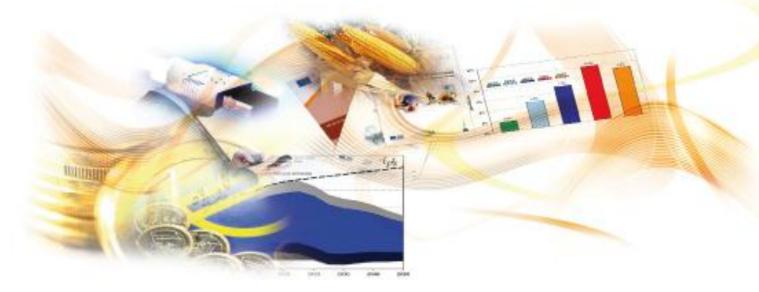# JRC SCIENTIFIC AND POLICY REPORTS

Internet-mediated Volunteering in the EU

Its history, prevalence, and
approaches and how it relates to
employability and social inclusion

Author: Jayne Cravens
Editor: James Stewart

2014

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It can be accessed through the Europa server http://europa.eu/.

Printed in Spain

Acknowledgements

About the author:

Jayne Cravens is researcher, trainer and consultant. Her work is focused on communications, volunteer involvement, community engagement, and management for non-profits, non-governmental organizations, and government initiatives. She is a pioneer regarding the research, promotion and practice of virtual volunteering, including virtual teams, micro-volunteering and crowdsourcing. She also researches methods to address folklore and rumours interfering with development and aid/relief efforts and government initiatives. She is a veteran manager of various local and international non-profit or NGO initiatives. She became active online in 1993, and she created one of the first web sites focused on helping to build the capacity of non-profits to use the Internet. She has been quoted in articles in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and the Associated Press, as well as for reports by CNN, Deutsche Well, the BBC, and various local radio stations, TV stations and blogs. Resources from her web site, coyotecommunications.com, are frequently cited in reports and articles by a variety of organizations, online and in-print. She received her BA in Journalism from Western Kentucky University and her Master's degree in Development Management from Open University in the U.K., and she is an adjunct member of the faculty of Institute for Non-profit Management at Portland State University. A native of Kentucky, she has worked for the United Nations, lived in Germany and Afghanistan, and visited more than 30 countries. She is currently based near Portland, Oregon in the USA.

For more about the author and her work, see: www.coyotecommunications.com

Preface

As the Internet pervades the economy and society, new tools and cultural models for human activity are being developed that change the practices and possibilities of work: the way that tasks are executed, how they are organized; how human capital is contracted, exploited and developed; and the ways and places that people are able and choose to work and develop their working life.

In the current economic context where a key policy emphasis is on employment, the JRC-IPTS Information Society Unit undertook a project, ICT4EMPL Future Work, to building understanding of four novel forms of internet-mediated work activity, both paid and unpaid: online work exchanges, crowdfunding, online volunteering and internet-mediated work exchange (timebanks). The study comprised four parallel studies of the state of understanding and practice in these areas, and in depth qualitative studies of the users and creators of services based on these concepts.

These reports capture some of the ways work, and pathways into work, are changing, with the aim of identifying whether these offers opportunities for policy to promote employment, growth, or represent new challenges with respect to labour markets and employment conditions, such as creating new barriers to participation in the labour market. There is considerable public, private and third sector activity in these areas, and many initiatives can be seen as models of social innovation. It reflects policy concerns in a range of EU Flagship programmes, most notably, the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, and specifically the European *Commission Employment Package* 2012 Key Action 8 which identifies a need to "Map new forms of employment", and the *Social Investment Package* 2013.

The studies are both descriptive and analytic and set out to answer:

1. How do new internet-based systems based on exchange or donation of labour, or capital provision, operate from both the user and operator perspectives?
2. What opportunities and challenges do each of these types of services present to policy?

A series of scientific reports emerging from the project are available on the JRC-IPTS website: http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pages/Employability-TheFutureofWork.html

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Executive Summary

This report assesses the current status of Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe and identifies key actors and stakeholders, drivers and barriers, uptake and usage, and potential challenges and risks for users, donors, policy makers and service operators. It also reviews the early history of Internet-mediated volunteering and the possible linkages between Internet-mediated volunteering and greater employability and social inclusion for online volunteers, particularly young people. Finally, it identifies areas for policy development, review and refinement, and makes recommendations for future research.

In this report, the term *Internet-mediated volunteering* refers to unpaid labour undertaken for the benefit of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charities, community organisations, etc., or those served by such organisations, where an online system, accessed through a computer, a mobile device, etc., plays a key role in volunteer recruitment, in facilitating access to tasks, and completion of tasks by volunteers. Other names include virtual volunteering, online volunteering, micro-volunteering and crowdsourcing. There are versions of these terms in Spanish, French, German, and various other European languages. Volunteering roles may be for just a few minutes or for a few hours, with no ongoing commitment, or may be a leadership or expert role, which requires commitment for several weeks or months. Online volunteers may work individually or as a team.

Besides the recruitment of volunteers for onsite work, there are many tasks that volunteers themselves can do remotely, which may often be done in combination with onsite or face-to-face volunteering. These 'virtual volunteering' tasks include:

· translating documents	· editing a podcast, a video
· researching subjects	· tagging photos and files
· designing web pages, databases, graphics, print publications, etc.	· offering feedback or suggestions regarding a graphic, a policy, a motto, a web site, an event theme, etc.
· editing or writing proposals, press releases, articles, etc.	· managing other online volunteers
· providing marketing, legal, business, medical, agricultural or any expertise	· using social media to promote a cause, training, recruit volunteers, raise money
· developing material for a curriculum and for classes, training sessions, etc.	· moderate online discussion groups
· counselling people	· adding information to a map
· tutoring or mentoring students, entrepreneurs, peers, etc.	

Internet-mediated volunteering in EU countries

Internet-mediated volunteering is an established, respected, widespread practise in community engagement in Europe:

- There are more than 20 websites based in Europe that focus on helping organisations recruit online volunteers (see Annex A).

- There are at least a few thousand online volunteering opportunities (roles, tasks, assignments, etc.) available in the EU, based on a review of the websites of organisations listed in Annexes A and B. There are many millions of conventional volunteering opportunities

advertised and discovered online.

- 60 organisations were easily identified in just three months by the researcher as involving online volunteers based in the EU (see Annex B).

Analysis of these organisations' web materials was used to inform this research, along with the case studies of seven NGOs in various EU countries involving online volunteers or that are representative of the types of organisations where online volunteers could be involved. However, there is no organisation tracking Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe, and it is probable that there are far more online volunteering opportunities and people volunteering online than those identified through this research.

As with all other forms of volunteer engagement, there are factors that contribute to organisations wanting to involve online volunteers and people wanting to be online volunteers, as well as factors for success in these volunteer relationships that benefit both the organisation and the volunteer.

A number of **success factors and challenges are similar to those for traditional volunteers**, such as whether an organisation with volunteers understands and employs basic, essential management practices effectively, and whether it has adequate staffing for these practises, etc. In addition, there are controversies regarding who may and may not be called a volunteer that can complicate discussions and policies regarding Internet-mediated volunteering. For instance, there is disagreement around whether or not unpaid interns at charities and NGOs are volunteering. This could affect discussions about virtual volunteering as it relates to skills development, career exploration, job contacts and professional advancement. In addition, a push for more unemployed people to volunteer online could be seen as an attempt to encourage volunteers to do work that they should actually be paid for, or as an effort to replace paid employees with unpaid workers.

In addition, there are **specific challenges** that must be addressed for Internet-mediated volunteering to be successful, such as fear of negative behaviour online, and lack of understanding or awareness regarding internet mediate volunteering. These findings are supported by both existing research and the case studies in this report. In particular, while Internet-mediated volunteering is widespread in Europe, many organisations are still not familiar with the practise and many volunteer centres and volunteerism initiatives do not include virtual volunteering in their promotion of volunteering. There are also minimal requirements for both organisations and individuals that wish to engage in Internet-mediated volunteering, such as online social skills, and organisations and individuals in Europe would require support to attain these minimal requirements.

Effect on Employability

Internet-mediated volunteering involves the use of many of the skills employers in Europe say they need in the workforce. While there is research that finds that traditional volunteers feel volunteering helps their employability, more research is required to know whether or not employers value volunteering (unpaid work) for a potential job candidate, and if they do not, what actions might be needed to change this perspective. More research is also needed to know if low-skilled volunteers could acquire necessary skills through online volunteering, and to know if NGOs and charities have the capacity or the interest in helping people acquire skills through online volunteering that could increase their employability.

Whereas traditional volunteering allows volunteers to shadow professionals in their work and, therefore, understand different types of positions, this can be more difficult in Internet-mediated volunteering activities. In addition, creating a sense of team or developing comradeship with employees can also be difficult in online situations. Finally, volunteering as a path to employment, even online, may not be economically feasible for everyone, including young people, who may not be able to afford to work without pay.

Effect on Social inclusion

There are a number of studies that show that volunteering does contribute to the social inclusion of

those volunteering, in particular for young people, for socialisation and network development, for developing a more positive attitude towards self and others, for developing personal resilience, for getting involved in the social context of belonging, for political participations, as promoter of civic engagement and support of prosocial norms and in reducing young people´s behavioural problems and school neglect.

The above findings and anecdotal information regarding online volunteering as an avenue for social inclusion for people with disabilities and people in rural areas, point that Internet-mediated volunteering as a way to build the social inclusion of young people shows promise, but more research is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

Policy considerations

Policies aiming to promote Internet-mediated volunteering development in Europe, leading to greater employability and social inclusion for the volunteers themselves, should consider the main risks and challenges identified in this paper, mainly linked to the lack of awareness and understanding, labour and regulatory concerns and lack of research and evaluation on the role of online volunteering on skills development, employability and social inclusion. A set of policy options are included in the report.

1. Introduction

This report was commissioned as part of the JRC-IPTS ICT4EMPL Future Work programme to explore some of the ways the Internet is changing work, both paid and unpaid. The brief for this study was to provide policy makers and other stakeholders with an overview report on the state of knowledge and practice regarding Internet-mediated volunteering in the different European traditions, and how this may relate to opportunities for employability, career development and social inclusion for those engaged in Internet-mediated volunteering.

This report provides:

- A state of the art review to understand the dynamics of Internet-mediated volunteering in general and specific to European Union (EU) countries, the key actors and stakeholders, drivers and barriers, uptake and usage, outcomes, and challenges for users, donors and service operators.

- A compilation of a list of resources, both in terms of organisations, literature and practitioners, that could play a role in supporting the growth of Internet-mediated volunteering in the EU.

- Identification of data and conclusions to opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment, skills and social inclusion, and transition from education to employment for young people.

- Identification of overall policy relevance and areas of future research.

- Seven short case studies of organisations engaging in or interested in Internet-mediated volunteering.

In addition, a wiki was created at http://ict4empl.wikispaces.com, serving as a publicly-shared knowledge base for resources used to inform this project, resources that could inform future research projects related to the subject matter, and to invite further submissions of relevant information from any wiki visitor.

2. Methodology: literature review and mapping of services

The first period of the study, from April through June 2013, consisted of three main activities:

- reviewing academic and grey literature relating to Internet-mediated volunteering, as well as literature relating to the role of any kind of volunteering in employability, career development and social inclusion.
- mapping services and resources related to Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe, or that could inform, or have informed, such activities in Europe.
- identifying organisations that are engaged in Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe, or that involve volunteers from Europe, with an eye towards which might be good candidates for case studies.

Searches for academic literature were conducted using JSTOR (Journal Storage),[1] Academia.edu,[2] and Academic Search Premier,[3] as well as via the researcher's own onsite office library of journals, books and articles. Searches used keywords and phrases listed in Section 2.2 of this paper. Time for reading through search results was limited by the timeframe for this project and, therefore, the list of literature referenced for this paper is not offered as a comprehensive list of available literature on the subject matter.

Searches for grey literature were conducted via the Internet using Google,[4] Bing,[5] automatically-generated content via an RSS reader using some of the keywords and phrases listed in Section 2.2 of this paper, and browsing the web sites of various organisations (see Annexes A and B) using those same keywords and phrases, as well as browsing web sites related to the subject matter.

If a reference for online literature was made regarding a web page that, as of the time of this paper's writing, no longer provided the information cited, older versions of the web page were accessed and reviewed via the Internet Archive.[6] This resource was also used when older versions of a web page were cited, particularly when reviewing historical information with regard to Internet-mediated volunteering in Section 3.1 of this paper.

Requests for suggestions regarding literature and case studies were also made by the researcher via:

- emails sent directly to organisations and individuals based in Europe providing resources and research related to Internet-mediated volunteering (see Annexes A and B)
- messages sent via her own online network accounts (Twitter,[7] Facebook,[8] LinkedIn,[9] etc.), both to followers/subscribers and directly to various organisations
- articles on the researcher's blog[10]
- messages distributed to the membership of these online communities:
    - ISTR-L,[11]
    - ARNOVA list,[12]

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1 http://www.jstor.org
2 http://www.academia.edu
3 http://www.ebscohost.com/academic/academic-search-premier
4 http://www.google.com
5 http://www.bing.com
6 http://www.archive.org
7 http://www.twitter.com
8 http://www.facebook.com
9 http://www.linkedin.com
10 http://www.coyotecommunications.com/coyoteblog/
11 http://www.istr.org/?page=Listserv
12 https://netforum.avectra.com/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=ARNOVA&WebCode=Listserve

- UKVPMS,[13]
- e-Voluntas list,[14]
- TechSoup Community Forum.[15]

Some electronic messages were subsequently forwarded by recipients to others, which resulted in suggestions from people and organisations not initially, directly contacted by the researcher. All messages referenced the wiki created for this project, as a way to invite further submissions of relevant information.

Literature reviewed included books, journal articles, articles for university courses, archives of printed newspaper articles, online-only publications, blogs, unpublished manuscripts, web pages and comments made on these articles by various individuals.

The findings from the literature review were used to identify key actors and stakeholders regarding Internet-mediated volunteering in EU countries, to provide information to help specify the topics for discussion during the interviews for the case studies, and to identify possible gaps in information and activities related to Internet-mediated volunteering; these activities altogether were meant to further identify drivers and barriers to Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe, and challenges for participants (organisations involving and expected to involve online volunteers, potential and current online volunteers, and current and potential funders of such activities).

The mapping of online resources, including services and organisations focused on internet-mediated volunteering (Annexes A and B), was done with a view to:

- creating a representative overview of Internet-mediated volunteering in EU countries, including the key actors and stakeholders.
- identifying possible candidates for case studies in this research.
- creating a resource to support further research by others.

2.1 Methodology: case studies

The second period of the research, from May through July 2013, was focused on identifying and interviewing organisations involving online volunteers, or considering involvement of such, with the goal of creating case studies for this research paper. Organisations were invited by the researcher to be interviewed based on known associations with Internet-mediated volunteering or per their known, established tradition of involving onsite volunteers and therefore having insights into barriers to adopting Internet-mediated volunteering.

The goal of the case studies was to show a spectrum of questions and insights into both current and potential practise around Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe, as well as how this does or might relate, or not, to employability and social inclusion.

Emails of introduction were sent by the interviewer to ensure that potential interviewees:

- had a clear understanding of the purpose of the research and how their feedback would be used
- had a shared understanding of various words and phrases that would be used in the interviews

Initial emails also noted what the researcher had read by or about the organisations and pointed them to the wiki associated with this research project. No incentives were offered to participants other than a copy of the final paper. No guarantees of inclusion in the final paper were offered.

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13 http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UKVPMs/
14 https://listas.us.es/mailman/listinfo/e-voluntas
15 http://forums.techsoup.org/cs/community/f/26/p/37346/126826.aspx

Semi-structured interviews were used per the model suggested by Woodhouse, Potter and Subrahmanian (1998). Descriptive / explanatory questions were refined over the course of interviews, so as to solicit more exactly the information needed, meaning that the interviewer's questions (Annex D) changed somewhat over the course of interviews. These interviews were meant to be conversational, rather than a strict question-and-answer model, to create a sense of ease and comfort in sharing information. Interviews were conducted via email, traditional phone or via Internet-connected conferencing (voice-only). Interviews often happened over multiple days.

The organisations profiled in the case studies are listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Short case studies presented in this report

Bodywhys, The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland **Ireland**	Involves online volunteers within its traditional, onsite volunteering schemes, including as counsellors, and has a formal "virtual volunteering" strategy/programme within its traditional programme.
Dutch Council for Refugees, **Amsterdam, Netherlands**	Does not have a formalized "virtual volunteering" scheme, but does allow traditional volunteers to interact with the organisation via Internet tools in addition to onsite experiences, and would like to explore more online peer-to-peer support.
E-wolontariat **Warsaw, Poland**	Promotes internet-based volunteering activities for NGOs throughout Poland, and involves online volunteers in support of the organisation's work.
hazloposible.org **Madrid, Spain**	One of the first Internet-mediated volunteering programmes in Europe, and still one of the largest in the EU. Also involves online volunteers in support of its work.
HelpFromHome **U.K.**	Promotes both short-term internet-based volunteering activities and short-term onsite volunteering (micro-volunteering) for charities in the U.K., and involves online volunteers in support of the organisation's work.
medica mondiale **Köln (Cologne), Germany**	Has involved a few volunteers that have used Internet tools to interact with the organisation, in addition to traditional, onsite work. Would like to expand Internet-mediated volunteering at the organisation.
NOW **Belfast, Northern Ireland, U.K.**	Involves online volunteers within its traditional, onsite volunteering schemes. Does not have a formalized "virtual volunteering" scheme; remote volunteers and traditional, onsite volunteers have offered to provide some or all of their service virtually, on an ad hoc basis, rather than the organisation recruiting such online volunteers specifically. Would like to expand Internet-mediated volunteering at the organisation.

All the interviewees revised their case studies included in the report and authorised their publication, and the publication of their personal data.

2.2 Definitions and terms

Definition of *volunteer* in this paper

There is no universally-agreed-to definition for the word *volunteer*. Four definitions, presented here, are representative of how most organisations in Europe define volunteers and volunteering:

The *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work*, developed by the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Civil Society Studies under the auspices of the Department of Statistics of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in collaboration with the United Nations Volunteers, defines

volunteering as:

> Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household. (ILO 2011)

Volunteering England defines volunteering as:

> any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation. (Volunteering England 2013).

COCEMFE BADAJOZ, Federación de Asociaciones de Personas con Discapacidad Física y Orgánica de la Provincia de Badajoz (Spain), says in its Manual de Formación del Voluntariado:

> There is no single definition of volunteering. The concept of volunteering is not the same in all countries. Actions that are considered voluntary in one country may not be in others. In general, volunteering implies collaborative work without payment to the volunteer or coercion, for the welfare of another person, the community or society in general. (COCEMFE BADAJOZ 2013, Author translation)

In its 27 November 2009 decision on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011), the Council of the European Union said:

> Having due regard to the particularities of the situation in each Member State and all forms of volunteering, the term "voluntary activities" refers to all types of voluntary activity, whether formal, non-formal or informal which are undertaken of a person's own free will, choice and motivation, and is without concern for financial gain. They benefit the individual volunteer, communities and society as a whole. They are also a vehicle for individuals and associations to address human, social, intergenerational or environmental needs and concerns, and are often carried out in support of a non-profit organisation or community-based initiative. Voluntary activities do not replace professional, paid employment opportunities but add value to society. (Council of the European Union, 2009).

Note that these definitions do not distinguish different forms of volunteering: volunteering in groups or teams (group volunteering), short-term volunteering (episodic or micro-volunteering), skills-based volunteering, etc. To keep this report as inclusive as possible, the researcher has also similarly avoided creating a typology of the various forms of voluntary action, though a variety of different forms are noted in order to show the breadth of variety in Internet-mediated volunteering.

In the United Kingdom, people considered *volunteers* are not called *workers*, even *unpaid workers*. Volunteers, in the UK, do not have any contract, written, oral or implied, with the organisation where they provide service. Volunteers, in this British definition, may provide services for anybody, not just organisations in the charity sector. By contrast, a *voluntary worker* may be called an *unpaid worker* and may have a contract to personally perform work or provide services for a charity, a voluntary organisation, an associated fundraising body such as a charity shop, or a statutory body such as the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (Invest Northern Ireland, 2012). This distinction in *volunteer* and *voluntary worker* was not used in this paper, however, it will need to be taken into consideration when reviewing information from the UK and considering policies or strategies regarding Internet-mediated volunteering.

