-term projects.

In relation to the of age of participants the highest concentration was observed in the 25 to 27 age group, followed by the 28 to 30 category, owed mainly to the large number of Spaniards registering within these blocks. This, as opposed to volunteers of other nationalities who chose Spain as a host

country and whose numbers are more equally proportioned between the age groups. This trend was explained with reference to the high unemployment rate registered in Spain over the last few years, which prompted many young people to search for alternatives to traditional employment after finishing their studies.

On the basis of the interviews administered to host volunteers at the end of their EVS project the following findings emerged:

1. Civic engagement on the part of volunteers
2. Motivations and expectations partially or fully met
3. Reduced indecision
4. Acquisition of skills and abilities useful in the labour market

The voluntary service is coupled with an intensive experience of life abroad and promotes values such as solidarity, philanthropy and knowledge of diversity. The choice among a vast range of different projects with a strong social component, such as activities aimed at integration and combating discrimination, cultural activities for youth, helping the elderly, helping terminally ill patients, gives some indication to this end. The opportunity of living in another country, of doing altruistic work, improving skills and experimenting with another way of life is appealing to many young people as expressed throughout the interviews. Thus, while it is fair to say that voluntary service leads to an increase in tolerance and active citizenship, at the same time it is legitimate to assume that for most of the participants there is some degree of pre-existing involvement in social issues that comes, for close to half of them, from their prior volunteering experiences in their home countries, as shared with the interviewer. The development of the civic engagement of volunteers can therefore not be attributed solely to EVS, since in the case of some volunteers it stands from previous experiences.

Volunteers' motivations for joining EVS suggest that they are aware of the benefits they can get from taking part in the program. For some, this consciousness comes after the experience itself rather than prior to involvement, while for others, who are more goal-oriented, the outcomes are clearly expressed and expected since the very beginning. These expectations usually refer to learning a new language, living an experience abroad, and cultural learning, breaking out of the routine, taking time to reflect upon the future and doing volunteer work and helping others. Both personal and altruistic motivations are present in the answers given by volunteers.

The volunteers' responses regarding the skills they acquired as a result of their EVS experience, point in a large degree to the fact that their expectations were met. One of the first outcomes that participants mentioned was learning a new language, followed by general personal growth that manifested itself in increase in their self-confidence and enhancement of social competences, capacity to live in a different culture and understand it, feeling independent, becoming more self-aware and open to new challenges.

Therefore, the evidence emerged from the sections regarding motivation and expectations and learning outcomes and skills acquired suggests that the outcomes of the volunteers' experiences match the expectations they had in the beginning.

The revelations that happened once the service was completed, are for the most part related to volunteers discovering that the program had a great influence on their personality, in terms of personal growth, self awareness and independence, and as a consequence on their choices concerning adult life. One aspect of how voluntary service impacted volunteers, as highlighted by them when talking about their future plans, was that it gave them the possibility to try out a new career, either one that they are considering taking up or one they wanted to try out before embarking on a different path. With

few exceptions, volunteers were offered an orientation that helped reduce indecision and had the potential of leading to substantial savings in time wasted.

In the field of voluntary work in general, there is a growing and inherent formalization and professionalization of volunteering. European Voluntary Service puts a strong emphasis on the learning experience of the volunteers. Some of the participants realized they had acquired on-the-job experience, organizational skills, social and communication skills and spirit of initiative through the activities performed in their projects. Emerging from the interviews is also that EVS facilitates young peoples' social integration, helps them gain experience and knowledge that can potentially improve employability and educational opportunities, by helping develop responsibility, independence and resourcefulness. While we can affirm that the skills acquired through EVS improve the participants' employability, there is no objective measure that allows us to firmly state that EVS leads to actual employment in a larger degree for ex-volunteers than for other young people. It is difficult to establish a relation between the participation in the European volunteering framework and the actuality of getting a job, due to a lack of systematic follow up and due the difficulty and scale that such a study would require.

The results and information gathered from data on participation and from interviews with the volunteers have lead to the conclusion of overall positive perceived impact of the EVS experience, with a vast majority of interviewed volunteers saying they had a good or very good experience. The information resulting from the interviews suggests that the EVS program has a significant positive impact on the young people who have taken part in it, in terms of raising their inter-cultural awareness, enabling them to acquire skills and improving their self-confidence and their capacity for initiative. Contributing to the positive impact was a balanced approach between personal development

and community benefit within the program, with preparation, training, support and monitoring and language courses available alongside the development of a work programme.

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Appendix

Interview administered to hosted volunteers:

1. Have you ever had a voluntary experience in your home country, before EVS?
2. Why did you choose to be a volunteer within the EVS program?
3. What do you think volunteering contributes to society? What does it mean to you?
4. How did the option of participation in EVS occur to you? What was your motivation and what expectations did you have?
5. What was your project about?
6. Why did you choose this specific project?
7. Have you prepared in any way before starting your activities?
8. Do you feel comfortable with the tasks you performed inside your project?
9. Have you been given the possibility of implementing personal activities within your project?
10. What did you learn as a result of your EVS project?
11. Do you think that your EVS experience will help you in future work projects?
12. How would you rate your overall EVS experience? What has impacted you most through this time?
13. What plans do you have for the future?
14. What would you say to someone who is considering volunteering in an EVS project?

List of interviews used:

The interviews are organized below by month, year, gender of volunteer, age and nationality (where available).

1. February 2010, female, Indonesian
2. March 2010, female, 20 years old, Swedish
3. November 2011, male, Turkish
4. March 2012, female, 26 years old, Indonesian
5. May 2012, male, German
6. June 2012, female, Czech
7. July 2012, male
8. September 2012, female, Norwegian
9. October 2012, male, 27 years old, Italian
10. November 2012, female, German
11. December 2012, male, Polish
12. January 2013, female, German
13. February 2013, female, Peruvian
14. March 2013, female, Japanese
15. April 2013, female, Italian
16. May 2013, female, Lithuanian
17. June 2013, female
18. July 2013, female, Mexican
19. September 2013, female
20. October 2013, female, Argentinean
21. November 2013, male, Kenyan
22. November 2013, female, Kenyan
23. January 2014, male, Indian
24. January 2014, female, Czech
25. January 2014, female, French
26. February 2014, female, German

27. February 2014, female, Austrian
28. April 2014, male, Italian
29. April 2014, female, German
30. May 2014, male, Italian
31. May 2014, female, Italian
32. June 2014, male, 19 years old, British
33. July 2014, female, Indonesian
34. September 2014, female, Italian
35. October 2014, female, Austrian
36. December 2014, female, Polish