



# European Conference on Volunteering in the Disability Sector:

## Quality and Qualification in Volunteering for Disability

LIFE LONG LEARNING PROGRAMME 2007 – 2013

GRUNDTVIG - LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

01.08.2011 – 31.07.2013

Thessaloniki, May 31<sup>st</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup> 2013

## CONCLUSIONS

- Institute for Community Rehabilitation (Greece)
- L'allegra banderuola Onlus (Italy)
- NGO Support and Learning Centre POWER (Estonia)
- Syndesmos Apodimon Agioy Konstantinoy (Cyprus)

SPONSOR:



UNDER THE AEGIS OF:



This publication is sponsored by the Life Long Learning programme of the European Commission, DG Education and Culture. It reflects the view only of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein



## General Information

The final conference of the QQVD project was held in the City Hall of Thessaloniki, Greece, during the dates 31st May and 1st June, 2013.

It's main purposes were the following:

- ✦ The presentation of the results of the two-year learning partnership funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, sub-programme Grundtvig.
- ✦ The trigger of a public dialogue with stakeholders in national and European level, in the field of volunteering for disability.
- ✦ The record of the feedback of the participants, that should help the partnership to improve the tool of the project.

In the conference participated representatives of:

- ✦ The European Association of Service Providers of Persons with Disabilities (EASPD).
- ✦ The most important service providers in Europe.
- ✦ The Holy Metropolis of Neapolis and Stavroupolis.
- ✦ Greek authorities, such as the Ministry of Macedonia - Thrace, the Prefecture of Macedonia.
- ✦ The Municipality of Thessaloniki and other municipalities.
- ✦ The Pan-hellenic Association of Parents and Guardians of Persons with Disabilities.
- ✦ Organisations of persons with disabilities.
- ✦ Organisations for persons with disabilities.
- ✦ The QQVD partnership members.

## Agreed Principles

The voluntary projects that concern disability must:

1. Respect the human rights, as they are presented in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
2. Take appropriate measures to keep a level of quality.
3. Take appropriate measures for prevention of potential abuse.
4. Encourage persons with any type of disability to participate actively as volunteers, in all the stages of the project, as they can be active citizens and can volunteer themselves to support others.
5. Offer an added value to the organisation and to the entire society.





The voluntary project that concern disability must not:

1. Be based on the "charitable approach", which is perceived as "offer of materials and/or services from the above and from a distance without respect for and human contact with the beneficiary".
2. Substitute services that are provided by professionals.

## **Specific conclusions**

A project concerning volunteering for disability must comprise the following methodological parts, which must work in high level of efficacy:

### ***Recruitment methods***

The recruitment methods have to:

1. Use public spaces to mainstream disability issues in the public opinion.
2. Involve trained volunteers in organizing events and for informational campaigns.
3. Involve one trained person as press officer in the organization to exploit internet and media potentials.

### ***Training methods***

The organisations that train volunteers have to ensure that their training method:

1. Provides the volunteers with all the necessary information.
2. Keeps a high level of quality of their training programme.
3. Incorporates the mission of the organisation.

### ***Supervision methods***

Organisations running voluntary projects must:

1. Be aware that supervision/coordination of volunteers is a crucial part of the procedure.
2. Be flexible to apply the most appropriate and convenient method.
3. Involve a trained person, or cooperate very closely with the supervisor.





## **Quality Assurance**

This procedure concerns two different parts:

### **a) Quality Assurance of the services delivered**

This is perceived in the following dimensions:

1. Assessment of the needs of the beneficiary and efforts and efforts to fulfil them.
2. Satisfaction of the beneficiary as regards the voluntary services.

### **b) Quality Assurance of the learning experience**

Volunteering, beyond others, is an informal and non formal lifelong learning procedure Therefore, the voluntary projects should:

1. Offer appropriate conditions, to support the highest level of learning experience of the volunteers.
2. Offer experiences that may be useful in the future.

## **Qualification**

So far, does not exist a widely accepted qualification system of the learning experience of the volunteers involved in the disability sector. The QQVD partnership started to develop a system based on the previous constituents. The certificate that the partners offer to volunteers certifies their practical and social competences developed during their participation in the project. This certificate is based on the philosophy of the Europass curriculum vitae.

## **Finally...**

NGOs should cooperate with other organizations and ask for support in developing training modules and share needs and responsibilities. After all we should consider each other as a shared enterprise working for the same objective of promoting social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

For better results, organisations that run voluntary projects should have one person responsible for networking: local grounds change rapidly and we need to monitor the social field in order to capture all the existing resources and opportunities.

The QQVD partnership is available for collaboration, support and networking with organisations of and for persons with disabilities, as well as with local authorities and any other organisation, in national and European level, in order to promote qualitative volunteering for disability.