Given that the focus of this part of the ICT4EMPL Future Work research includes how Internet-mediated volunteering can contribute to a person's employability, particularly young people, the researcher felt it was important not to limit research only to a very strict interpretation of volunteering that focuses on an entirely selfless motivation on the part of the volunteer, one who has no expectation of any kind of non-monetary benefit, such as potential job contacts and skills

development for eventual paid work. Therefore, within this paper and on the associated wiki, the term *volunteer* refers to any person who undertakes unpaid labour for the benefit of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charities, community organisations, schools, etc., or those served by such, regardless of the volunteer's motivation, and with acknowledgement that this unpaid service may be in the hopes of improving a volunteer's employability. This definition, therefore, includes people who may be identified as pro bono consultants or unpaid interns, rather than as volunteers. Controversies regarding unpaid interns labelled as volunteers are reviewed in Section 3.8.6 of this paper.

Definition of *Internet-mediated volunteering* in this paper

In this paper, the term *Internet-mediated volunteering* refers to unpaid labour undertaken for the benefit of a non-governmental organisation (NGO), charity, school, community organisation, etc., or those served by such, where an online system (accessed through a computer, a mobile device, etc.) plays a key role in volunteer recruitment, in facilitating access to tasks, and in the volunteer conducting that task. That system could be as simple as email or as complex as a privacy-protected online mentoring platform. Terms used in searches by the researcher to identify information for this paper are included in Table 2.

Table 2: Terms used in association with Internet-mediated volunteering:

• *virtual volunteering* (and variations such as *virtual volunteers*)	• *micro-tasking*
• *online volunteering* (and variations such as *online volunteers*)	• *micro work*
• *e-volunteering* (and variations such as *e-volunteering, e-volunteers*, etc.)	• *crowdsourcing*
	• *wisdom of the crowd*
• *voluntarios en línea, voluntarios digitales, voluntarios en red*	• *crowd computing*
• *bénévolat virtuel, bénévolat en ligne, bénévolat Internet*	• *crowdcasting*
	• *distributed computing*
• *digitales Ehrenamt, virtuelles Ehrenamt, Online-Freiwilligenarbeit, freiwilliges Online-Engagement*	• *distributed development*
	• *distributed thinking*
• *e-mentoring* (and variations such as *online mentors, online mentoring, tele-mentoring*, etc.)	• *smart mob*
	• *virtual community of practise*
	• *virtual management*
• *micro-volunteering (and variations such as micro-volunteering, micro-volunteers, etc.)*	• *virtual teams*
	• *virtual workforce*

On one end of the spectrum of Internet-mediated volunteering, volunteering roles may be for just a few minutes or for a few hours, with no ongoing commitment (micro-volunteering or crowdsourcing are the two most common terms for this type of online volunteering). At the other end of the spectrum, there may be leadership or expert roles that require a commitment from online volunteers of several weeks or months and several hours each week or month. Online volunteers may work individually or as a team, and may change roles and commitments over the course of their service. The type of tasks online volunteers engage in are listed in Section 3.3.

The researcher chose not to include in this research certain online activities, including:

- "liking" a Facebook page for a charity or NGO, voting in an online contest to award a charity or NGO funding, or signing an online petition as Internet-mediated volunteering, because the offline counterparts for these activities – sending a charity or NGO a compliment in a letter

or card via land-based post, casting a paper ballot in a contest or signing an offline, paper petition – is not be considered volunteering by most charities or NGOs: those that participate in such offline activities are not included in volunteer recognition events, their time is not included in reports about volunteer activities, etc.

- people who contribute financially to online fundraising campaigns by charities, just as people who provide financial contributions to organisations offline via traditional means, are usually called donors rather than volunteers. However, this paper does include people who forward information about a charity or NGO to their social media networks, including fundraising campaigns, as online volunteers, if such are being encouraged or directed to engage in these activities by the organisation.

There are no studies, that the researcher could find, that link these type of online activities in support of charities and other organisations to the cultivation of people participating in the more formal tasks defined as a part of Internet-mediated volunteering in Section 3.3, but that could be because study of Internet-mediated volunteering remains relatively new, rather than because there is not a link between these activities.

While not researched for this paper, it is worth mentioning that there are self-help groups organised online by individuals, with no direction from or affiliation with any agency, company, charity, university or other official entity. Also known as peer-support groups, mutual aid groups and user groups, these online groups are formed around a common experience, such as a shared illness or users of a particular brand of computer. Participation in such virtual communities may have benefits for participants regarding employability or social inclusion. If such groups are not affiliated with a charity, the organisers of such group are prohibited from recruiting online volunteers via platforms listed in Annex A, and such unaffiliated groups are difficult to study because participants often do not identify as volunteers and are not tracked by official charities.

2.3 Research challenges

A number of challenges were faced in approaching this research:

- The short time frame.

- The terms *volunteer* and *volunteering* are contested terms, in any language (not just English); there is not universal agreement on their definitions and they are not uniformly used the same way – if they are used at all by organisations (they often are not).

- Terms like *Internet-mediated volunteering*, *virtual volunteering*, *micro-volunteering*, *crowdsourcing*, etc., are contested terms, in any language (not just English); there is not universal agreement regarding their definitions, regarding their relationship to each other, regarding their relationship to volunteering in general, nor regarding how such volunteering should be practised.

- Many people volunteering online, and many organisations involving volunteers online, do not think of what they are doing as online volunteering / virtual volunteering / Internet-mediated volunteering and, therefore, they do not use these terms; these activities are, simply, *helping* or *supporting*. While organisation staff may have heard about this research project, they may not have believed it applied to them and, therefore, did not respond to requests for information; in fact, the researcher sometimes had to spend several minutes in conversation convincing an organisation's representative that, indeed, they were engaging in Internet-mediated volunteering.

- The language abilities of the researcher were limited primarily to English and Spanish, though some terms in French, German and Polish regarding Internet-mediated volunteering were known to her. The large representation of organisations in Spain and the United Kingdom in Annex B, which lists initiatives in the EU that involve online volunteers, together with her observations about the history of Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe (see

Section 3.1), could be a reflection of her limited language skills.

- The vast majority of NGOs, charities and other organisations that involve volunteers in the EU are not tracking in-depth information about volunteers – many cannot say how many active volunteers are engaged with their organisation. In addition, most organisations rarely, if ever, track volunteer experiences with regard to skills / career development or social inclusion.

- There are not many associations of managers of volunteers in the EU – associations for people whose role, as a paid staff member or volunteer, is partially or wholly to recruit, support and track volunteers at NGOs or charities. This means those that work with volunteers have to be found via a variety of outreach and research methods and contacting hundreds of organisations directly, rather than simply sending a message to an association that will then forward the message to members.

3. The past and present of Internet-mediated volunteering

3.1   Early history and spread in Europe

Looking at the early history of Internet-mediated volunteering globally, where volunteers were recruited specifically to engage in defined online activities to benefit an organisation, a cause or campaign, or society at large – even the global community – shows that people have been volunteering online in Europe, and that organisations in Europe have been engaging online volunteers, since at least the 1970s, and shows the practise of virtual volunteering, including micro-volunteering, taking wider root at a variety of charities and NGOs in Europe in the last part of the twentieth century.

Cravens (2000) identifies the first online volunteering initiative as Project Gutenberg,[16] a global volunteer effort that began in 1971 to digitize, archive and distribute written cultural works that were no longer protected under copyright laws, such as works by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mark Twain. These works were typed in and proofread by online volunteers[17] from various countries, though no data could be found at the time of this paper's writing regarding how many of these online volunteers were from countries in Europe. (Chapter 1, "History of Virtual Volunteering" subsection, second paragraph)

The Internet began being used by the wider public in the 1980s and commercialised in the 1990s (Treese 1995), with the World Wide Web being developed between March 1989 and December 1990 by Tim Berners-Lee, of the U.K. and, at that time, an employee of the CERN Consortium in Geneva, Switzerland. Berners-Lee made an online appearance at the United Nations Open Day in Geneva in 2001, during which he noted the role online volunteers had played in his development of the Web a decade earlier (UNITeS 2005).

Cravens and Ellis (2013) note that, in 1995, a then-new nonprofit organisation called Impact Online, based in the U.S.A., began promoting the idea of virtual volunteering via its web site. While Impact Online found that there were large numbers of people interested in volunteering online, there were few organisations willing to create online volunteering opportunities; the nonprofit therefore launched the Virtual Volunteering Project in late 1996, an initiative to research the practise of virtual volunteering and to promote the practise to nonprofit organisations. This initiative moved to the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and Impact Online became VolunteerMatch[18] (foreword, second paragraph).

By April 1999, almost 100 organisations around the world had been identified by the project as involving online volunteers and were listed on the project's Web site. By the end of 1999, as the numbers of organisations involving online volunteers grew exponentially, mostly in the U.S.A., the Project stopped listing every organisation involving online volunteers and instead identified only those organisations with large or unique online volunteering programmes (Cravens and Ellis, 2013, Introduction, fifth paragraph).

An archived version of the Virtual Volunteering Project web page from December 2000 listing organisations outside the U.S.A. engaging online volunteers[19] lists five organisations in Europe that contributed information to the project regarding their involvement of online volunteers. (Cravens 2000). The project did not record how many online volunteers from Europe these initiatives were involving. Below are excerpts from that web page. Note that the web pages referenced below may no

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16 http://www.gutenberg.org

17 Most online volunteers that support Project Gutenberg now do so under the auspices of Distributed Proofreaders, http://www.pgdp.net

18 http://www.volunteermatch.org

19 Also archived on the archive.org web site at:
http://web.archive.org/web/20001214092700/http://www.serviceleader.org/vv/orgs/outside.html

longer function, and that these organisations may no longer involve online volunteers:

- Barcelona 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures,
  http://www.barcelona2004.org/html/indexfuc_e.html (Spain)

"...has online volunteers performing research to find online discussion groups for topics relating to the forum's mission (peace, sustainability and cultural diversity), disseminating information about the Forum (online 'ambassadors'), and developing and maintaining the Virtual Forum's online activities." This web site was launched four years before the forum actually took place.

- Samaritans and Befrienders International, http://www.befrienders.org/ (U.K.)

"Trained 'listening' volunteers who provide support via phone to people who are suicidal or despairing, and who work to increase public awareness of issues around suicide and depression. Some of the centres also provide support via e-mail."

- German Charities Institute, http://www.dsk.de

"This organization was one of the first to provide information to the Virtual Volunteering Project about its involvement of online volunteers." The specifics of what information this organisation provided are not listed on the project's web site.

- YouthOrg UK, http://www.youth.org.uk, (U.K.)

"YouthOrg UK's virtual community and web site are entirely managed, developed and published by volunteers. Online volunteers also maintain a Web-based bulletin board, answer technical inquiries and design graphics.

In 2000, NetAid, a joint online initiative by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Cisco Systems, launched an online volunteering matching service, in partnership with and largely managed by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme based on Germany. The service encouraged and allowed NGOs and UN-affiliated projects serving the developing world to recruit and involve online volunteers (NetAid 2000). UNV, a part of UNDP, took over the service entirely in 2004, relaunching it at www.onlinevolunteering.org (United Nations Volunteers 2004). While online volunteers from Europe were involved via this initiative in assisting organisations online, neither UNDP nor UNV have records currently available regarding how many online volunteers from Europe were involved.

In Spain,

- Hacesfalta.org was posting online volunteering opportunities as early as June 2001
- Enciclopedia Libre Universal en Español, a Spanish language wiki encyclopedia, was launched in 2002 by online volunteers formerly associated with Wikipedia[20] in the U.S.A. (Wikipedia History 2013)
- In December 2002, Ismael Peña-López of Universitat Oberta de Catalunya published "Voluntarios virtuales" in ABC Nuevo Trabajo, regarding the involvement of online volunteers by El Campus for Peace (4P), a programme at the university (Peña-López 2002).
- In October 2003, members of the E-VOLUNTAS online discussion group, as online volunteers, finished and published online a translation of *The Virtual Volunteering Guidebook* into Spanish (E-VOLUNTAS 2003, TechSoup 2003).

Discussions regarding working with remote volunteers "virtually" occurred on UKVPMs, an online discussion group on YahooGroups for managers of volunteers at charities in the U.K., as early as March 2002,[21] though it is probable that such discussions began earlier, as the group began in 1999, but the YahooGroups archive does not go back farther than 2002.

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20 http://www.wikipedia.org
21 http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UKVPMs/message/839

By the end of 2003, OneWorld, a charity based in the U.K., had extensive experience involving and supporting remote volunteers who served as onsite editors and reporters for the organisation in their respective countries, a fact highlighted by UNV at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, Switzerland, organised by International Telecommunication Union (OneWorld 2003; UNITeS 2004).

The literature review, including a search on the Internet, turned up little information about Internet-mediated volunteering in France or in other French-speaking countries of Europe prior to 2003. A search of keywords related to this subject matter on journal and Internet search platforms, including *bénévolat virtuel*, *bénévolat enligne* and *bénévolat Internet,* turned up just one short web page on the primary volunteering portal of France, France Bénévolat, which linked to Canadian materials regarding virtual volunteering in French.[22] The researcher could not find references to virtual volunteering prior to 2003 in German, and because of time limitations, was unable to explore virtual volunteering activities prior to 2003 in any other languages.

It is highly probable that, in the last part of the twentieth century, there were far more initiatives in Europe involving online volunteers, and more initiatives elsewhere involving online volunteers based in Europe, than are noted in the aforementioned narrative. For instance, the aforementioned history does not discuss any resources or activities in Estonia, which has one of the highest rates of Internet connectivity worldwide; it is highly probable that some early adopters of online volunteering could be found among NGOs there (Internet World Stats 2004). The challenges to this research both regarding past online volunteering activities and present Internet-mediated efforts, as noted in Section 2.3, identify several of the reasons for this and other possibly missing data from this research paper.

As this research shows, the history of Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe stretches back for several years and, therefore, is far from an entirely-new practise in European countries. However, European-based Internet-mediated initiatives were rarely, if ever, mentioned on the web sites of mainstream volunteer centres in Europe at the time these initiatives were launched, as a sample viewing of these centres web sites from prior to 2004 (see Annex C), archived at www.archive.org, revealed (note that, even as of 2004, some traditional volunteer centres did not yet have web sites).[23]

3.2   Current status of Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe

While there are at least a dozen online services in Europe available for organisations to recruit online volunteers (Annex A), there is a high-probability that not all organisations in the EU involving volunteers online are using these services; rather, charities and NGOs often use their own web sites and social media channels such as Facebook or Twitter, and other internal communications tools (email, newsletters, etc.) to recruit volunteers for online tasks, as a review of organisations involving online volunteers (Annex B) in relation to listings on volunteer recruitment sites confirms.

Another limit on finding more initiatives involving online volunteers in some form in Europe is that, as noted in Section 2.4, phrases such as *virtual volunteering* or *micro-volunteering* are not always used or understood by organisations that are, indeed, engaged in such activities. For instance:

- Germany hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2006 and recruited, trained and supported hundreds of volunteers all across Germany to help with the event; no doubt the Internet played an important role in the screening, training and support for volunteers, however, the researcher could find no reference to activities related to Internet-mediated volunteering for the World Cup (United Nations Volunteers 2005).

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22 http://benevolatenligne.francebenevolat.org/exemples-etrangers/
23 The researcher compiled a list of regional and national volunteer centres in the EU on the wiki associated with this paper, and used this list to evaluate how these centres did or did not refer to Internet-mediated volunteering, both at the present time and, using archives.org, in 2004 and prior years.

- Bodywhys, The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland, which is profiled as a case study in this paper, has an established online counselling program, calling its online volunteers *online facilitators,* and has never used the phrase *virtual volunteering* to describe its online counselling program.

- In a conversation at the all-volunteer firefighting station in the small town of Hoehr-Grenzhausen in Germany in 2006, the researcher asked a firefighter if the fire station involved any online volunteers; the firefighter said no. However, it was known by the researcher that the fire station's web site was maintained at that time by another firefighter.

Services where organisations can recruit traditional volunteers, such as DO-IT based in the U.K., may talk about virtual volunteering,[24] yet often do not allow for searches of such opportunities on their database. For instance, the first requirements for a volunteer to search for an opportunity on DO-IT at www.do-it.org.uk/search/opportunities are to enter his or her post code or town name, and then the distance he or she could travel for volunteering – criteria which may not relate to a specific search for online volunteering opportunities. Trying to do a search without a post code leads to an error message: "location must not be empty."

By contrast, the Volunteer Ireland web site at www.volunteer.ie does not require the choosing of a location, and has a keyword field where the word "virtual" can be used to find volunteering opportunities tagged as such. However, not all online opportunities may be tagged as *virtual*.

Online volunteering schemes also come and go; for instance, while Samaritans was profiled for its involvement of online volunteers in the 1990s (see Section 3.1), as of the time of this paper's writing, the web site does not note this past involvement, and a page on the web site says that such an online programme is "coming in the future".[25]

With all of this in mind, the literature review, including various Internet searches, as detailed in Section 2.1, revealed at least 60 specific examples of organisations in the EU involving online volunteers, or involving online volunteers in the EU (Annex B). The number of online volunteering opportunities, using a search of the services listed in Annex A in June and July, was more than 1000, in total. In addition, Wikipedia has contributors from every European country (Annex B) and, therefore, it can be said that there are people volunteering online from every European country via that initiative alone. Excluding Wikipedia, a conclusion can be drawn from the research cited in this paper that there are at least a few thousand online volunteering opportunities available from organisations in Europe.

Despite the long history and current widespread practise of Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe, there is no organisation tracking the practise in Europe – or in any country outside of Europe, for that matter.

From the authors survey of web sites and publications by individual volunteer centres in various cities across the European continent (see Annex C), the majority of these do not track organisations using the Internet to support and involve online volunteers, nor do they track volunteers engaged in Internet-mediated service.[26]

The problem of lack of data is not confined to online volunteering. While some countries do collect extensive data on volunteering, in general, there is no standardised, European data collection. Some data is starting to be collected by national statistical offices using the standards set in ILO's *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work*, however, this does not currently, explicitly include online volunteering, and even the definition as volunteering as work done outside the home might

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24 http://www.do-it.org.uk/magazine/features/virtual/introduction

25 http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/different-ways-you-can-get-touch/text-and-online-help-coming-future

26 Although the language limitations of the researcher mean that virtual volunteering-related references on some European city's web sites could have been missed. See Section 2.4.

conceivably exclude online volunteering done from home.

In addition, the majority of individual volunteer centres in various cities across the European continent (see Annex C), do not track organisations using the Internet to support and involve online volunteers, nor do they track volunteers engaged in Internet-mediated service.

3.3 Internet-mediated volunteering: tasks

A review of organisations involving online volunteers in Annexes A and B and the organisations profiled in the case studies, as well as per the literature review, show people engaged in virtual volunteering undertake a variety of activities from locations remote to the organisation or people they are assisting, via a computer or other Internet-connected device, such as:

- translating text,
- researching subjects,
- creating web pages,
- editing or writing proposals, press releases, newsletter articles, blogs, etc.,
- developing material for a curriculum, and for classes, training sessions, etc.,
- designing a database, mobile phone application, graphics, web pages, print publications, etc.,
- testing an online tool,
- providing marketing, legal, business, medical, agricultural or any other expertise (this can be everything from serving on a committee or leading a project to answering a quick question that requires a certain expertise),
- counselling people,
- tutoring or mentoring students,
- using social media to promote a cause, educate people about an issue, recruit volunteers, spread awareness about a campaign or cause or to raise money (fundraising) from family and friends for a charity or NGO,
- moderating or facilitating online discussion groups,
- writing songs,
- creating or transcribing a podcast,
- editing or transcribing a video,
- monitoring the news,
- tagging photos and files with keywords,
- offering feedback on a graphic, a policy, a motto or tagline, a web site, etc. (feedback can be a detailed critique or a quick reaction, positive or negative),
- adding information to a map – such as, after a disaster, asking volunteers that are onsite to add road obstacles to a shared map that all other disaster staff can access,
- managing other online volunteers.

A review of organisations involving online volunteers in Annexes A and B shows that online volunteering ranges from volunteers engaged in a long-term commitment and a regular role with an organisation (serving as the organisation's web manager, serving as facilitator of an online discussion group, etc.) to short, one-time tasks that require no ongoing commitment (microtasks, micro-volunteering or crowd-sourcing), such as tagging photos, providing feedback about a new logo or adding information to a map. In the case studies, Bodywhys, E-wolontariat, hazloposible.org and NOW provide examples of volunteers engaged in long-term or regular commitments as online volunteers, with high-responsibility roles; E-wolontariat, hazloposible.org, HelpFromHome and medica mondiale provide examples of short-term, one-time tasks or micro-volunteering.

3.4 Why Internet-mediated volunteering

There has been little research on the motivations of organisations to involve online volunteers.

Looking at the cases developed for this study, three of the initiatives, E-wolontariat, hazloposible.org and HelpFromHome, all arose primarily from volunteer requests for online volunteering, far more than there were organisations requesting online volunteers, hence why all three initiatives continually engage in outreach to charities and other volunteer-involving organisations to use their volunteer-matching service. A fourth, Bodywhys, an organisation in Ireland helping people with eating disorders, developed its online volunteering engagement scheme, focused on online counselling, as an extension of the offline, onsite service the organisation has provided for many years (see case study).

More generally, based on their observations of organisations working with online volunteers, conversations with online volunteers and experiences of working with online volunteers, as well as research undertaken by the Virtual Volunteering Project, Cravens and Ellis cite these reasons as possible motivations for organisations involving volunteers online:

- More resources. Just as with volunteers who work onsite, the additional help augments core staff efforts and allows an organisation to do more.

- Meeting community/volunteer demand. Current volunteers, and potential volunteers, are asking for these opportunities.

- More volunteers. It can allow for greater numbers of volunteers to be involved.

- Sends a message of innovation/credibility. An organisation that uses the Internet to support and involve volunteers may feel it is sending a message to its supporters (and potential supporters) that it is modern and efficient, that it wants to provide convenience to its volunteers, and that it understands the realities of the 21st century workplace.

- Involves those who could not volunteer otherwise. Internet-mediated volunteering may allow for the participation of people who might find onsite volunteering difficult or impossible because of a home obligation or work schedule, disability or mobility/transportation issue (see Section 5.3 regarding online volunteering and social inclusion).

- Greater diversity of volunteers / specific volunteer recruitment. Potential volunteers not reached by traditional means (newspaper, community of faith, newsletter, etc.) may be reached online. The Internet makes it easy to reach particular audiences quickly, such as people with a specific skill or representing a specific demographic. This can include reaching young volunteers.

- Low overhead. Online volunteers do not need the organisation to provide them with a workspace, a desk, a chair, etc. Organisations usually do not have to buy any additional equipment in order to involve online volunteers.

- Record-keeping / data tracking. Internet-mediated volunteering can create automatic, extensive records of both volunteer activities and interactions with volunteers—records that can be used to generate statistics, provide quotes for an upcoming grant proposal, or evaluate the overall volunteering programme. An organisation gains an archive of emails, instant messages, chats, online forum messages, photos, and audio and video recordings relating to volunteer discussions and activities.

- A programme may be best served by the involvement of online volunteers. For instance, an online component of a traditional mentoring programme may create more interaction and support for participants, or young people may feel more comfortable talking about topics such as sex or family strife via an Internet communications tool rather than in an onsite, face-to-face setting. (Cravens and Ellis, 2013, Introduction).

3.5 Who is volunteering online?

A review of the web sites for organisations listed as involving online volunteers in Annexes A and B did not turn up any demographic information about online volunteers; however, note that this information may have been on some web sites but unfound by the researcher. The organisations profiled in the case study have not done research to date regarding the ages or other demographics of online volunteers they have involved or that have used their services to engage in online volunteering.

A breakdown of online volunteers for the UN's Online Volunteering service in 2004 showed that almost 40% of online volunteers were based in developing countries in Africa, Asia, South America and Eastern Europe (United Nations Volunteers 2004). This global data is worth quoting because it shows that one cannot make sweeping generalizations about who online volunteers are – as in a particular age group, ethnicity, all from developed countries, most from the United Kingdom, etc.

In a survey of contributors to all Wikipedia sites (22 language editions in 231 countries) by UNU-MERIT, a joint research and training centre of United Nations University (UNU) and Maastricht University, in cooperation with the Wikimedia Foundation, the largest share of responses was provided by users who accessed the survey via the Russian or English Wikipedia sites, followed by users of the German and Spanish versions. Contributors were split into four approximately equal age-groups: those under 18, those between 18 and 22, those from 22 to 30 and the remainder between 30 and 85. About 23% of contributors had completed degree-level education, 26% were undergraduates and 45% had secondary education or less. 87% of respondents were men and 13% were women.

A survey of people who used the smartphone app Do Some Good, available through the telecommunications company Orange, to engage in micro-volunteering was conducted from June 2011 until December 2011. In 3,598 people completed the survey. Participants were largely from the U.K.. 56% were female, and 78% between 16 and 34 (Paylor 2012).

Without a comprehensive study on who is volunteering online in the European Union, or without questions related to online volunteering being included in surveys and studies by organisations such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the largest umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector in England, or similar organisations in other countries, it is impossible to have a fully-informed idea of who is volunteering online, in terms of age groups, economic levels, education levels, employment status and other demographic information.

3.6 Why people want to volunteer online

A review of the web sites for organisations listed as involving online volunteers in Annexes A and B did not turn up any information about the motivations of online volunteers in the EU based on research; however, note that this information may have been on some web sites but unfound by the researcher. Based on an additional review of web sites of organisations that report on volunteering trends, such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and CEV, there has not been specific research done regarding the motivations of volunteers in the EU regarding online volunteering.

In the case studies, five organisations – Bodywhys, E-wolontariat, HelpFromHome, hazloposible.org and NOW – all identified employability as a possible motivation for the online volunteers they have involved, based on anecdotal evidence – primarily unsolicited comments from online volunteers. The representative from hazloposible.org also noted that many online volunteers are looking to better understand the non-governmental, non-profit sector through their online volunteering.

Per the survey regarding volunteers using Orange's micro-volunteering smartphone app referenced earlier, the report says that "it could be suggested that participants perceived the strength and use of micro-volunteering as laying not so much in its potential impact and benefits, but in its convenience and capacity to fill spare time." (Paylor 2012)

UNV's Online Volunteering service annually recognises outstanding online volunteers, through its Online Volunteering Award. From 2002 through 2006, these awards were given to individuals, who were profiled on the web site; since 2007, the award has been given to teams of online volunteers supporting an NGO. From 2002 through 2006, of the 54 online volunteers honoured and profiled on the UNV site, nine were from or based in a European country, including (Spain), France, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Turkey. Reviewing the profiles of these EU-based online volunteers (United Nations Volunteers 2012), as well as according to data compiled and reviewed by Cravens and Ellis (Cravens and Ellis, 2013, Introduction), reasons regarding why people volunteer in general, in traditional settings, can be applied to why people want to volunteer online, in terms of why they seek out opportunities. For instance, some people seek out volunteering opportunities – online or onsite – based on the mission of an organisation: they want to support an organisation that helps children, or the environment, or human rights. Some people seek out volunteering opportunities – online or onsite – based on the kind of volunteering activities: they want to work with children, or they want to work in database design, or they want to edit video.

The Free/Libre and Open Source Software (FLOSS) Survey and Study, conducted by Berlecon Research at the University of Maastricht, gathered primary data about the development and distribution of such software. The survey and study included several questions about the motivations of unpaid contributors to contribute to FLOSS projects. According to the study, more than 78% of 2,784 FLOSS survey respondents indicated that the reason why they volunteered for FLOSS projects was to "learn and develop new skills". The second most popular reason was to "share my knowledge and skills" (49.8%), followed by the motivation to "participate in a new form of cooperation" (34.5%). In answer to the question about why they continue to be involved in FS/OS development, the percentage of respondents who cited the desire to "share my knowledge and skills" increased to 67.2%. The motive to "learn and develop new skills" was still the most prevalent (70.5%), followed by the desire to "improve FS/OS products of other developers" (39.8%) and "participate in a new form of cooperation" (37.2%). (Ghosh 2002). However, it should be noted that the majority of FLOSS projects in this study were not for charitable organisations – organisations with a mission to improve the quality of life for people or in communities, to improve the environment, etc. – and, therefore, the motivations for such online volunteers may be different than for those that support NGO endeavours.

In a 2007 study of what motivates online volunteers to contribute information to the English version of Wikipedia on an ongoing basis, people who had created a user page on the site, in addition to contributing information to other pages, were asked to complete a web-based survey. 151 people responded. On average, respondents have been contributing content to Wikipedia 2.3 years, and the average level of contribution was 8.27 hours per week. Overall, the top motivations for their continued volunteering online for Wikipedia were "fun" (volunteering as an opportunity to undertake an enjoyable activity) and "ideology" (a passion for the mission of the organisation). Motivations related to meeting and engaging with friends online or related to career exploration or skills development were not found to be strong motivations for contribution. (Nov 2007).

Reasons people may seek out online volunteering in particular, as cited by Cravens and Ellis, include:
- *Perceived convenience.* People may like the idea of not having to take the time to go onsite to an organisation. They may also like the idea of volunteering from home, in their pyjamas, or from their favourite coffee shop (perhaps wearing pyjamas, but probably dressed more appropriately). They may also like the idea of not having to volunteer at a certain time, on a certain day, though it is worth noting that some online volunteering opportunities *do* require volunteers to be online at a certain time on a certain day.
- *Connecting with organisations geographically far away.* For instance, people may want to volunteer online to help an organisation that helps children with a particular type of disability, but they might not live in an area that has such a charity.
- *Easier international volunteering.* Many people want to support organisations internationally, working in a different country, but do not have the means or the desire to go onsite to

volunteer.

- *It may seem fun.* A lot of people love using computers, tablets, smart phones and apps, and love the idea of using these tools in support of an organisation or cause.
- *Career exploration / skills development.* There are people who use online volunteering as a way to explore careers or further develop skills. This could be young people with a degree but no work experience, or older workers who want to transition from one career to another. (Cravens and Ellis, 2013, Introduction)

3.7 Approaches to Internet-mediated volunteering

The standards for involving **traditional volunteers** in Europe are largely the same, and true for online volunteers as well.

For instance, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) features on its web site this checklist for managing volunteers:

- Write a volunteering strategy,
- Write volunteering policies,
- Write a role description and role specification for each volunteer vacancy,
- Ensure you have relevant references and Criminal Records Bureau checks for each volunteer,
- Provide training relevant to the volunteer's work and role,
- Provide highly supportive supervision and management,
- Ensure volunteer documents do not set out 'rights' or 'obligations'.[27]

The National Occupational Standards for the Management of Volunteers specify the standards of performance to which people recruiting and supporting volunteers should be working, citing these "Key Areas":

A   Develop and evaluate strategies and policies that support volunteering.
B   Promote volunteering.
C   Recruit and induct volunteers.
D   Manage and develop volunteers.
E   Manage yourself, your relationships and your responsibilities.
F   Provide management support for volunteering programmes.

Under D, "Manage and develop volunteers," activities are defined as:

- Manage and develop volunteers,
- Plan, organise and monitor volunteering activities,
- Lead and motivate volunteers,
- Support the development of volunteers' knowledge, skills and competence,
- Provide one-to-one support to help volunteers develop,
- Enable volunteers to learn in groups,
- Maintain records of volunteers,
- Manage volunteers' expenses,
- Help address problems affecting volunteers (Skills – Third Sector 2008).

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27 http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/workforce-development/hr-employment-practice/managing-volunteers/checklist

Similarly, the publication Claves para la Gestión del Voluntariado en las Entidades no Lucrativas (Keys to Volunteer Management in Nonprofit Organisations) identifies "todo lo previsto en el programa de voluntariado" (provisions of a volunteer programme), which include:

- Asignación de tareas a las personas voluntarias (Assigning tasks to volunteers),
- Ordenación cronológica de las tareas (Chronological ordering of tasks),
- Definición de responsables para la toma de decisiones (Defining responsibilities regarding decision-making),
- Relaciones entre los diferentes equipos (Relations between different teams),
- Normas de procedimiento necesarias (Establish necessary procedures),
- Cómo buscar personas voluntarias (How to look for volunteers),
- Selección del voluntariado (Selecting/screening volunteers),
- Identificación y Formulación (identifying and formulating volunteering assignments),
- Seguimiento (tracking the programme's activities),
- Evaluación (evaluation of the programme) (Salas 2009).

Cravens and Ellis provide similar guidelines on approaches to setting up a **virtual volunteering** programme and supporting online volunteers, devoting entire chapters and subsections to these key activities:

- Getting an organisation ready for virtual volunteering:
  - identifying how volunteers are already providing service, onsite or online, at an organisation,
  - overcoming resistance to online engagement of volunteers,
  - identifying costs of virtual volunteering,
  - defining and refining policies and procedures to accommodate virtual volunteering,
  - record keeping regarding online volunteers and their activities,
  - understanding tools and online communications.
- Designing virtual volunteering assignments.
- Interviewing and screening online volunteers.
- Orienting and training online volunteers.
- Evaluating and recognizing online service.
- Recruiting online volunteers.

Cravens and Ellis also devote an entire chapter in their book to address accessibility and diversity in all aspects of a virtual volunteering programme, so that a programme can be as inclusive as possible and not exclude qualified online volunteers because of recruitment messaging or inaccessible web design for people with disabilities (Cravens and Ellis, 2013).

Ellis and Cravens further note that how much screening and training (if any) and how much support for an online volunteer is required depends on the nature of the task. For instance, a community park clean up event usually does not require volunteers to do anything but to sign up and show up; there are no criminal background checks, the volunteer induction may be just 10 minutes, and volunteers are under no obligation to continue to help after the event. Such volunteers, sometimes called *episodic volunteers*, need little supervision during their service. By contrast, a volunteer who will mentor a student must undergo a criminal background check, a reference check, many hours of training, be regularly supervised and his or her work regularly evaluated. The same variation in support is true of Internet-mediated volunteering: a volunteer who will tag photos with keywords may need little or no training or screening, whereas a volunteer that will facilitate an online discussion group will need to be screened, trained and supervised, and his or her work evaluated

regularly. What is true about all Internet-mediated volunteering is that the contributions of online volunteers must be reviewed by someone to ensure quality – and this reviewer could also be a volunteer (Ellis, Cravens 2013).

For instance, anyone with Internet access could participate in crowdsourcing, where services, ideas, opinions or content for an organisation or project are solicited from a large group of people online – a crowd – rather than through a traditional, onsite workforce. An example of this is the "knowledgebase ict café" by the U.K.-based charity Lasa; this is an online discussion forum[28] where anyone can ask for and offer "ideas and advice for voluntary and community groups on using technology." People participating do not need to have any formal ties with Lasa in order to answer questions. Another example of crowdsourcing or micro-volunteering is Wikipedia, which allows anyone to contribute to any article on their web sites, which are available in every European-based language, without any formal training or screening, and without any ongoing commitment. However, note that phrases such as *virtual volunteering* or *micro-volunteering* are never used in Lasa online materials or in Wikimedia online materials to describe its online experts and editors, though these are two examples of such volunteering.[29]

By contrast, volunteer relationship advisors for YouthNet, which provide at least some of their service online, must take part in a part time, six month coaching programme, working with experts and trained counsellors. They are trained to answer relationships questions from young people that come in through askTheSite.[30] Relationship advisors are given training on and offline and, while volunteering, they attend monthly-themed coaching chats online and answer training questions to continue to develop their skills (YouthNet 2013).

An even more intensive vetting and training process is for online mentoring. For instance, people that want to serve as online volunteers to mentor women entrepreneurs in developing countries through the Cherie Blair Foundation must fill out an application, and new volunteers are inducted just three times a year: in February, June and October. Candidates should be professionals or entrepreneurs with at least seven years of relevant experience, be able to commit for one year, able to meet live online with a mentee at least two hours a month, participate in the programme's online community and forums, and complete a feedback form at the end of the programme (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women 2012).

The researcher could not find any organisation that measures the value of its online volunteer engagement using the economic value model promoted by *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work* and CEV: assigning to the hours of volunteer work the average wage that the volunteer would earn if that volunteer worked at a regular job for those same hours, or assigning to the hours of volunteer work what it would cost to hire someone for pay to do the work that the volunteer is doing for no pay (ILO 2011, p. 36).

The approaches to internet-mediated volunteering, in terms of identifying tasks and roles, recruiting candidates and supervising and supporting volunteers varies greatly among the seven organisations profiled in the case studies later in this paper. The variations seem to depend on the amount of volunteer responsibility, the type of assignment in terms of what skills the volunteer already needs to have before participating (as opposed to being trained for the assignment) and how much interaction, if any, is required with the public, as opposed to working one-on-one with an employee. These variations are in line with what Ellis and Cravens identified, as noted earlier, regarding differences in how online volunteers are engaged, recruited and supported, depending on the type of task.

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28 http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/forums/index.php

29 Wikipedia describes those that provide content to its web sites as "wikipedians" or just "volunteers," as noted on its own entry for such, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedians

30 http://www.thesite.org/community/askthesite/askaquestion

3.8 Potential risks and challenges

"Real" versus "virtual"

There is some misunderstanding among both organisations that promote volunteering and those that involve volunteers that Internet-mediated volunteering is, somehow, not real volunteering, and online volunteers are not real volunteers. An example of this mindset is a March 2012 report on national policies in the EU with regard to youth and volunteering, which notes:

> "All in all, there is a clear modern tendency to use new technologies for the benefits of volunteering. But personal conversation and advice from someone we know and trust remain important too." (Shalayeva 2012)

Personal conversations and trusting relationships do happen online, including during virtual volunteering, but the misunderstanding about Internet-mediated volunteering somehow not being as real as onsite volunteering could be an obstacle to organisations' willingness to create or assignment tasks for online volunteers.

Marzena Kacprowicz, the E-volunteering Program Coordinator at E-wolontariat, noted in an interview for the case studies in this report:

> Through these years we found out that people are a bit sceptical about virtual volunteering – mainly because of the stereotype that volunteering can be done only physically in the real world. Sometimes they just can't imagine, how support given via the Internet can have positive impact to the real world.

Fear of negative behaviour online

Many organisations have a fear regarding negative behaviour online that keeps them from engaging with online volunteers online. For instance:

- Kacprowicz noted that, among many organisations in Poland, there is a negative stereotype of Internet users, such as that all online activities are "wasting time and cyber-bullying."
- Jayne McStay, an employee charged with managing volunteers at NOW, noted in her interview for the case studies in this report: "I worry about inappropriate language and inappropriate behaviour."
- Dorine Manson, the managing director of the Dutch Council for Refugees and interviewed for the case studied, said a concern for her regarding engaging in virtual volunteering is that "the security of refugees is not breached" by online volunteers.
- Pia Blase of medica mondiale said in her interview for the case studies that "data security" is an issue in considering whether or not to involve online volunteers at her organisation.

Note that these fears expressed by organisations profiled in the case studies were not based on any actual accounts of online volunteers engaging in cyber-bullying, breaches of data security or confidentiality, or inappropriate behaviour.

Lack of understanding of and support for volunteer management

Many organisations do not fully understand the basics of volunteer management (how to create assignments, how to screen and induct new volunteers for different tasks, what support volunteers need, when volunteers do or don't need to undergo a criminal background check or reference check, etc.), or do not fully fund resources to support volunteer engagement. As noted in Section 3.6, successfully engaging online volunteers requires an understanding of traditional volunteer management. For instance, more than four out of 10 people who manage volunteers at organisations in the U.K. have not received any training, and volunteer management, as a skill and practice, is both undervalued and underfunded in many charities (Brewis, et al., 2010).

In the BodyWhys case study, the representative says explicitly that cost of service development and shrinking budgets are obstacles for the organisation to involve more online volunteers. Without

adequate resources to involve volunteers, as noted by the case study for NOW, those charged with involving and/or supporting volunteers may become frustrated with increased responsibilities that come with involving more volunteers through an Internet-mediated volunteering scheme. The volunteers themselves could have frustrating, dissatisfactory experiences, leading to ill will from volunteers about the organisation, about Internet-mediated volunteering, and even about all volunteering in general.

The case study for E-wolontariat also cites a lack of understanding of the basics of volunteer management by charities in Poland. An organisation without such understanding could fail to adequately screen volunteers for assignments, resulting in placing volunteers in assignments for which they do not have the appropriate skills, leading to frustration by all involved. Or an organisation could fail to appropriately train an online volunteer regarding confidentiality, resulting in that volunteer sharing confidential information, unintentionally, with online social networks.

Lack of understanding or awareness regarding Internet-mediated volunteering

Creating assignments and supporting volunteers, even microtasks / micro-volunteering, takes skills, time and ongoing commitment and support from the host organisation, as noted in the literature review and in the case studies for Bodywhys, E-wolontariat, HelpFromHome and hazloposible.org. However, as noted in case studies for the Dutch Council for Refugees, E-wolontariat, HelpFromHome, medica mondiale and NOW, there is a lack of awareness and understanding regarding Internet-mediated volunteering that keeps many organisations from engaging online volunteers.

Per the literature review and the review of web sites listed in Annexes A and B, resources regarding Internet-mediated volunteering, particularly for organisations that might host online volunteers, are not available in most EU languages; most material is in English, though there is also a fair amount of information in Spanish, and some basic information in German and in Polish. Therefore, support for Internet-mediated volunteering is not available to thousands of organisations and millions of people in the EU.

Labour concerns

Concerns about volunteers replacing paid staff in an effort to save money, or volunteer providing less quality work than professionals, are expressed in numerous documents produced by EU-based organisations, as well as in public media, demonstrating that this is an ongoing controversy. Annex E lists 15 examples, from the U.K., Spain and France, of newspaper articles and blogs regarding debates over volunteers replacing paid staff, volunteers not being fit for certain tasks (rather than paid staff), and policy documents meant to assure labour unions and professional associations that the promotion of volunteerism at a national level will not be a push to replace paid work. Some of the most recent debates were regarding the "Big Society" approach in the U.K., which called for massive cuts in public services and local volunteers assuming the work previously done by paid employees regarding these services, as noted in Annex C.

Per these concerns expressed in various publications and the media, a push for more unemployed people to volunteer online could be seen by volunteers as an effort to encourage them to do work they should actually be paid for, or be seen by paid staff as an effort to replace them with unpaid workers.

A popular request on the UN's Online Volunteering service is for volunteer translators; a search using the word translation on the site over the course of two weeks (June 15 to July 1) found at least 30 assignments related to translation. Translation assignments can also be found on any day on most of the online platforms listing volunteering opportunities (Annex A). Could professional unions such as the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs/International Federation of Translators (FIT) or the National Union of Professional Interpreters and Translators (NUPIT) feel that such online volunteering infringes on paid assignments for professional translators? Will these unions feel the need to advocate on behalf of amateur translators, or professionals donating their service in terms of working conditions, the fairness with which they are treated and pay levels, as they do for

professional translators?

Internships

There is not universal agreement among those that advocate for volunteerism, those that involve volunteers, and volunteers themselves as to whether or not unpaid interns supporting charities or NGOs are volunteers.[31]

The European representative organisation, the European Volunteering Centre (CEV), says on its website that internships are "mistakenly perceived to be or even presented as volunteering."[32] However the same source also recognises that volunteering is a "source of non-formal and informal learning" (European Volunteer Centre 2013[33]), and implies that the difference in unpaid internships and volunteering is that the former is primarily for the benefit of the intern, whereas volunteering should primarily be focused on the beneficiary (European Volunteer Centre 2013).

Similarly, ILO's *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work* says:

> Volunteers may receive non-monetary benefits from volunteering in the form of skills development, social connections, job contacts, social standing and a feeling of self- worth (p. 14)

But then, later on that same page, says:

> Unpaid apprenticeships required for entry into a job and internships and student volunteer work required for graduation or continuation in a school or training programme violate the non-compulsory feature of the definition and should therefore not be considered as volunteer work. (ILO 2011 p. 14)

Disagreement regarding whether or not unpaid interns at charities and NGOs are volunteers will complicate discussions and policies about online volunteering as a tool for increasing employability among volunteers; for instance, what will be the stated difference in a volunteer role created to help a young person develop skills and employ a career and in an unpaid internship?

What do organisations and volunteers need?

A review of organisations involving online volunteers, feedback from case studies, and previous literature regarding Internet-mediated volunteering, particularly the *Virtual Volunteering Project*, shows that, to engage volunteers online, an organisation needs, at minimum:

- Reliable, regular Internet accessible.
- A person with the responsibility and time for supporting online volunteers or supporting staff working with online volunteers, tracking progress, addressing challenges, etc.
- Understanding of the basics of volunteer management (how to create assignments, how to screen and induct new volunteers for different tasks, what support volunteers need, when volunteers do or don't need to undergo a criminal background check or reference check, etc.).
- An explicit incentive or need to involve online volunteers (in addition to or instead of onsite volunteers for a particular kind of task).
- Comfort working online.
- Tasks that can be completed by someone working remotely via the Internet and are needed and wanted by the organisation (Cravens and Ellis 2013, Chapter 2, Introduction).

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31 On the UKVPMs online discussion group for managers of volunteers in the UK, debate on this subject happened as recently as December 2012 The longest debate on UKVPMs happened in July 2011, with more than 50 messages and more than a dozen people debating the issue. Messages 8992 to 9005, most under the subject line "volunteering vs unpaid internships – the debate continues."
32 http://www.cev.be/policy-advocacy/internships-volunteering/
33 http://www.cev.be/policy-advocacy/recognition-of-learning/

In Virtual Volunteering: Current Status and Future Prospects, Murray and Harrison (2002) highlighted in particular the necessity for understanding of the basics of volunteer management in relation to involving online volunteers:

> We looked at characteristics such as gender, education, and computer experience and skills. Only one of these characteristics had any significant association with virtual volunteering: the amount of prior work experience as managers of volunteer resources. Managers with less than five years' experience in their positions had more openings for virtual volunteers than did managers with more experience. This suggests that those relatively new to the job are more willing to experiment with virtual volunteering. (p. 6).

Using the same sources of information, as well as the UNV Online Volunteering service (United Nations Volunteers 2013), to volunteer online, a volunteer needs, at minimum:

- Reliable, regular Internet access,
- Motivation to volunteer,
- Motivation to volunteer online,
- Skills needed by an organisation,
- Awareness of where to find volunteering opportunities and how to apply for them,
- Understanding of the real commitment of volunteering, and the consequences for the organisation and the volunteer of not completing an assignment or fulfilling a role (Cravens and Ellis 2013, Chapter 12, For Volunteers).

A question that will need to be answered if Internet-mediated volunteering is to be further cultivated in the EU: what will EU agencies, governments, volunteer centres, volunteerism initiatives, charities, NGOs and funders of these be able to provide or fund, in terms of what organisations and volunteers need to engage in Internet-mediated volunteering?

3.9 Conclusions

The history of Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe stretches back for several years and, therefore, is far from an entirely-new practise in European countries.

Internet-mediated volunteering is an established, respected practise of community engagement. There are at least a few thousand online volunteering opportunities available from organisations in Europe. Like all other forms of volunteer engagement, there are factors that contribute to both organisations wanting to involve online volunteers and people wanting to be online volunteers, as well as factors for success in these volunteer relationships to benefit both the organisation and the volunteer. In addition, like all forms of volunteer engagement, there are challenges that must be addressed for Internet-mediated volunteering to be successful.

Organisations based in the EU are involving online volunteers, and people based in the EU are volunteering online. There are numerous challenges to fully tracking all Internet-mediated volunteering activities happening in the EU, and a comprehensive review is probably impossible. However, there is enough information to be able to provide examples of Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe and to make recommendations for a range of activities to expand this engagement.

While Internet-mediated volunteering is widespread in Europe, many organisations are still not familiar with the practise and many volunteer centres and volunteerism initiatives do not include Internet-mediated volunteering in their volunteerism promotion. There are also controversies regarding who is and is not a volunteer that can complicate discussions and policies regarding Internet-mediated volunteering, particularly because such volunteering often happens, literally, in the volunteer's home and because of debate regarding unpaid interns at charities and NGOs as to

whether or not this is volunteering.

Because of contradictory statements by EU and other international organisations focused on the promotion and tracking of volunteering, there is confusion around whether or not internships at charities and NGOs are volunteering, and this could affect discussions about Internet-mediated volunteering as it relates to skills development, career exploration, job contacts and professional advancement. In addition, per concerns expressed in various publications and the media, a push for more unemployed people to volunteer online could be seen by volunteers as an effort to encourage them to do work they should actually be paid for, or be seen by paid staff as an effort to replace them with unpaid workers.

Finally, there are minimal requirements, mostly in terms of competencies and skills, for both organisations and for individuals that wish to engage in Internet-mediated volunteering, but it is not clear what organisation, if any, would or should be charged with helping organisations and individuals attain these minimal requirements if they do not have such already.

4. Internet-mediated volunteering and employability

4.1   Lack of research and data

The researcher could find literature regarding the relation of traditional volunteering to employability, and vice versa, but no research literature regarding how Internet-mediated volunteering and issues such as job / career skills development, nor regarding how the success rate of job seekers in finding employment, creating self-employment, job advancement or entrepreneurship might or might not be related to volunteering online.

This lack of data regarding Internet-mediated volunteering and employability presents an opportunity for further research that will be unique to the field.

4.2   Traditional volunteering and employability

While there is a lack of research regarding Internet-mediated volunteering and and links with employability, there is a good amount of research and literature regarding links between traditional volunteering and employability. As Internet-mediated volunteering is, indeed, volunteering, it is probable that research on traditional volunteering holds insights regarding the possibilities for online volunteering and skills development, career exploration, building networks of contacts related to employability and job advancement.

VERSO (Volunteers for European Employment) notes that "Traditional volunteering can provide a pathway to new skills and eventually a paid job; civic society and volunteerism can also be instrumental in creating new types of social spaces capable of including or connecting with marginalised groups whose employment needs are not currently met by the established employment systems." The VERSO web site includes studies on volunteering in seven EU countries: Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Spain and The Netherlands. However, at this time, the site nor its report mention Internet-mediated, that the researcher could find in a cursory of its online materials. (VERSO 2012)

In Autumn 2010, vInspired (also known simply as v), The National Young Volunteers Service, commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies to explore the contribution of volunteering to employability for young people – the development of employability skills and attributes, networks and contacts, qualifications and accreditation, etc. According to the study's findings, young people had a stated belief that volunteering and work could be a means to improve their employability, enabling them to develop skills and enhance their CV. Participants said their expectations in relation to these factors were exceeded. Volunteers had an improved insight into future careers and believed the development of networks through their unpaid service might assist future transitions (Newton, Oakley, Pollard, 2011).

However, these and other studies reviewed by the researcher were mostly about perceptions related to volunteering as a path to employment, rather than data showing a substantiated correlation between volunteering and employment.

A recent study by the Corporation for National and Community Service in the U.S.A. used population and employment data and found that volunteering was associated with 27% higher odds of employment. "The association between volunteering and employment had the strongest effect on individuals without a high school diploma or equivalent (a 51% increase in odds) and individuals who live in rural areas (55% increase in odds). We found that the relationship between volunteering and employment is stable across gender, race, and ethnic categories, age, time, Metropolitan Statistical Area, and unemployment rate." However, the researchers also noted that, even with this approach, they did not establish a causal link between volunteering and employment (Spera, et al., 2013). A similar approach to studying links between volunteering and employability in any EU countries could not be found, however, that could be because of the research challenges and limitations detailed in

Section 2.3 of this report.

Youth unemployment: a lack of skills?

A popular debate regarding the cause of unemployment among the young is whether they lack skills to be employable.[34] A key question to be addressed is whether the skills that young people are said to lack could be addressed by providing them with volunteering experience. Looking at the tasks undertaken by online volunteers, listed earlier in Section 3.3, it can presumed that there is a correlation in the skills needed in the work force and skills applied by online volunteers.

For instance, the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Network (STEMNET) at the University of Exeter gives one of many definitions of 'employability':

> Employability Skills can be defined as the transferable skills needed by an individual to make them 'employable'. Along with good technical understanding and subject knowledge, employers often outline a set of skills that they want from an employee.

The skills identified were:

- Communication and interpersonal skills,
- Problem solving skills,
- Using your initiative and being self-motivated,
- Working under pressure and to deadlines,
- Organisational skills,
- Team working,
- Ability to learn and adapt,
- Numeracy,
- Valuing diversity and difference (STEMNET 2010).

The Observatorio Navarro de Empleo, Servicio Navarro de Empleo at the Confederación de Empresarios de Navarra defined "10 competencias críticas para la empleabilidad de los jóvenes, con instituciones educativas y empresas navarras" (10 skills critical to employability of youth, with educational institutions and companies in Navarre). The competencies identified were:

- Motivation, enthusiasm and willingness to learn: the ability to maintain a positive and proactive attitude to develop the work and learning.
- Initiative: the ability to propose and initiate activities and projects to get the best results.
- Focus on results: the ability to contribute and act to achieve defined objectives.
- Customer orientation: the ability to meet the expectations of internal and external customers to provide tailored responses and strengthen trusting relationships.
- Teamwork: the ability to work with others, creating an environment of collaboration, communication and trust to achieve joint objectives.
- Empathy: the ability to perceive and understand the feelings of others, and to act accordingly.
- Conflict resolution: the ability to anticipate, address and resolve interpersonal conflicts to create successful outcomes for all parties.
- Adaptation to change / flexibility: the ability to adapt to new situations and contexts while maintaining a constructive attitude.
- Confidence: the belief in their own abilities and potential for development.
- Communication: the ability to perceive, listen and effectively transmit using the right channel

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34 E.g. In an editorial for the Guardian newspaper, Andrew Adonis.

at the right time. (Observatorio Navarro de Empleo, 2012).

Online volunteering tasks (see Section 3.3) could be assessed as building all of these skills, with the added benefit of also building skills around the use of software and hardware.

4.3 Potential challenges and risks

There are a number of challenges and risk in promoting online volunteering as a route to employability:

- Reluctance by employers to value volunteering experience by a job applicant or employee,
- Minimal skills and competencies required for online volunteers,
- Job-shadowing and team-work development are difficult online,
- Volunteering is not something everyone can afford to do,
- Debate regarding internships.

Reluctance by employers to value volunteering experience

There is no hard data that the researcher could find as to whether or not skills acquired through unpaid work by a job applicant or employee would be valued by employers in Europe. Therefore, investment in activities to encourage people to volunteer online as a path to employability may frustrate volunteers if potential employers do not value their online volunteering activities.

Minimal skills and competencies required for online volunteers

Minimal skills and competencies that are necessary to volunteer online are the same, or similar, to the skills and competencies that have been identified for the modern work place. However, many unemployed people may not have the necessary skills or competencies for Internet-mediated volunteering, which would be a barrier to their participation.

Job-shadowing and team-work development are difficult online

The implication from research identified in this paper and other literature is that online volunteering, like traditional volunteering, could be associated with enhancing the employability of participants. However, as noted in a 1998 study for the Institute for Volunteering Research, "The essence of the on-the-job experience was that volunteers could shadow paid workers and learn from them." (Gay 1998, p. 40). Job-shadowing online is much more difficult, if not impossible, as volunteer and paid staff person are in two different locations. Gay's report also notes that another vital aspect of volunteering for employability, from the volunteer's point of view, "was the team-work element present in many of the work situations and volunteers commented on the importance of the comradeship of staff and fellow volunteers." (1998, p. 40). Creating a sense of team, where online volunteers feel included in onsite activities or where they feel a sense of comradeship with other online volunteers, particularly if they are not working with these online volunteers regularly, can be difficult.

Volunteering is not something everyone can afford to do

Volunteering, even online, may not be economically feasible for everyone, including youth. In an article from the BBC, Tom Geoghegan said, "the prospect of unwaged employment might not be so appealing if you're a cash-strapped school leaver who wants to help mum put food on the table." In this same article, Caroline Diehl, chief executive of Media Trust, says volunteering is much more accessible to economically affluent youth. "It's easier for the middle class because there's probably a parental expectation, it's easier because there may be parental support, it's easier because of the networking, the access and the knowledge will be there," she says. "It's not about a lack of interest among disadvantaged young people, it's more a lack of knowledge and financial resources. In communicating volunteering opportunities we haven't really reached out to those young people." (Geoghegan 2005).

Debate regarding internships

The debate regarding internships and volunteerism, mentioned earlier, is one that would affect an effort to promote Internet-mediated volunteering to people in Europe, particularly youth, as a path to employability.

4.4   Conclusions

Internet-mediated volunteering does involve using many of the skills employers in Europe say they need in the workforce. However, more research is required to:

- understand if volunteers feel that online volunteering does enhance these skills.
- know whether or not employers value volunteering (unpaid work) for a potential job candidate, and if they do not, what activities might be needed to change their perspective about volunteer service.
- know if low-skilled volunteers could acquire necessary skills through online volunteering.
- know if organisations that involve volunteers have the capacity or the interest in helping people acquire skills through online volunteering that could increase their employability.

Whereas traditional volunteering allows volunteers to shadow professionals in their work and, therefore, understand different types of positions, this can be difficult in online volunteering situations. In addition, creating a sense of team or developing comradeship with employees can also be difficult in online volunteering situations. In addition, volunteering as a path to employment, even online, may not be economically feasible for everyone, including youth, who may not be able to afford to work without pay.

Finally, controversies around unpaid internships, which some consider volunteering and others do not, as well as controversies around volunteering as a path to employment, even when not called volunteering, can affect support and public debates regarding volunteering as a way to build the skills of people needing employment, to help job seekers regarding networking with potential employers, to help people explore careers or to help people advance in their current jobs. What the rights and expectations of people using volunteering as a path to employability should be, and the ethics of such volunteering, are frequently debated, and such debates will probably affect efforts to promote volunteering as a path to employability.

5. Internet-mediated volunteering and social inclusion

5.1   Defining social inclusion

As well as possibly being a pathway to employment, Internet-mediated volunteering may be a pathway to empowerment and social inclusion. Definitions of social exclusion, social inclusion, and the competences needed for citizenship in use in European Union policy provide a basis for suggesting how volunteering could play this role.

Social exclusion is defined in European Policy as when:

> Certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education and training opportunities, as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day to day lives. (European Commission's Joint report on social inclusion (2004), p. 11).

Social inclusion consists of actions and policies that prevent people falling into exclusion:

> Promoting social inclusion means advocating for a society for all people, based on mutual respect and solidarity, promoting equal opportunities and decent living standards regardless of economic status or ability, gender, sexual orientation, social or ethnic background etc. Combating poverty is a central component of social inclusion, since poverty can trigger a number of processes of exclusion – for example in the areas of education, employment as well as in different areas of social life and citizen participation. (Youth in Action programme, European Commission 2013).

The European Framework (2013) defines eight key competences "that everyone should have to thrive in a knowledge society." One of these key competences relates to social inclusion - specifically:

> **Social and civic competences**. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation.

Using these aforementioned sources, the qualities of social inclusion could be listed as:

- mutual respect and solidarity.
- equal opportunities and decent living standards regardless of economic status or ability, gender, sexual orientation, social or ethnic background etc.
- personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life.

5.2   Lack of research and data

Unfortunately there is no research or data that the researcher could find related to Internet-mediated volunteering and social inclusion, beyond information from the Virtual Volunteering Project, published in the 1990s, regarding people with disabilities (listed later in this paper). There is some limited information regarding a link between traditional volunteering and social inclusion.

Because of time limitations, the researcher was not able to do more than a cursory search of online articles, particularly research, relating to the social aspects and community-building aspects of open source software development – that is, development of computer-related tools by a network of

distributed workers, who may or may not be paid to participate, and for a resulting product that may or may not be a for-profit endeavour. The researcher was also unable to review literature with regard to virtual teams as a way to build employee or team cohesion. It is possible that such research could provide insight into results that may have applications to Internet-mediated volunteering projects with regard to building or expanding social competencies and social inclusion.

5.3 Linking volunteering and social inclusion

In "Young People and Volunteerism: A Model of Sustained Volunteerism During the Transition to Adulthood," Marta and Pozzi cite several studies that defined the personality characteristics of young–adult volunteers, aged between 18 and 28 years, personality characteristics:

- volunteers are more extroverted, have less need of autonomy, have a greater ego strength,
- have higher internalized moral standards,
- have a more positive attitude toward self and others,
- have a greater degree of self-efficacy and optimism,
- have more emotional stability, and
- have a greater empathy and a less narcissistic investment on the self than do non-volunteers in the same age group.

They also cite studies that showed that volunteerism among young people is useful:

- for socialization, for getting involved in the social context of belonging,
- for political participation,
- as promoter of civic engagement and support of prosocial norms,
- in reducing young people's behavioural problems and school neglect.

Their multi-methodological research project on adolescents and young–adult volunteers and their families "in order to understand the socio-demographic and psychological characteristics of young Italian volunteers" confirmed the findings of these previous studies. (Marta and Pozzi 2008).

Researchers for vInspired, in exploring the contribution of volunteering to employability for young people, found that volunteering contributed to young people's feeling of social inclusion:

- Volunteering helped young people to develop their networks and mix with a more diverse social group. It also increased their ability to work within and across authority structures. This suggests that providing volunteering opportunities to a wide range of young people will help to break-down social barriers and lead to greater community cohesion and personal well-being.
- The positive contribution made by young people to the organisations and communities with which they were involved, helped to overcome the negative stereotypes often applied to them, and improved perceptions of young people amongst adults such as staff, volunteers and service users.
- Many young people are currently in a precarious economic position with the high level of youth unemployment, and some commentators are warning of a lost generation. Helping young people to stay connected to society and their communities, to develop leadership and employability skills that will shape their future, is one of the most urgent and critical tasks of the next decade.
- This research demonstrates that supportive, developmental volunteering (and work) opportunities can play a crucial role in building the personal resilience and capabilities that young people need to succeed in an uncertain world (Newton B, Oakley J, Pollard E, 2011, p. 7).
- However, Susanne Strauss (2008) details studies with regard to volunteering and

employability and draws the conclusion from her review that, while the unemployed might have much more time at their disposal than employed people, "the unemployed are also confronted with striking social networks: they have less contact with previous colleagues and are less often members of clubs and associations. Since social networks have been found to be important for the decision to volunteer, it becomes plausible that the unemployed are underrepresented in volunteering organisations." (p. 23)

Internet-mediated volunteering might contribute to social inclusion, especially if the volunteer is working with other volunteers and employees, particularly in group projects, on an ongoing basis, rather than just one-on-one with a staff person through a series of micro-volunteering projects, where a volunteer makes a contribution to a project with little or no interaction with other volunteers or staff. Or, perhaps even volunteering just one-on-one with an employee is enough to create a sense of social inclusion.

As noted earlier in this paper, there are numerous self-help groups organised online by individuals, with no direction from or affiliation with any agency, company, charity, university or other official entity. Also known as peer-support groups, mutual aid groups and user groups, participation in such virtual communities may have benefits for participants regarding social inclusion, but data regarding such benefits could not be found.

In 2000, the Virtual Volunteering Project published 11 testimonials it had received via an online survey, online volunteer applications and emails from people with disabilities serving as online volunteers for various organisations in the USA. Most of these volunteers helped one-on-one with an employee at a nonprofit organisation, rather than in a group project where they would interact with several volunteers. Here are three people's comments from these testimonials about volunteering online and its effects on their feeling of social inclusion:

> Online Volunteer in Iowa: "I live in a very rural area. Any significant area to seek volunteer opportunities is approx. 45 miles, one-way. Also, I became ill, and wanted something to do at my pace from home… My ability to predict my health status and schedule activities lessened dramatically. Volunteering on the web gives me scheduling flexibility, assists me in maintaining contacts and cognitive functioning… Now, my skills and background have become better utilized. I was awarded Volunteer of the Month. I was given more responsibility. My input is more readily sought. I was given more prominence on the organizational web site."

> Online Volunteer in Maryland: "I am a disabled person. And my work record would make it hard for me to find a paying job. I receive a little check from the government. And I would be so glad to be able to give something in return! For a long while I could see no prospects. I prayed and prayed to the Lord and wondrously, in His own time, He brought me in contact with you people. I was a little apprehensive about what I could do, or if I could do anything at all. Your patience with me and guidance helped me to success. The doctor who I see now was overjoyed when he saw my progress and he is so proud of me! Then there is my brother who is a Computer Analyst who taught me how to use E-Mail… He set me up with the latest version of Netscape Navigator and E-Mail. He and my Mom are proud of me too! My whole life has been enriched since I've been in contact with you!"

> Online Volunteer in North Carolina: "We live in a very rural area that makes the disabled feel cut off from the world. Due to my disability, driving is out of the question. I also have children at home so that limits travel drastically. (Now) I can volunteer from home. I feel that I have learned as much from those I've helped as they have learned from me. I'm helping others as well as taking care of my children. Internet technology allows people to leave their disabilities behind. We are all the same on the Internet. No disabilities, race, or religion. We are united as one person. I recently found out that the fellow I worked with (online) had no light perception. He is a wonderful caring person. His vision loss in no way affected his terrific personality. It has been a wonderful experience." (Cravens 2000)

These comments indicate that at least some people feel a sense of increased social inclusion through volunteering online.

Per research regarding traditional volunteering as a tool for social inclusion, including among teens, and anecdotal information regarding online volunteering as an avenue for social inclusion for people with disabilities and people in rural areas, Internet-mediated volunteering as a way to build the social inclusion of young people shows promise, but more research is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

5.4 Potential challenges and risks

Three main challenges can be identified to promoting online volunteering as a pathway to social inclusion, other than through employment.

- Resistance to including social inclusion goals into current volunteer engagement.

- Lack of necessary online social skills among socially-excluded.

- Unmet expectations by volunteers leading to more social exclusion.

Resistance to including social inclusion goals into current volunteer engagement

Most organisations that involve volunteers have no stated reason relating to contributing to greater social inclusion for volunteers, and, therefore:

- may not see the benefits of adapting their volunteer engagement to contribute to such,

- may not have the expertise in how to do this, and

- may not have the resources needed to build their expertise to do this.

Organisations may resist adapting their volunteer engagement schemes to include a social inclusion element, for fear of it draining resources or focus from their primary missions which may have nothing to do with social inclusion.

Note that some case study respondents already fear the increased resources that would be needed to involve more volunteers through online volunteering (see Section 3.8.3).

Lack of necessary online social skills among socially-excluded

Young people, people who are unskilled or low-skilled communicating online, people with low-literacy skills or people who are socially excluded may not have the necessary competencies required to build successful online relationships through online volunteering, such as writing clearly, responding to messages promptly, providing exactly the information asked for, working as a team, etc.

Unmet expectations by volunteers leading to more social exclusion

Young people and people representing various demographics that are traditionally socially-excluded, such as people with disabilities or the long-term unemployed, may seek Internet-mediated volunteering activities as a way to become more connected to communities, to attain a sense of accomplishment and to build skills and confidence, but then become disappointed and disillusioned with volunteering if experiences do not meet their expectations.

5.5 Conclusions

Internet-mediated volunteering does require some competences related to social inclusion. However, more research is required regarding:

- if Internet-mediated volunteering does enhance these competences.

- if organisations that involve online volunteers, or would involve online volunteers, as well as volunteers themselves, would need training and other support in order to cultivate social inclusion competencies.

- if Internet-mediated volunteering has led to mutual respect and solidarity, equal opportunities and better living standards regardless of a person's economic status or ability,

gender, sexual orientation, social or ethnic background etc., or personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and behaviour that helps individuals to participate more fully in society.

In addition, there are risks in focusing on using online volunteering as a means to enhance a person's social inclusion, as people who are socially excluded may not have the necessary competencies required to build successful online relationships through online volunteering, and people seeking this benefit from online volunteering may not have this expectation met and become disappointed and disillusioned with volunteering.

6. Policy considerations

6.1 Overview of policy opportunities, stakeholders and challenges and risks

Potential opportunities

This report suggests that the main policy relevance of Internet-mediated volunteering lies in providing NGOs and charities with additional human talent and community connections, and providing individuals with opportunities to engage in activities they might find both personally and professionally rewarding. To that end, activities that policies could support might include:

- identifying additional, current Internet-mediated volunteering activities.
- interviewing those engaged in Internet-mediated volunteering activities, both the volunteers and the host organisations, to gather information about benefits, accomplishments and challenges.
- sharing information gathered from these research activities, in a variety of languages, with a view to improving existing efforts and increasing Internet-mediated volunteering activities across Europe.

Questions for policy makers with regard to these activities include:

- which activities could be supported in some way? (with policies or funding).
- which activities require policy action, and which require funding?
- The potential role of European Commission, in supporting Member States, particularly in addressing cross-border issues and in research and awareness raising.

Internet-mediated volunteering stakeholders

In order to take advantage of these opportunities, the follow stakeholders will play a role:

- NGOs and any entities that involve, or want to involve, volunteers, online or onsite.
- Volunteers, including current volunteers that aren't volunteering online and those that are.
- Potential online volunteers.
- Entities that fund and/or research NGOs and other organisations that involve or could involve volunteers, including governments (local, national and international), research institutes, universities and for-profit organisations.
- Entities that research volunteer engagement and all forms of unpaid labour, including governments (local, national and international), research institutes, universities and for-profit organisations.
- Traditional media, such as newspapers, radio and television, and newer media, such as blogs, podcasts and online-only news video (as these individuals and organisations report on volunteering and NGO initiatives).
- The general public, who may benefit from online volunteering efforts.

Risks and challenges

The risks and challenges to Internet-mediated volunteering in EU countries identified in each section of this paper, that policies may need to address in some way, are here divided into three categories:

- Awareness and understanding,
- Labour concerns,
- Resources and skills.

More detail on these 3 categories of risks and challenges are given below:

Awareness and understanding:

- "Real" versus "virtual": there is a misunderstanding that Internet-mediated volunteering is, somehow, not real volunteering (3.8.1).
- Fear of negative behaviour online, such as bullying or violations of confidentiality (3.8.2).
- Lack of understanding of and support for volunteer management resources (3.8.3).
- Lack of understanding or awareness regarding Internet-mediated volunteering (3.8.4).

Labour concerns

- There are concerns that volunteers could replace paid staff in an effort to save money, or that volunteers would provide lower quality work than professionals, (3.8.5).
- lack of agreement as to whether or not unpaid interns supporting charities or NGOs are volunteers. (3.8.6 and 4.4.5).

Resources and skills

- There is little widely available material in multiple languages and relevant to different contexts as to on what organisations and individuals want and need to be able to engage in virtual volunteering (3.8.7).
- Failure of employers to value volunteering (4.4.1).
- Many volunteers may lack the required skills and competencies (4.4.2).
- Job-shadowing and team-work development are difficult online (4.4.3).
- Volunteering is not something everyone can afford to do (4.4.4).
- Young people and people who are socially excluded may not have the competencies required to build successful online relationships through online volunteering (5.4.2).
- Volunteers' unmet expectations may lead to more social exclusion and disappointment which is turn could lead to disillusionment regarding volunteering (5.4.3).

The following policies could address the above risks and challenges for all stakeholders.

Policy recommendations: encouragement of awareness and capacity-building

The opportunities and challenges this report has described suggest a number of policy options, primarily aimed at building awareness regarding Internet-mediated volunteering, improving the knowledge base and building the capacities of organisations and volunteers to engage in such. These suggestions are not grouped in the three risk categories – i.e. awareness and understanding, labour concerns, and resources and skills – because many of these activities would address more than one category:

Policy makers could affect awareness of Internet-mediated volunteering among organisations that promote volunteerism, as well as organisations that involve volunteers, and increase their capacities to involve online volunteers, by:

- *Encouraging the incorporation of Internet-mediated-volunteering material into traditional volunteering material and existing web sites*: Organisations that currently provide training or awareness to volunteer-involving organisations in any EU country regarding volunteer and community engagement could be encouraged, and, possibly, funded, to incorporate information about Internet-mediated volunteering into their existing trainings/capacity-building activities and online materials (web sites, blogs, etc.).
- *Encouraging traditional research to include data related to online volunteering*. Organisations such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), which focus on volunteering-related data in their respective countries, could be encouraged, and, possibly, funded, to include questions related to Internet-mediated activities in any survey or research they undertake related to volunteering. They could then interpret this data for their primary audiences.

- *Encourage the creation of region-based communities of practise*. Organisations that currently provide training to volunteer-involving organisations could be encouraged, and, possibly, funded, to organise communities of practise for people in charge of volunteer engagement at individual charities, NGOs and other initiatives. At the moment, communities of practice of this kind are a rarity in most European countries. A community of practise or knowledge network is a learning and support community that allows people who share a profession or role to exchange knowledge. The main aim of these communities is to allow their members to gain knowledge related to their common field or activity from each other. They are usually limited to just one city or region. Members may gather onsite for regular face-to-face meetings, or they may meet online via an online platform, for asynchronous or synchronous communications. An example in the EU is UKVPMs, an online community for those who are in charge of working with volunteers at charities and other organisations in the United Kingdom (referenced in Sections 2.1 and 3.1). Another example is e-voluntas[35] "un canal para compartir experiencias de intervención e investigación sobre voluntariado" (also referenced in Sections 2.1 and 3.1). There are numerous online community platform options that are available for free. For each community of practise, one organisation or initiative would need to take the lead in moderating and facilitating the group, as well as marketing the group to possible members.

- *Encouraging or funding the adaptation and translation of materials*: Publications and online training materials regarding Internet-mediated volunteering could be adapted for different European contexts and translated into the different languages of the EU. These adaptations could be done by organisations already working in volunteerism promotion in individual countries. Translated material could be provided in print and online, by either an EU commission initiative and/or organisations that currently provide online information targeted to support volunteer-involving organisations in any EU country.

- *Outreach to initiatives serving young people*: Organisations in Europe focused on youth or other under-employed, socially-excluded groups could be regularly informed by organisations that provide training to volunteer-involving organisations of the availability of training and information on Internet-mediated volunteering.

- *Tracking progress*: All of the above organisations could be encouraged to submit information about aforementioned activities, as well as any other activities regarding Internet-mediated volunteering, to a central body, encouraged by the European Commission to solicit this data, interpret it and publish the data and findings online.

- *Encouraging the creation of a dedicated initiative*: A dedicated initiative or organisation could be set up to build the capacities of NGOs, charities and other organisations and initiatives throughout the EU regarding Internet-mediated volunteering. This organisation could lead all of the aforementioned activities, and also create a website and offer training.

- *Hardware, software funding and training*: Volunteer-involving organisations in EU countries may need more funding for more computers, smart phones, tablets and Internet access for a greater number of staff, and more funding for training on using these tools.

In addition, policy makers may want to explore these questions:

- There are minimal requirements for both organisations and for individuals that wish to engage in Internet-mediated volunteering, particularly in terms of competencies and skills, rather than equipment and Internet access. What organisation, or which organisations, if any, would or could be charged with helping organisations and individuals attain these minimal requirements, or encouraged to help with this?

- There are factors for success in Internet-mediated volunteering, from both the volunteer-involving organisation's point of view and that of the volunteer. What organisation, or which

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35 https://listas.us.es/mailman/listinfo/e-voluntas

organisations, could be charged with capturing and communicating this information to stakeholders, or encouraged to do so?

Policy recommendation: policy developments and clarifications

The first policy area that needs clarification for Internet-mediated volunteering in relation to increasing employability is guidance on the issue of whether internships at charities and NGOs are volunteering. When can unpaid work, which may lead to employability, be called an internship or a volunteering experience? This could affect discussions and actions regarding Internet-mediated volunteering as it relates to skills development, career exploration, job contacts and professional advancement. What should the rights and expectations of people using volunteering as a path to employability be? What are the ethics of this kind of volunteering? These issues need to be further explored and clarified. Stakeholders need to address the controversy around who is and is not a volunteer, and clarify whether or not volunteering to improve employability is the same as an unpaid internship at a charity or NGO. The initial goal may be simply to get a variety of organisations and stakeholders on record as agreeing to disagree, rather than hoping for any outright agreements regarding volunteering-related definitions.

In addition, laws and policies on the following issues may need to be clarified or amended in each EU country to allow for or accommodate Internet-mediated volunteering,:

- legal definitions of cross-border volunteering (volunteers providing service to organisations outside of their country of residence).
- whether people who are receiving government financial assistance should be able or required to volunteer.
- safety and liability in the workplace.
- legal requirements of organisations working with volunteers (such as checks of police records for convictions or arrests, reference checks to confirm skills and abilities and appropriateness for volunteering, etc.).

Policy recommendation: support for further research

Internet-mediated volunteering involves using many of the skills employers in Europe say they need in the workforce. However, more research is required:

- to understand if volunteers feel that online volunteering does enhance these skills.
- to know whether or not employers value volunteering (unpaid work) for a potential job candidate, and if they do not, what activities might be needed to change their perspective about volunteer service.
- to know if low-skilled volunteers could acquire necessary skills through online volunteering.
- to know if organisations that involve volunteers have the capacity or the interest in helping people acquire skills through online volunteering that could increase their employability.

Internet-mediated volunteering requires competences related to social inclusion. However, more research is required on whether:

- Internet-mediated volunteering does in fact enhance these competences.
- the organisations that involve online volunteers, or would involve online volunteers, and also the volunteers themselves, would need training and other support in order to cultivate social inclusion competencies.
- Internet-mediated volunteering has led to mutual respect and solidarity, equal opportunities and better living standards regardless of a person's economic status or ability, gender, sexual orientation, social or ethnic background etc., or personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and behaviour that helps individuals to participate more fully in society.

Policy recommendation: encouragement of evaluation

Whatever the policies adopted and the other activities pursued by stakeholders with regard to promoting Internet-mediated volunteering, their impact will have to evaluated in order to assess their effectiveness. Thus, strategies can be refined when necessary so that more people volunteer online and more organisations employ online volunteers in the EU countries. Moreover, online volunteering, if properly managed, can offer greater employability and social inclusion for the volunteers themselves.

7. Case Studies

The following cases have been analysed:

• **Bodywhys, The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland, Ireland**	Involves online volunteers within its traditional, onsite volunteering schemes, and has a formalized "virtual volunteering" strategy/programme.
• **Dutch Council for Refugees, Amsterdam, Netherlands**	Does not have a formalized "virtual volunteering" scheme, but does allow traditional volunteers to interact with the organisation via Internet tools in addition to onsite experiences, and would like to explore more online peer-to-peer support.
• **E-wolontariat, Warsaw, Poland**	Promotes internet-based volunteering activities for NGOs throughout Poland, and involves online volunteers in support of the organisation's work.
• **hazloposible.org, Madrid, Spain**	One of the first Internet-mediated volunteering programmes in Europe, and still one of the largest. Also involves online volunteers in support of its work.
• **HelpFromHome, U.K.**	Promotes both short-term internet-based volunteering activities and short-term onsite volunteering (micro-volunteering) for charities in the U.K., and involves online volunteers in support of the organisation's work.
• **medica mondiale, Köln (Cologne), Germany**	Has involved a few volunteers that have used Internet tools to interact with the organisation, in addition to traditional, onsite work. Would like to expand Internet-mediated volunteering at the organisation.
• **NOW, Belfast, Northern Ireland, U.K.**	Involves online volunteers within its traditional, onsite volunteering schemes. Does not have a formalized "virtual volunteering" scheme; remote volunteers and traditional, onsite volunteers have offered to volunteer some or all of their service virtually, rather than the organisation recruiting such specifically. Would like to expand Internet-mediated volunteering at the organisation.

7.1 Summary analysis of case studies

The goal of the case studies was to show a spectrum of questions and insights into both current and potential practise around Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe, as well as how this does or might relate, or not, to employability and social inclusion.

None of the feedback in the case studies resulted in contradictions with research referenced in this paper regarding the motivations of online volunteers, the motivations of organisations to engage in Internet-mediated volunteering, types of virtual volunteering assignments, or approaches to Internet-mediated volunteering. The feedback from the organisations in these case studies is cited repeatedly to support other research findings in Section 3 and formulating policy recommendations in Section 6 of this paper.

While approaches to Internet-mediated volunteering, in terms of identifying tasks and roles,

recruiting candidates and supervising and supporting volunteers, varied greatly among the seven organisations profiled in the case studies, the variations seem to depend on the amount of volunteer responsibility, the type of assignment in terms of what skills the volunteer already needs to have before participating (as opposed to being trained for the assignment) and how much interaction, if any, is required with the public, as opposed to working one-on-one with an employee.

As noted earlier, there is little demographic data available on the web sites of organisations identified in this report as involving online volunteers, or available from the organisations interviewed for the case studies. Organisations profiled here are also not formally evaluating their Internet-engagement schemes.

7.2   *Bodywhys, the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland -* <u>*http://www.bodywhys.ie*</u>

Bodywhys, the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland, is a charity that works to ensure support, awareness and understanding of eating disorders and advocates for the rights and healthcare needs of people affected by eating disorders.

This organisation was chosen as a case study by the researcher to be interviewed for this report and profiled as a case study because the researcher felt Bodywhys was, in many respects, a typical small or mid-sized NGO in the EU involving online volunteers, because:

- Bodywhys has no stated mission relating to the Internet, computers or other networked technologies, just as most NGOs and charities in the EU do not.

- All employees have Internet access, the organisation has a web site that features information about volunteering with the organisation, the organisation regularly responds to email, and the organisation publishes an online newsletter periodically.

- The majority of volunteers, including those that work onsite, use email to communicate with the organisation.

- The organisation does have an active Facebook presence (<u>https://www.facebook.com/bodywhys</u>).

- The organisation has a formal, established, traditional volunteer engagement scheme, in addition to having experience working with online volunteers, which are fully integrated into its program.

Harriet Parsons, Bodywhys Services Coordinator, was interviewed via email for this case study.

Parsons said "Volunteers are an integral part of our organisation. All of our support services are manned and facilitated by trained volunteers." Volunteers must be over 20 years of age, and she said Bodywhys volunteers represent a variety of age groups and backgrounds. She continued:

> The majority of our volunteers are in their late twenties and early thirties, and they are studying something in the field of psychology, clinical psychology, counselling and psychotherapy. However, a significant portion also are not studying in this area, but working in other fields and just want to give their time, or do something they feel passionately about. Some, but by no way the majority of our volunteers, have personal experience of an eating disorder, but we have a recovery policy in place to ensure that someone with personal history is fully recovered before they volunteer with us. The age range of volunteers is from 21 – 60s, and some of our volunteers have been with the organisation for over 10 years. Currently I have approximately 50+ volunteers in total, and these volunteers are based all over Ireland, and some are even living in other countries.

Regarding volunteer recruitment, she said "We use many methods to recruit volunteers including the Internet. We sent out a call for volunteers on our website, and on volunteering Ireland websites, and other websites." While the organisation uses the Internet to advertise for volunteers, including online volunteers, staff use the term *online facilitators* but not terms such as *micro-volunteering, online*

volunteering, or *virtual volunteering*. While volunteers can apply online and the initial interview might be done online, training for volunteers is done in person, onsite.

Email is an essential tool in communication with all volunteers at Bodywhys. Parsons said:

> The main method of communication I have on a daily basis with volunteers is by email. Sometimes we have 'email discussions' of relevant issues, and I do online group supervision for our online support group volunteer facilitators, and for our email support volunteers. Previously we set up a private message board forum so that volunteers could communicate with each other, but we stopped this after a year when our volunteers did not engage with it.

She described their engagement of Internet-mediated volunteering thus:

> In a way all of our volunteers engage with us and me online through email, but specifically our email volunteers answer emails from home, and our online support group facilitators do the groups online from home. So, for example there are always 2 facilitators on the online groups, and these 2 people could be in completely different locations. So they facilitate together online from different locations, and they also communicate privately while the group is running through different channels like g-mail chat, msn chat, or by e-mail. It works for us, and I feel it is helpful because it allows people to volunteer even when they are not located in one of the counties where we have physical support groups, or our helpline.

When asked how working with online volunteers was similar or different to working with onsite volunteers, Parsons said:

> I have similar or even on occasion more regular contact with my online volunteers than I do with those who do not work online. The online volunteers are slightly more open and certainly more reliable about replying to emails etc., because this is the medium that they are happy and comfortable with engaging in. Whereas, for example someone on the helpline will be more amenable to responding by text or in person because this is what they are used to, and this is how I engage in with them more often. So, it is similar in terms of confirming the rota, managing the service, and disseminating of information.

> The main way it is different is in terms of supervision, because I do online supervision with the online volunteers and I do 'in person' supervision with the helpline of physical support group volunteers.

She also noted:

> When I began in my role here I was sceptical about doing online supervision and how it might be less effective than physical group supervision, but I have been surprised with how effective and constructive this is. I find it works really well and feels the same as actually meeting the volunteers in a group. It is also more likely to have good attendance because it is online and people can do it from home (so for example, if a parent is volunteering they don't need to get a baby sitter, or if someone is away with work, they can do it from wherever they are – and they do!).

She said Bodywhys has not evaluated its volunteer program, but said "without them (volunteers), we would not have the resources to run the support services we run." However, she said that she is able to know how online engagement is impacting the organisation because:

> I am able to see exactly what people are saying with our online volunteers. I read all the emails that our sent from our email support service, and I can read the full transcripts of the online groups. In some ways it is easier for me to evaluate the online volunteers because I can continually read exactly what they are saying. I do not have this level of access to people who are on the helpline or in the physical support groups.

She said that "quite a few" volunteers have said that their volunteering has helped them land a job or advance in their professional work or explore a career.

In the future, she sees Bodywhys involving more online volunteers:

> We are starting a psycho-education programme in which young people will do a programme over 6-8 weeks and be supported by a volunteer through it. So, this is one way. I would also hope to start an instant messaging type support service.

She said cost of service development and shrinking budgets are obstacles for the organisation to involve more online volunteers.

7.3   *Dutch Council for Refugees, Amsterdam, Netherlands –*
https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/

The Dutch Council for Refugees is a Dutch NGO with more than 6,000 volunteers and 600 paid employees (452 regional staff and 109 at the headquarters in Amsterdam) in more than 250 locations. The Dutch Council for Refugees was chosen by the researcher to be interviewed for this project and profiled as a case study because:

- The organisation has no stated mission relating to the Internet, computers or other networked technologies, just as most NGOs and charities in the EU do not.

- All employees have Internet access, the organisation has a web site that features information about volunteering with the organisation, the organisation regularly responds to email, and the organisation uses some social media, such as Facebook, at least periodically.

- The organisation involves a large number of traditional, onsite volunteers, more than any other organisation that is profiled in this report's case studies.

- It has a focus on helping clients regarding social inclusion and employability.

Dorine Manson, the managing director of the organisation, was interviewed by email. She said, in describing the organisation:

> Besides increasing public support for refugees, DCR offers refugees practical support during their asylum procedure and help them rebuild their lives in the Netherlands. This practical support is done by volunteers, in learning refugees the Dutch language, building networks, finding a job. In general: "to make them feel welcome in the Netherlands" and be self-supportive to participate in the society. Also by helping them to re-unite with their family by getting them to the Netherlands.

Manson's organisation was the only one that was able to provide a detailed review of the demographics represented by its volunteers:

- 36% male / 64% female
- % education university level: 64%
- average age: 57
- % working : 24%
- % pension: 35%
- % scholar/student: 6%
- % new Dutch (first or second generation Dutch, not born in the Netherlands): 19%
- Age groups:
- 24 and under: 5%
  25-34:   10%
  35-44:   10%
  45-54:   17%
  55-64:   31%
  64+:   27%

Manson noted that the NGO has "successfully launched two internet recruiting campaigns, in 2010 and 2011, to recruit younger and non-Dutch-origin volunteers." However, she said that teen volunteers are rare, that those that are involved are sometimes helping out a parent that regularly volunteers, and most teens that do help do not volunteer with the NGO on a regular basis. That said, she also noted: "we would like very much to involve younger volunteers, because of two reasons: continuity and diversity of volunteers, and their professional skills and network."

The NGO has not evaluated the impact of the contribution of its volunteers. She said:

> The volunteers became more distant to the central organisation in Amsterdam since the regional foundations became more self-supportive. Since 2006, over 300 local volunteer groups started merging into the 12 foundations we have today. These foundations became more professional, and the volunteer more out of sight from central organisation in Amsterdam. Therefore, the evaluation of the impact of the contribution of our volunteers can only be made by the regional foundations.

Manson said that her headquarters office does not communicate with its more than 6000 volunteers across the USA via email or an online group, because the NGO is "an association of 12 independent foundations. Our volunteers work in those foundations, and the foundations, at least most of them, are very keen of 'keeping' their volunteers for themselves." This means there is not, currently, an online platform that allows volunteers to share their experience, ask each other questions, recommend resources and approaches, etc. However, the organisation has not surveyed its volunteers to find out if and how many of the volunteers are already using Internet activities to support or as part of their volunteering service.

The organisation does have volunteers that work offsite as part of their service – but directly with immigrants, and not via the Internet. Manson said:

> About 1/3 of our volunteers is a 'Taalcoach' (language coach). They teach refugees the Dutch language by weekly team up with a refugee, speaking Dutch, reading, but also write letters, som guiding through Dutch (municipal) paperwork. This is done outside our offices.

She noted that the organisation does have its own LinkedIn group, "which is mainly focussed on getting refugees in a working position in Dutch society, so job opportunities etc." Manson also noted:

> We already use e-learning, we have an online knowledge bank with legal information, best practices, guidelines, country information etc. Also we have a Facebook page and are very active on Twitter.

When asked how she would feel about volunteers using the Internet as a part of her service, she said, "We have no problem with that, as long as (data) security of refugees is not breached. By the way, this is the same for our staff members. It is part of today's work-life balance." At this time, they are using the terms online volunteering, virtual volunteering or micro-volunteering, and do not believe they are engaged in such, however, Manson noted, "we hope we can start doing so by using some of your expertise on that part of volunteering!" She added:

> Our guess is that the communication between client (asylum seeker or refugee) and volunteer will not be online in the near future. But managing our volunteers might be an opportunity, coaching them, online training etc.

Manson sees one of the biggest obstacles to the organisation's volunteers using the Internet as a part of their service as lack of Internet access by those they serve:

> The core activity of a volunteer is face to face meeting with our clients, the refugees. Not all asylum seekers have easy access to the internet. Refugees living here might have easier access via libraries, public internet etc.

She said a first step in the organisation engaging more in Internet-mediated volunteering would be giving the headquarters staff access to all volunteers in the network across the country and creating a way to encourage and support an ongoing "online dialogue" with the organisations volunteers. She

noted that: "We started an intranet recently, still very basic and mostly used for 'sending' information, not getting input from our volunteers."

Manson said she believes that the lack of more Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe is because "mostly a lack of awareness or understanding online volunteering."

Regarding volunteering as a path to employment, Manson noted that "A good deal of our staff members formerly started as a volunteer. And, our younger volunteers expressed their motivation in our Helden (Heroes) campaign," which was designed to recruit younger volunteers for the NGO.

She believes that the biggest obstacle to leveraging online volunteering work into greater employability/career advancement in the EU may be because of "a lack of awareness. Volunteering is highly regarded in NL, and, with an economic crisis at hand, unemployed use volunteering to stay in touch with society and create chances to get back to work again."

7.4 E-wolontariat, Warsaw, Poland – www.e-wolontariat.pl

E-wolontariat, which translates into "e-volunteering" in English, is the web site of a national virtual volunteering initiative in Poland. It is supported by the Fundacja Dobra Siec, or "Good Network Foundation," an NGO, and Fundacja Organge, the Polish division of the international company Orange. It is based in Warsaw.

E-wolontariat was chosen to be profiled as a case study because:

- It seemed, to the researcher, be a good example of an EU-based organisation that has fully embraced Internet-mediated volunteering.
- It promotes Internet-mediated volunteering to other NGOs in the EU.
- The organisation regularly uses social media, including Facebook and Twitter.
- The organisation has information on its web site in more than one language (Polish and English).

The site features a searchable database of volunteering activities that can be done by a remote volunteer (http://www.wlacz-sie.e-wolontariat.pl/pl/Wlacz-sie.html); volunteers are not required to go onsite at the organisation to complete a volunteering assignment posted on this web site. Categories of virtual volunteering assignments on the site:

- Accounting
- Advising and counselling
- Brainstorming, crowdsourcing
- Coordination and project management
- Creating and editing texts
- Creating and editing video
- Designing

- Fundraising
- New technologies/IT
- Promotion, public relations, marketing
- Researching
- Social media, blogging
- Teaching, training and coaching
- Translating

The site also features a database of online volunteers (http://www.wlacz-sie.e-wolontariat.pl/en/E-volunteers-profiles.html), allowing organisations to browse and find online volunteers with the necessary expertise for a particular assignment.

Marzena Kacprowicz, the E-volunteering Program Coordinator at E-wolontariat, was interviewed by email for this case study.

She said that, as of yet, her program has not evaluated its impact beyond numbers of how many

organisations have posted assignments, how many assignments have been posted, how many individuals have signed up on the service, and how many individuals have signed up to help on an assignment. Due to lack of funding and staffing, they have not evaluated their service in terms of:

- what impact online volunteers have had at the organisations that have involved such
- what impact online volunteering has had on online volunteers
- how many assignments have been completed versus how many have been posted.

She said the organisation is exploring ways to motivate organisations and volunteers to provide feedback about their experiences, and said she is particularly interested in using gamification techniques to this end, such as rewarding a certain level of feedback activity with online badges. For instance:

> This year we have started the debate with finalists of our 'Discover e-volunteering' Competition. We ask them, what the 'e-volunteering' means to them, how do they recruit volunteers, what do they do to provide reliable support through their projects and what barriers they have to overcome. By the end of this year we'll create the report and start to work on defining some standards on e-volunteering – kind of guidelines for e-volunteering projects organizers.

Kacprowicz noted that, in addition to facilitating matches between organisations and online volunteers, her organisation also involves online volunteers themselves, primarily to help with translation of materials from Polish into English and to help promote the initiative online.

She said that one of the reasons her organisation promotes online volunteering, and involves online volunteers themselves, is to counter negative stereotypes of Internet users, such as that all online activities are "wasting time and cyber-bullying." In addition, the organisation involves online volunteers "Because we can cooperate with people regardless of distance and time. And because we've got small office ;)".

Because the organisation was focused from the beginning on Internet-mediated volunteering, the staff did not have a traditional, onsite volunteer engagement scheme it then had to adapt to include online volunteers. She notes that "we treat our e-volunteers as the team members, so we didn't have to change anything."

She said that she has heard from volunteers who have successfully completed assignments related to translation, writing and editing, graphic design, and support to other volunteers, regarding how their online volunteering has impacted their employability.

> They said that thanks to virtual volunteering they've gained professional skills and job experience that would be difficult to gain on labour market in the real world.

> There are plenty of (e-)volunteering projects, in which volunteers have the opportunity to participate in trainings where they can gain some professional skills. They also gain valuable job experience. We have to share their stories to convince others!

She agreed that there is a lack of online volunteering in the EU, compared to the USA. She said a factor in this is that "In Poland, there is still a problem with internet access in some regions." She was asked why she believes so many organisations in Europe do not involve online volunteers. She said that it could be because of a narrow definition of what is *volunteering* in Europe. She offered this example:

> People still have some difficulties with describing volunteering. For example, when we ask people in Poland: *Have you done something good to people from outside your family during last year?* and give few examples of volunteering works without naming them 'volunteering', more than 50% of them say: *Yes, I have.* But when we ask the same people: *Have you volunteered during last year?* only 20% of them say: *Yes, I have.* There are still some stereotypes connected with volunteering – some people are convinced that volunteering is only about working physically in hospice or in the orphanage and e-volunteering is some kind

of drifting in the abstract.

Kacprowicz also said that there is a lack of understanding among many NGOs and charities in Poland regarding the value of volunteer engagement and regarding the basics of volunteer management, and that this can affect how much Internet-mediated volunteering is, or is not, embraced. She noted:

> In 2011 we've done the first in Poland qualitative research on volunteering. We've asked over 180 people engaged in different types of volunteering, how do they perceive volunteering, what are their motivations and what barriers they have to overcome when doing volunteering work. We were surprised how many volunteers said that the main barrier they have to overcome is the attitude of the organisations – they are not properly prepared for working with volunteers. For example, they have no idea how to organize their work, how to distribute tasks among them and how to engage and motivate them. In my opinion, it's because of the lack of support at charities, NGOs and other organisations for the engagement of volunteers (online or off; support includes staffing, knowledge and funding). When we conduct trainings on volunteering for NGOs, they often tell us that they do need professional trainings on organizing volunteering, especially e-volunteering, because the idea of e-volunteering is still something new (and a bit controversial) in Poland.

She said that, overall, there is a lack of awareness or understanding regarding online volunteering in Europe, including Poland. She noted in the email interview:

> We have been promoting volunteering since 2009. We've launched the www.e-wolontariat.pl website, we organize workshops, as well as the 'Discover e-volunteering' competition – the first and only competition in Poland (and probably the first in Europe) which aims at promoting and honouring social projects undertaken on the Web. Through these years we found out that people are a bit sceptical about virtual volunteering – mainly because of the stereotype that volunteering can be done only physically in the real world. Sometimes they just can't imagine, how support given via the Internet can have positive impact to the real world. But when we show them specific projects, they become convinced and ask for more. We are going to develop the database of good e-volunteering practices here: http://www.e-volunteering.eu/en/Good-practices.html. The organisation features information on its web site to try to address some of these issues, such as this page (in English): http://www.e-wolontariat.pl/en/e-volunteering/for-organisers

In her interview, she also noted:

> In my opinion, we should educate organisations how to divide complicated tasks into smaller e-volunteering tasks that can be done via the Internet. We have to convince people, that Internet is a great tool and that there's huge social potential … we should tell people what e-volunteering is, how to become an e-volunteer and what are the advantages of this type of volunteering.

7.5 *Fundación Hazloposible, Madrid, Spain* – *http://www.hazloposible.org*

Fundación Hazloposible is an NGO that works "in innovative ways to boost interaction and society participation in charitable causes using new technologies." Its vision is "a more engaged and participatory society in which every person and organisation is the protagonist in the construction of a more just and sustainable world." It was established in 1999, and its first online project was CanalSolidario.org. The web site notes that "Internet and technology evolve at a breakneck pace. Society evolves with them."

In 2000, it launched HacesFalta.org, an online portal for the promotion of volunteerism, including virtual volunteering. Over the years, it has launched and sustained various other volunteerism projects. Most recently, in 2012, Hazloposible launched Microdonaciones.net, a finance crowdfunding platform for social projects in various NGOs, and Tucodigovaacambiarelmundo.org, a volunteer platform for the development of technology projects with social impact. It also hosts

SolucionesONG.org, a crowdsourcing project for nonprofits to recruit volunteers with specific areas of expertise, such as accounting, marketing or management.

Hazloposible was chosen to be profiled as a case study because:

- It has more than a decade of working with online volunteers and promoting Internet-mediated volunteering; it may be the third-oldest organisation devoted to virtual volunteering, after the Virtual Volunteering Project (founded in 1996) and Impact Online (founded in 1994).
- It promotes Internet-mediated volunteering to other NGOs in the EU.
- The organisation regularly uses social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to engage with audiences.
- The organisation has information on its web site in more than one language (Spanish and Catalan).

Marta Reina, Coordinadora Área de Proyectos, was interviewed via email for this report. Her answers were provided in English.

She said that, while most volunteers that help through its various web sites are in Spain, others are from countries all over the world. She said, "They have knowledge in different areas such as communication, legal advisory, technology and TIC, project management or volunteering." She said that more than 800 volunteers help organisations through Hazloposible's web sites.

The organisation does not ask questions of volunteers regarding their age. Looking at photos of those that have registered on the various sites, she says it can be surmised that online volunteers using the sites represent various age groups, including teens. She added, "NGOs are interested in solving their questions with contributions from volunteer experts, regardless their age."

She said that organisations that use their service are invited to provide feedback about each experience with online volunteers, and that the majority of evaluations have been "highly positive." Volunteers are also regularly surveyed about their experiences, and these have also been largely positive. However, Reina does not have specific information on how online volunteering has impacted organisation or individuals.

Reina noted that the challenges organisations face in involving online volunteers are:

- difficulties in using the necessary technology and communicating online
- lack of resources and knowledge to involve online volunteers

Regarding the organisation's SolucionesONG.org platform, Reina said that volunteers, particularly younger volunteers, have used online volunteering through her organisation as a way to improve their employability. She said that, in a survey was sent to all online volunteers, several said they had acquired knowledge for the workplace. She also said:

> We have some students that have said they decided to participate in this project to know better how they can help an NGO with their knowledge, to prepare them to face professional challenges. They also want to improve their professional skills. Some volunteers have asked us for a certificate citing the tasks they have done through SolucionesONG.org, to attach to their CV. Some volunteers include in their Linkedin profile their participation as experts in this project.

Reina said that she sees interest in online volunteering continuing to increase in coming years, particularly among young people, because they use computer and Internet technology more than previous generations. For more NGOs to involve online volunteers, however, they must:

- increase their knowledge about online volunteering,
- have more knowledge about using computer and Internet technologies,
- establish strategies to involve online volunteers.

7.6   Help From Home, UK - http://www.helpfromhome.org

Help From Home is an all-volunteer run charity based in the U.K., begun in 2008. It is focused exclusively on micro-volunteering; the organisation promotes both online forms of this type of volunteering as well as onsite, in-person volunteering. The Help from Home web site allows organisations to post micro-volunteering assignments, and volunteers to sign up to undertake such assignments.

Help from Home was chosen by the researcher to be interviewed for this project and profiled as a case study because:

- of the organisation's focus on micro-volunteering (though it is not limited to online opportunities only),
- of its robust web presence,
- it is an all-volunteer organisation, in contrast to the other organisations profiled, and involves online volunteers to maintain the organisation,
- the organisation is active on both Facebook and Twitter.

Mike Bright is the founder of the organisation. He runs the organisation as a volunteer. He was interviewed by email.

He notes that "only a very small number of charities" have come to his site, on their own, to recruit volunteers. The majority of organisations using the site were identified by him, found through various Internet and media searches, and he invited each of them to post their opportunities to his site. He also noted that "From the very small number of orgs that have forwarded their opportunity to us, there is unfortunately not one of them that stands out as a heavy user," meaning that there is no one organisation, that he knows of, regularly involving online volunteers in micro-volunteering assignments. He also noted that the site is in English only and, therefore, most of the organisations and volunteers using the site are in the U.K.

The number of purely online volunteering opportunities on the site at any given time is around 500. Bright said that more than 4000 "actions", or micro-volunteering opportunities, have been completed since November 2011, as of the time of the writing of this case study. He notes that this figure, which is available on the home page and frequently updated, does not distinguish between online and onsite, face-to-face actions for organisations.

Help from Home has introduced gamification to its site to encourage volunteers to use micro-volunteering as a way to develop skills for employability: volunteers can receive online badges depending on the number of hours they have contributed to volunteering through the site. Through its Skills 4 You program on the site, volunteers are told that contributing time to micro-volunteering assignments "Looks good on your CV where employers favour altruistic efforts!" Bright notes regarding this program, "It's exceedingly early days yet to evaluate the projects performance." He said that, while they do not have demographic information about users of his site, he can say that, among Skills 4 You applicants, 50% are 24 years or younger, and more than 60% are female or have a female sounding name.

Help from Home also relies on volunteers itself to sustain the organisation. Bright noted, "Most volunteers are very temporary, but a few stay medium to long term."

Bright said that there is a need for "an online scheme where it makes it easy for volunteers to add their volunteer experience to their CV at the click of a button, or an online scheme where volunteers and orgs are encouraged to provide feedback and evidence of their volunteer experience, all online."

He also said that there is a need for traditional volunteer centres to encourage for-profit businesses to support their employees "to look at virtual / micro-volunteering opps as a way of giving back to society." He also said there is a need to approach NGOs that support people with disabilities and people who are homeless to help them build up their job skills through virtual opportunities and onsite, in-person micro-volunteering opportunities.

He said traditional volunteer centres also need to set up schemes similar to the Volunteer Centre of West Berkshire's "Flexiteering", where potential volunteers sign up to receive notices of one-time, just-show-up events where they can volunteer (http://www.volunteerwestberks.org.uk/iflexiteer.htm), and to Shropshire Skills Match, run by Volunteer Centres Shropshire, also in the U.K., which finds, according to the web site, "short-term, bite-sized opportunities for people who offer their skills and experience to help organisations from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector develop and thrive. This could be a one-off task and is ideal for people who cannot commit to more regular, long-term volunteering." (http://shropshireskillsmatch.org.uk). Most of the opportunities on these sites, however, are not virtual.

7.7 medica mondiale e.V., Köln (Cologne), Germany – *http://www.medicamondiale.org*

medica mondiale (the name is written in lower case by the organisation) is an NGO (Eingetragener Verein, or "Registered Association") based in Cologne, Germany. It supports women and girls in war and crisis zones in various countries. "medica mondiale's commitment is to give women a chance to lead an independent and self-determined life despite having experienced degrading and destructive violence." In Albania, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Liberia, the organisation has constructed therapy and women's centres and created and supported projects related to medical treatment, emotional and mental services, and legal issues to support women and girls. "With our help, independent women's organisations have emerged from Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and in Kosovo that we continue to support and advise."

medica mondiale was chosen by the researcher to be interviewed for this project and profiled as a case study because the researcher felt it was, in many respects, a typical small or mid-sized NGO in the EU, per these qualities:

- medica mondiale has no stated mission relating to the Internet, computers or other networked technologies, just as most NGOs and charities in the EU do not.

- All employees have Internet access, the organisation has a web site that features information about volunteering with the organisation, the organisation regularly responds to email, and the organisation publishes an online newsletter periodically.

- The organisation does not have an active Facebook presence (it is the researcher's understanding that most EU NGOs and charities do not have such).

- The organisation is talked about by others online – for instance, on Twitter (https://twitter.com/search?q=medica%20mondiale&src=typd) – meaning it has a high profile among those that care about its mission focus.

- The organisation has information on its web site in more than one language (German and English).

- The organisation involves volunteers onsite, but does not have a mandate to involve volunteers nor does it have a formal volunteer engagement scheme.

- It has involved at least one online volunteer (the researcher assisted the organisation primarily as an online volunteer in 2008, offering advice on database software options).

Pia Blase, an employee in charge of evaluation and quality assurance at medica mondiale, was interviewed by email.

She noted that the organisation involves four volunteers regularly onsite at their organisation, who help with administrative tasks, with maintaining of the organisation's onsite library, with and with mailings, events and logistics. She said most of these volunteers are women 50 and over who feel passionately about the organisation's mission. She said they have also involved volunteers, as interns, and that these have been in their 20s. She said that they do not involve teen volunteers, and feels that this may be because the themes are too "burdening." They have no special recruitment activities to target any particular demographic as a volunteer.

She said medica mondiale has not evaluated its volunteer engagement, "because we see the impact and significance in our daily work." Specifics on what this impact or significance is were not offered.

Blase said staff uses email to communicate with some of its volunteers, as well as the phone, but noted "four of the volunteers we have don't use email."

She said medica mondiale does not recruit online volunteers specifically, though they would be open to the idea of doing so, noting "We trust in our volunteers, in our office or at home does not matter." She did not mention the involvement of the researcher as an online volunteer several years ago, which may be because she did not know about the online involvement, or she may not have thought of the experience as *virtual volunteering* because the researcher did come onsite once to the organisation or because the researcher was an ad hoc volunteer helping on just once project, rather than someone who helps on an ongoing basis.

However, to engage in Internet-mediated volunteering, Blase said the organisation's employees and current volunteers would need much more information and training:

> We have no experiences in this at all. We would have to change used processes and would have to train volunteers, especially the older women so that they can handle it. We first of all would have to see the benefits of online volunteers in our work. Then we would need to establish processes that make online volunteer work efficient. Data security is an issue!

Blase said that none of the NGOs current or previous volunteers, including the interns they have involved in the past, have said that their volunteering with the organisation helped them land a job or advance in their professional work or explore a career. However, the organisation has not followed up with interns to see if their time at the organisation affected their employability.

Blase agreed that the lack of Internet-mediated volunteering in the EU, compared to, say, in the USA, may be because of a lack of support at charities, NGOs and other organisations regarding the engagement of volunteers (online or off), and agreed that such support includes staffing, knowledge and funding. Blase also agreed with statements that there is a lack of awareness or understanding regarding online volunteering, and that there is a lack of availability of online tools at charities, NGOs and other organisations that could support the engagement of online volunteers, such as social media, VOiP technologies like Skype, or cloud-based platforms.

She did not agree that there is a lack of understanding regarding the value of volunteer engagement, in general (not just online) among charities or NGOs in Europe.

She agreed with statements that obstacles to leveraging online volunteering work into greater employability/career advancement in the EU may include:

- lack of available online volunteering work,
- lack of awareness of this type of volunteering among those seeking/needing employment,
- perceptions among potential employers regarding the value of volunteering, online or onsite, for application to paid work ("it's just volunteering" or "you were just volunteering, rather than really working").

7.8   NOW. Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK – http://nowproject.co.uk

NOW is a charity and "social enterprise" that "works to help people gain qualifications and life/work experience and support them to move into jobs with a future. Our work is about social inclusion and leads to the people we work with having better health, a better education and a brighter future." NOW offers transition services for people aged 14 to 19, employment services and volunteering services for people with learning disabilities or difficulties, and training services "to offer the chance to access training which will help you to develop the skills needed to get a job and keep it."

NOW was chosen by the researcher to be interviewed for this project and profiled as a case study because:

- of the organisation's focus on career development and social inclusion.
- of its robust web presence and its established volunteer engagement activities over the years.
- all employees have Internet access and answer emails promptly.
- the organisation is active on both Facebook and Twitter.
- the organisation has a traditional, face-to-face mentoring component, and such a program might benefit from an online mentoring component as well.

Jayne Mc Stay, an employee charged with managing volunteers at NOW, was interviewed by Skype.

She noted that clients are called "service users", and many participate in an onsite "social inclusion group" each week, where they discuss their needs regarding social inclusion and skills development, and also propose ideas for NOW programs and community activities that could help them. Some clients can read and write, some cannot. She said service users have often expressed a desire to volunteer more in the community, feeling that volunteering "opens the doors to the community."

She said NOW has had "a number of adults with learning disabilities who self-selected and came to the organisation and wanted to volunteer" onsite at NOW or any other organisation. She said many such volunteers need one-on-one support with another volunteer in order to volunteer outside of NOW, and the organisation provides such, through peer-to-peer support and through volunteers that are not also service users. She noted that, with volunteers with learning disabilities, "There's a difference confidence level. In volunteering, they are pushing personal boundaries and learning what they can really do." She also said that all of the service users need coaching and mentoring, including for volunteering.

She said that service users particularly enjoy group volunteering with peers and with other volunteers because they learn about other organisations in their area and learn how to work with others. She said that, for all of the volunteers, "There is nothing like that empowerment of being able to do something for something else." Service users who participate in such volunteering activities frequently ask for more opportunities, and some have gotten their own volunteering placements with other organisations without NOW's direct assistance.

She said that the organisation involves about 50 volunteers that are not also service users. She said these volunteers help in a variety of ways, including by "facilitating group discussions and supporting group visits and group volunteering. They are members of the groups right along with service users. It's more support than leading. Volunteers also help with risk management." These volunteers provide the mentoring and coaching service users need. Volunteers also help with social enterprises by NOW, supporting programs that help service users to build the skills needed to work at restaurants and hotels. These non-client volunteers are involved in the trainings by the organisation as well, teaching life skills (money management, independent travel, etc.). She said many of these non-client volunteers are studying to be occupational therapists or nurses, or have finished studies and are looking for a job. They have also had chefs that volunteer their time and expertise.

McStay said:

> I have had a number of volunteers say their volunteering has helped with jobs. One in particular I am thinking of that said, 'I only got the job because of my volunteering experience.' The volunteering gives them the edge because it's real experience. They go into an interview with immediate experience. They are also networking with organisations that might hire them. A number of volunteers will use volunteering to test the waters, to see if that's the sector they want to move into career wise. I have had a number of volunteers that are still working, and have taken a volunteer role because they are thinking of career change and want to see if it's what they really want to do.

> I had one guy who volunteered last year – only for a short time, he was only with me for two months. He followed us on Twitter. He spent a number of months in Boston and saw a job was coming up here and applied and got it. And his volunteering here helped him get that

job.

She said that she believes people use volunteering at NOW to learn about the culture of organisations like this, to learn about the working patterns of a place like this. She said a lot of people follow the organisation online long before they apply to be a volunteer, so they can understand more of what the organisation does.

She said that non-client volunteers have been essential in bring new ideas and resources to the organisation. "They have fresh eyes and suggestions. They have the networks we need. That's what the volunteers bring to us. They bring our organisation into communities and networks into places we couldn't reach just with staff."

She has involved just a few online volunteers. One example she noted:

> I had a marketing volunteer. He's setting up a newsletter. Ideally, we'd like to have social media volunteers to manage, for instance, or Twitter accounts. We're hoping some of our volunteers will blog. We're really keen to explore the idea of more online volunteers here. I'd like to look into online volunteers for lobbying.

She said that she's seen how, at other organisations, Facebook online groups have led to face-to-face meetings and volunteers, and she would like to see that at NOW. She said that, for virtual volunteering to become more common at NOW, including for it to be incorporated into the organisations mentoring and coaching activities, a number of issues would need to be fully addressed:

- "I need to expand my understanding of virtual volunteering, what the possibilities are."
- "I have a fear around management, about how hard it would be."
- "I worry about inappropriate language and inappropriate behaviour."
- "I want to know how to prevent misunderstandings online."
- "I need a champion onsite here for the idea of online volunteering."
- "I might need someone to work just with people helping NOW online. Let's say we had 20 of them (online volunteers). I might need a person to work with them. I won't have time.
- "I need a specific project for them (online volunteers). I need to know how to create projects for them.
- "I would like to do a pilot project. I don't want to get burned by a bad experience."
- "We would need funding to pay for training, for staff experts, maybe for staff to manage the program."

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Annexes

Annex A: Online volunteering-related recruitment or matching web sites with at least some European involvement

These web sites list online volunteering assignments that benefit European-based organisations or list assignments for various organisations that are available to online volunteers based in the EU. These web sites recruit online volunteers for other organisations and may not involve online volunteers themselves; some have been listed in Annex B if it could be confirmed that such also assignments that benefit European-based organisations or list assignments for various organisations that are available to online volunteers based in the EU. These web sites recruit online volunteers for other organisations and may not involve online volunteers themselves; some have been listed in Annex B if it could be confirmed that such also involve online volunteers to support their own activities. The contents of this annex are shared in full on the wiki associated with this research.

Initiative name and website	Country of operation or focus	Notes
Betobe http://www.betobe.org	France	"beTobe offers a matching system between volunteers and non-profit organisations to foster collaborations online. The benevolent contributions are produced via Internet, so the physical presence of the benevolent is not required." in English, French and Spanish. The number of online volunteering opportunities posted on this site, nor the number undertaken successfully by online volunteers, could not be found on the site by the researcher.
BrightOne http://brightone.org.uk/	U.K.	Matches communications volunteers with charities. "Volunteers work remotely, but we do encourage face to face meetings, which normally take place once a month. Volunteers spend a maximum of 4 hours per week working on campaigns, but depending on the client and the amount of activity they have, the time spent volunteering usually works out at 2-3 hours per week." The number of online volunteering opportunities posted on this site, nor the number undertaken successfully by online volunteers, could not be found on the site by the researcher.
e-wolontariat http://e-wolontariat.pl/	Poland	e-wolontariat translates into "E-volunteering." In June 2013, had more than 20 distinct online volunteering opportunities on its site with at least a dozen NGOs in Poland.
France Bénévolat http://www.francebenevolat.org/	France	Does not have an option to search opportunities by keyword, but a search of "types de mission" for "Informatique, Internet" or "Communication" can generate volunteering opportunities that can be done online, such as helping with a blog or designing a graphic.
FreeForce vrijwilligerswerk in Nederland http://www.freeforce.nl	Netherlands	This site, in Dutch, says, "The processing of all applications made through the member volunteer centres." The site has been in use since 1999. It's a recruitment site for all kinds of volunteers, primarily onsite, traditional volunteers, but the researcher suspects online volunteers are also recruited through this site.

HacesFalta.org also canalsolidario.org solucionesong.org voluntariadocorporativo.org	Spain	Online databases of volunteering opportunities at a variety of organisations, including online opportunities. A search of "voluntariado virtual" with no other categories specified returned more than 350 opportunities with dozens of organisations.
Help From Home Helpfromhome.org	U.K.	Not all opportunities listed here are online; opportunities are also not searchable (they are, rather, browsable, by category of cause). The site's manager reports that he believes about 500 organisations have used the service. Also, Help From Home cross posts some of its virtual opportunities on other matching services noted in this table.
IT4Communities www.it4communities.org.uk Virtual volunteering: twww.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/open/volunteer/Volunteering/virtual.html and www.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/open/charity/it4cvol/virtual.html	U.K.	Matches IT volunteers with charities in the U.K. "If you are interested in working on a virtual opportunity look out for the 'Virtual' flag when searching for an opportunity… There are also opportunities which require only an initial face-to-face meeting. After that you'd be free to work where and when you choose."
Idealist / Action Without Borders http://www.idealist.org/	U.S.A.	A search in June 2013 using "volunteer opps" in the type filed, the word "virtual" in the keyword field, and each European country name in the location field yielded some results. By country: United Kingdom – 3 France – 2 Ireland – 1
ivo (formerly i-volunteer) http://ivo.org/	UK	Browsing volunteer opportunities, http://ivo.org/volunteer-opportunities, it is possible to choose "micro", however, many of these require onsite volunteering; under "skills", choosing skills that can be applied online, such as "social media" or "communications" does sometimes bring up opportunities that could be done online, as does the keyword search "virtual."
ManufacturingChange.org	Location unknown	Online volunteers provide practical support to organisations that create social change in developing countries through manufacturing and production related activities. Volunteers contact organisations directly through the web site when they find a task in which they are interested in doing.
Nabuur http://www.nabuur.com	Netherlands	"an online volunteering platform that links Neighbours (online volunteers) with Villages (local communities) in Africa, Asia and Latin America." Opportunities are listed by village rather than by organisation.
Open Society Foundations www.opensocietyfoundations.org	U.S.A.	This is not an online volunteering matching service, but it does fund initiatives that often involve online volunteers globally, and the Open Society Foundation sometimes involves these same volunteers themselves as bloggers for their site, such as with this article www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/spreading-the-word-online-for-palliative-care-in-kenya regarding how an online volunteer in England created a new online outreach strategy for

		an NGO in Africa and this article www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/drug-policy-reform-hiv-prevention by an online volunteer in England with a drug policy initiative. Other online volunteering activities can be found by searching for *volunteer* on the site and reading the resulting articles.
Shropshire www.ShropshireSkillsMatch.org.uk	U.K.	"Shropshire Skills Match is for people who have a specific professional skill to share; for instance a graphic designer who could design a logo for a charity campaign, a PR person who would give a press release for a local sports club the 'once-over', a surveyor who could give some initial general advice on alterations to a community building. However, it is also for more general skills such as typing, proof reading, creative crafts, gardening and even knitting."
TechSoup Global www.techsoupglobal.org/network	Based in U.S.A., with affiliated NGOs in various European countries, e.g. Fundacja TechSoup (Poland), SOCIALware, (Belgium), TechSoup Bulgaria, Asociatia TechSoup (Romania), and Croatia, Česká Republika, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK	Some national affiliates of TechSoup create opportunities for IT professionals to donate advice and expertise online to NGOs, charities, nonprofits, libraries and others in need of such, and this can include online service. For instance, via the TechSoup online forum (http://forums.techsoup.org), online volunteers can answer tech-related questions from nonprofits, libraries and others. TechSoup's Donate Your Brain initiative (http://www.techsoup.org/community/community-initiatives/donate-your-brain) is this forum supported branded as microvolunteering.
United Nations Online Volunteering Service www.onlinevolunteering.org	Germany	This service is managed by UNV, a division of UNDP. A search in June 2013 found more than 200 online volunteering opportunities.
vInspired http://vinspired.com/	U.K.	A search in June 2013 using the keyword "virtual" found several online volunteering opportunities, though most were posted by Help From Home (and were therefore also available on its web site). This was far more opportunities than clicking on the "online volunteering" link, which creates a list of opportunities that organisations have marked as online (meaning that many, even most, opportunities on the site that would be considered virtual volunteering may not be categorised as such by the organisations themselves).

Volunteer Ireland www.volunteer.ie	Ireland	A search in June 2013 using the keyword "virtual" found 11 online volunteering opportunities with nine different charities.
Volunteer Scotland www.volunteerscotland.org.uk	U.K.	Doesn't mandate that a potential volunteer type in a location in order to search, so a search using the word "online" (rather than "virtual") can generate a list of online volunteering opportunities for charities throughout Scotland, such as an an online campaigner, an online researcher, or an online mentor. However, a search of "online" also generates volunteering opportunities that require entirely onsite service.
xarxanet.org and voluntariat.org	Spain (Catalunya)	Xarxanet.org is the network of volunteer associations in Catalonia and launched in 2003. Xarxanet.org is a project promoted by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Family of the Government of Catalonia. As of July 7, there were 19 online volunteering opportunities posted on the site, available for more than 200 online volunteers (some opportunities could be done by more than one volunteer)
Youvo http://www.youvo.org	Germany	Allows NGOs to recruit volunteers from the fields of media and communication. Offers photography, video, design, writing, social media, and public relations projects for "first time young creative people to engage in social projects while gaining valuable practical experience."
ZiviCloud http://zivicloud.roteskreuz.at	Austria	die erste Web-Applikation für das Online- und Micro-Volunteering im deutschsprachigen Europa (the first web application for online and micro-volunteering in German-speaking Europe). This is a new orgnaisation; as of July, had just four initiatives seeking online volunteers for various assignments.

Annex B: Organisations that involve online volunteers in the EU

This table lists 60 initiatives in Europe that are known to be involving online volunteers at the time of this paper's writing, or organisations outside of Europe that are known to involve online volunteers from the EU. Note that some of these services are listed in Annex A as well. This table is not, however, a comprehensive list of every charity, NGO or other initiative in Europe involving online volunteers, as explained in Section 3.2. Rather, this table is meant to highlight the prevalence of Internet-mediated volunteering in Europe. The contents of this annex are shared in full on the wiki associated with this research:

Initiative name & URL	Country of base operations	Notes
2aid.org http://www.2aid.org	Germany	"Das Team über ganz Deutschland verteilt ist, ist der Arbeitsort dort, wo es dir am besten gefällt. Wir erledigen alle organisatorischen Themen über das Internet. Auch Meetings werden in der Regel per Skype oder anderen Kommunikationsmitteln abgehalten. Zweimal im Jahr gibt es ein Team-Meeting, wo wir uns persönlich treffen, Neue kennenlernen und uns austauschen. " (the team is distributed all over Germany, the workplace is where it suits you. We take care of all the organisational issues over the Internet. Also, meetings are held usually via Skype or other means of communication. Twice a year there is a team meeting where we meet in person, get to know new and exchange ideas.)
A.S.I.F - Entidad sin ánimo de lucro www.asif-entitatsenseanimdelucre.org/	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
ASMSS, Amigos de Subhadra Mahatab Seva sadan www.amigossmss.org	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Action on Depression http://www.actionondepression.org/	U.K.	Based in Scotland, online lifeskills coaches/mentor volunteers complete an course: http://www.actionondepression.org/news/news/volunteer-opportunities-delivering-our-online-cbt-based-skills-course
Amnistia Internacional www.es.amnesty.org	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Anam Cara http://www.anamcara.ie	Ireland	Listed at least one volunteering opportunity on the Volunteer Ireland web site in June it categorizes as "home-based/virtual volunteering"
Asociación Cultural Skadix skadix.org	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Asociación de Mujeres Eleanor Roosevelt www.eleanorroosevelt.es	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Beat Bullying – Mentors www.beatbullying.org/teachers-and-professionals/training-for-students/	U.K.	Formerly http://cybermentors.org.uk, this initiative recruits volunteer mentors for both onsite and online activities.
Betobe http://www.betobe.org	France	Network of online volunteering in English, French and Spanish. The site implies that online volunteers help with the site itself.

BodyWhys www.bodywhys.ie	Ireland	Ireland national voluntary organisation supporting people affected by eating disorders. Online volunteers respond from their home to emails sent to the web site. Volunteers commit to 1-2 hours per week on a particular day, attend online group supervision once every three months, and commit to one year after training.
Casal dels Infants, acció social als barris www.casaldelraval.org	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Cherie Blair Foundation www.cherieblairfoundation.org	U.K.	online mentors are in the U.K., and mentor online women entrepreneurs in developing countries: http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org/mentoring/
cibervoluntarios.org	Spain	More than a dozen projects related to computer and digital technologies and volunteering. though there are some aspects of Internet-mediated volunteering, projects are not focused primarily on online volunteering.
CrisisMappers http://crisismappers.net	Not determined	Crisis Mappers leverage mobile & web-based applications, participatory maps & crowdsourced event data, aerial & satellite imagery, geospatial platforms, advanced visualization, live simulation, and computational & statistical models to power effective early warning for rapid response to complex humanitarian emergencies. Stats: 5,502 = Members of the etwork 3,000+ = Member organisations/Affiliations including 400+ Universities, 50 UN Agencies/Programs, dozens of tech companies, several Volunteer & Technical Community Networks & Disaster Response NGOs. 162 = Countries where Members are 1,906 = Members of Crisis Mappers Google Group
Doe Network www.doenetwork.org	U.S.A.	Devoted to to assisting official law enforcement agencies in solving cold cases concerning unexplained disappearances and unidentified Victims from North America, Australia and Europe. Online volunteers also help translate documents into various languages. The Doe Network has been recognised as part of the Responsible Volunteer Community by the U.S.A. Department Of Justice.
e-wolontariat http://e-wolontariat.pl	Poland	The name translates to "E-volunteering." In addition to serving as a matching service for online volunteers and organisations in Poland, e-wolontariat also involves online volunteers in its activities.
Edinburgh University Settlement http://www.adults-mentoring.eu/?pid=15 or http://esolscotland.com/documents/mentoring.doc	U.K.	Its Welcome Package for Migrant Workers is a free online resource for adults coming to live in Scotland. "Mentors need to be good listeners who are happy to regularly communicate with their mentee via emails, messenger, Skype or a mixture of all three. Experience of having moved to Scotland would be useful, but not essential."
EngineerAid www.engineeraid.com	U.K.	An online based charity in the UK working to "provide remote engineering advice on problems experienced in the less economically developed countries and to satisfy the inherent desire of many engineers to collaborate and solve problems." Needs online volunteers who have an engineering or Science degree, or are studying towards such, to contribute time to projects such as housing

		reconstruction, designing water pumps, improving water sanitation systems, choosing and installing solar powered generators, and so forth. Current projects can be viewed at http://www.engineeraid.com/ask_the_expert/ Potential volunteers fill out this form http://www.engineeraid.com/ask_the_expert/volunteer.php
Forvo http://www.forvo.com	Spain	The largest pronunciation guide in the world with audio pronunciations in more than 200 languages, all provided by online volunteers. Volunteers rate and discuss other people's pronunciations.
FROPIS-u Forum Rabczańskich Organizacji Pozarządowych i Społecznych (Forum of NGOs and Society) http://www.fordza.cba.pl/	Poland	One of the most frequent users of the e-wolontariat platform to recruit online volunteers for various assignments.
Fundació Lucía per a la SIDA Pediàtrica http://www.fundacionlucia.org/	Spain (Catalunya)	Lists multiple online volunteering assignments on http://voluntariat.org as of June 2013
Galaxy Zoo www.galaxyzoo.org	U.S.A.	image classification
Give As You Live/ Ganet's Adventure School www.idealist.org/view/volop/ZfPwGXMXg3cp/	U.K.	Listed at least one volunteering opportunity on the Idealist web site in July it categorizes as "virtual" or "online"
GlobalGiving www.globalgiving.co.uk/globalgivingtime/	U.K.	GlobalGivingTIME program allows organisations to recruit online volunteers to help with research, search-engine optimization (SEO), social media (Twitter, Facebook, blogging, etc.), fundraising, data entry, or other expert advice.
GreenPeace Germany	Germany	
HelpFromHome www.helpfromhome.org	U.K.	In addition to being an online matching service for online volunteers with organisations that need such, this charity also involves online volunteers itself.
Human Grid Athens http://humangrid.gr	Greece	a TEDxAthens project that "aims to promote the various groups of volunteers and NGOs in Athens (Greece), as well as connecting them with other volunteers that want to participate in their initiatives." Online volunteers contribute to the creation of this grid.
Human Writes www.humanwrites.org	U.K.	Encourages UK volunteers to befriend and support those facing execution in the US by writing letters directly to inmates.
Humanity Road Digital Disaster Volunteers http://www.humanityroad.org/Volunteer	USA	Online volunteers from all over the world, including the EU, research, collect, maintain and tweet information and resources about first aid, hospitals, shelters and other critical needs before, during and after a disaster.
Humanium http://www.humanium.org	Switzerland, with offices in Germany and France	As of June listed online volunteering opportunities related to translation on the UN's Online Volunteering service.
Implicadas/os no desenvolvemento, Asociación www.implicadas.com	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Ireland Reaching Out	Ireland	Listed at least one volunteering opportunity on the

www.irelandxo.com		Volunteer Ireland web site in June it categorizes as "homebased/virtual volunteering"
Lasa www.lasa.org.uk and www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/forums/index.php	U.K.	Lasa's "knowledgebase ict café" is an online discussion forum where anyone can ask for and offer "ideas and advice for voluntary and community groups on using technology."
LibroVox http://librivox.org	U.S.A.	Involves volunteers internationally, including from the EU
Move Your Money UK www.moveyourmoney.org.uk	U.K.	Listed at least one volunteering opportunity on the Idealist web site in July it categorizes as "virtual" or "online"
Nueva Vida adopciones www.nuevavida-adopciones.org/	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Old Weather www.oldweather.com	Part of the citizensciencealliance.org initiative, which includes institutions in both the U.K. and U.S.A.	Online volunteers help scientists recover worldwide weather observations made by various ships in the 19th Century by transcribing these old weather records. These transcriptions will contribute to climate model projections and improve a database of weather extremes. The data will also be used by geographers, historians and the public around the world (anyone will be able to access it and use it).
OpenStreetMap www.openstreetmap.org OpenStreetMap Foundation www.osmfoundation.org/wiki/Main_Page	UK	Collaborative online project to create a free editable online map of the world. Created by Steve Coast in the UK in 2004. Supported by the OpenStreetMap Foundation, a non-profit organisation registered in England.
OpenMRS openmrs.org/about/	International (unable to determine base of operations)	a worldwide network of volunteers from many different backgrounds including technology, health care, and international development. Together, they are working to build the world's largest and most flexible technology platform to support delivery of health care in some of the most challenging environments on the planet. "No matter what your background or interest, we'd love to have you help us save lives with Health IT."
Positive Nett-Works e.V. http://www.youth-leader.org/	Germany	As of June listed online volunteering opportunities related to article writing and translation on the UN's Online Volunteering service.
Project Gutenberg / Distributed Proofreaders www.pgdp.net/c	U.S.A.	Has involved online volunteers from all over the world since the 1970s.
Red Deporte y Cooperación www.redeporte.org	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Save the Children U.K./Spain www.savethechildren.es	U.K.	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Sosdesaparecidos www.sosdesaparecidos.es	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
Tag Del http://tagdel.dk	Denmark	Danish site providing opportunities for online volunteers to get involved in NGO and community-based activities.
TalkingDrugs http://www.talkingdrugs.org/	U.K.	Involves volunteers "from all over the world", most working from their own homes, in tasks related to journalism, social media, communications and policy.

TechSoup Community Forum http://forums.techsoup.org/cs/communi ty/f/ or http://forums.techsoup.org/cs/communi ty/p/activity.aspx Info on all volunteering opportunities: http://www.techsoup.org/joining-techsoup/become-a-volunteer	U.S.A.	Involves online volunteers in the moderation and facilitation of its online community forum, as well as subject matter experts on the forum and in its Second Life community; volunteers from the EU have been involved at various times (including currently). Has a ranking system for its community forum moderators: http://forums.techsoup.org/cs/p/star.aspx
Turn2me turn2me.org	Ireland	"an interactive support community for people with personal problems to share, discuss and offload those problems. Our aim is to use technology to connect people and promote mental wellbeing." The charity also listed at least one volunteering opportunity on the Volunteer Ireland web site in June it categorizes as "homebased/virtual volunteering."
VoIDIX – Voluntarios Digitales o Voluntario DIXITAL http://voluntariadodixital.xunta.es/es/vo luntariosDigitales EU press release in English re: initiative http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langI d=en&catId=89&newsId=1905&furthe rNews=yes	Spain	"Volunteers can be physically present (i.e. in classrooms of Centres of Technological Modernisation and Inclusion… public libraries, etc.) or provide support online…"
UK Youth Climate Coalition http://ukycc.org	U.K.	Listed at least one volunteering opportunity on the Idealist web site in July it categorizes as "virtual" or "online"
Um sem um tam http://www.umsemumtam.cz/	Czech Republic	An online matching service for NGOs and professionals that want to donate their expertise online.
United Nations Online Volunteering Service www.onlinevolunteering.org	Germany	This service is managed by UNV, a division of UNDP. In addition to matching online volunteers with organisations that need such, the initiative also involves online volunteers in its work periodically.
Wikipedia sites in European languages http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/List_of_Wikipedias Bulgaria / Bulgarian Català (Catalan / Catalunya) Česky (Czech Republic) Dansk (Danish / Denmark) Deutsch (German – Deutschland / Germany and Austria) Eesti (Estonia) Español (España / Spain) Euskara (Basque Country) Français (French / France) Hrvatski (Croatian / Croaia) Italiano (Italian / Italy) Lietuvių (Lithuania) Magyar (Hungary / Hungarian) Nederlands (Dutch, The Netherlands) Norsk (bokmål)(Norway / Norwegian) Polski (Polish/Poland) Português (Portuguese / Portugal) Română (Romania) Russia / Russian		Online volunteers contributing to these free online encyclopedias are rarely called volunteers. For instance, A Czech Republic online volunteer is a Wikipedista or Wikipedistka German language volunteers are called Wikipedianer Spanish language volunteers are called Wikipedistas) French contributors are called Wikipédistes Norsk (bokmål)(Norway. An online volunteer is a Wikipedant) Polski(Polist. An online volunteer is a wikipedysta or wikipedystka) Português(Portuguese. An online volunteer is a Wikipedian, Wikipediano, or Wikipediana) Русский (Russia. An online volunteer is a википедист or википедистка)

Slovenčina (Slovakia) Slovenščina (Slovenia) Srpski (Serbia) Suomi (Finland) Svenska (Sweden) Türkçe (Turkey) Ukraine		
Xaley www.fundacionxaley.org	Spain	Listed at least one online volunteering (voluntariado virtual) opportunity on hacesfalta.org in June 2013
YouthNet http://www.youthnet.org/work-for-youthnet/volunteer/ Do-It bloggers http://www.do-it.org.uk/magazine/features/virtual/youthnetvirtual	U.K.	Online volunteers donate their time to write for the Do-It blogs and moderate TheSite.org discussion boards and live chats. There is also volunteer relationship advisors who must take part in an onsite six month coaching programme before beginning their online service.
Youvo http://www.youvo.org	Germany	Allows NGOs to recruit volunteers from the fields of media and communication. Offers photography, video, design, writing, social media, and public relations projects for "first time young creative people to engage in social projects while gaining valuable practical experience."

Annex C: Regional and national volunteer centres with web sites that were used by the researcher to inform this study

These centres were identified by the researcher based on a variety of Internet searches using country or city names and that country's word for volunteer, as well as searching links on the "European Volunteering Exchanges" section of the EU / European Youth Portal.[36]

Hungary Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány (National Volunteer Centre) *Ireland* Volunteer Ireland *Italy* Centro Nazionale per il Volontariato (CNV) Coordinamento Nazionale dei Centri di Servizio per il Volontariato – CSVnet *Liechtenstein* aha Liechtenstein Tipps & Infos für junge Leute – Liechtenstein *Luxembourg* Agence du Bénévolat *Montenegro* Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid *Netherlands* Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk (National Volunteer Centre) MOVISIE (Netherlands Centre for Social Development) *Poland* e-wolontariat (e-volunteering) wolontariat.ngo.pl wolontariat.org.pl *Portugal* Confederação Portuguesa do Voluntariado *Romania* Pro Vobis – National Resource Centre for Volunteering VOLUM Federation *Slovakia* Platform of Volunteer Centre and Organisations C.A.R.D.O.	*Slovenia* Slovenska Filantropija / Slovene Philanthrophy *Spain / España* Plataforma del Voluntariado de España Haces Falta – for Spanish citizens, organisations and residents xarxanet.org and voluntariat.org/, based in Catalunya Masticable tecnolongia.org *Sweden* Forum For Frivilligt Socialt Arbete *Switzerland* Academy for young volunteers / die Akademie für junge Freiwillige Alliance Sud Benevol *United Kingdom* Volunteering England Do-It (for England) Volunteering Scotland Volunteering Wales Volunteer NOW Northern Ireland National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) UKVPMs PAVMI: The Professional Association of Volunteer Managers Ireland

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36 http://europa.eu/youth/archive/volunteering_–_exchanges/index_eu_en.html, accessed 10 April 2013

Annex D: Summary of Questions used as a guideline for semi-structured interviews

1. Tell me about how volunteers help your organisation, overall, in *any* way.

2. Tell me about who these volunteers are (age groups represented, why they get involved, diversity of volunteers, how many -- anything you would like to say about the demographics)

3. Do you involve teen volunteers? 20 something volunteers? Volunteers in their 30s? How many, in general?

4. Would you like to involve more volunteers under 40? If not, why not? If so, why?

5. How have you ever evaluated the impact of the contributions of your volunteers? (and if you have not evaluated the impact, why not?)

6. Do you use the Internet to recruit volunteers? If so, how? If not, why not

7. Do you communicate with your volunteers via email at all? Do you have an online discussion group for volunteers? How do you use online tools to work with volunteers?

8. Do volunteers do anything offsite for you, from their own home or work or elsewhere, via their own device (laptop, smart phone, tablet, etc.), like designing a newsletter, or talking with other volunteers on an online group, or reading materials and responding to them, or translating something?

9. How do you feel about volunteers doing some tasks from their home or work, or otherwise offsite, via their own devices (computers, smart phones, tablets, etc.)

10. Do you use the terms "online volunteering" or "virtual volunteering" or "micro volunteering" at your organisation?

11. How is working with online volunteers SIMILAR to working with onsite volunteers in your organisation (recruitment, screening, assigning tasks, supervising volunteers, evaluating their work, etc.)

12. How is working with online volunteers DIFFERENT to working with onsite volunteers in your organisation (recruitment, screening, assigning tasks, supervising volunteers, evaluating their work, etc.

13. How do you evaluate the success of your engagement of online volunteers?

14. Do you evaluate the success of your engagement of online volunteers differently than how you evaluate the success of your onsite, traditional volunteers?

15. Have any of your volunteers said that their volunteering has helped them land a job or advance in their professional work or explore a career?

16. Do you see your organisation involving more online volunteers in the future?

17. What obstacles does your organisation face in involving online volunteers – or involving more online volunteers?

18. What would your organisation need in order to involve more online volunteers?

I'd also like your feedback about these statements, telling me if you agree, disagree, or have anything else to add or edit:

I. The lack of widely-available online volunteering work in the EU, compared to, say, in the U.S.A., may include:
*   lack of support at charities, NGOs and other organisations for the engagement of volunteers (online or off); support includes staffing, knowledge and funding
*   lack of understanding regarding the value of volunteer engagement, in general (not just online) for a charity or NGO
*   lack of awareness or understanding regarding online volunteering
*   lack of availability of online tools at charities, NGOs and other organisations for the engagement of online volunteers (many organisations have prohibitions instituted by senior management or the IT department with regard to using social media, VOiP technologies like Skype, or cloud-based platforms)

II. Obstacles to leveraging online volunteering work into greater employability/career advancement in the EU may include:
*   lack of available online volunteering work
*   lack of awareness of this type of volunteering among those seeking/needing employment
*   perceptions among potential employers regarding the value of volunteering, online or onsite, for application to paid work ("it's just volunteering" or "you were just volunteering, rather than really working")

Annex E: Online and print articles about or addressing controversies regarding volunteers replacing paid staff

This annex is referenced in Section 3.7.

Spending cuts 'destroying big society' concept, says retiring head of Community Service Volunteers (CSV), 7 February 2011. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12378974, Accessed June 19, 2013

The 'big society' is collapsing under its inherent absurdity, 6 February 2011. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/06/david-cameron-big-society-coalition, Accessed June 19, 2013

Quote from article: "The ugly implication, habitual to champions of the big society, is that such unpaid civic activity does not support every established charity and volunteer effort." Liverpool withdraws from government 'big society' pilot, 4 February 2011. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-12357450, Accessed June 19, 2013

Summary: Liverpool City Council leader said government cuts threaten the future of many local volunteer groups. "Big Society' volunteering in long term care must not substitute for skilled paid staff", Feb 10 2012. http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/2012/02/10/big-society-volunteers-care-sector/, Journal Name: British Politics and Policy at LSE. Accessed June 17, 2013

"Volunteer workers could transform the long-term care sector. However, Shereen Hussein emphasizes that a greater understanding of the strengths and weakness of a voluntary workforce is needed in order to effectively identify the services it is best equipped to provide. The government should think of volunteers as a complement to professional staff rather than their replacement." Librarians in Southampton (U.K.) striking in 2010 over efforts to replace paid workers with volunteers, 12 July 2010. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10599564, Accessed June 19, 2013

Unison union branch secretary Mike Tucker says in this article: "Libraries need professional staff to provide a modern service to the people of Southampton. Untrained, unskilled, unreliable volunteers will not provide this service." A Charter for Strengthening Relations Between Paid Staff and Volunteers: Volunteering England and the TUC, 2011. http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-17329-f0.pdf

The involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff, and should not be used to displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service. • The added value of volunteers should be highlighted as part of commissioning or grant- making process but their involvement should not be used to reduce contract costs. UK Wants Volunteers to Make Up for Massive Public Service Cuts, February 09, 2011. Labor Notes. http://www.labornotes.org/2011/02/uk-wants-volunteers-make-massive-public-service-cuts#sthash.BlRsnUGr.dpuf, Accessed June 19, 2013

'Job substitution or volunteer substitution?' Alan Strickland (Volunteering England) and Nick Ockenden (Institute for Volunteering Research) 22 June 2011. http://www.cypfconsortium.org.uk/UserFiles/File/job_substitution_volunteer_substitution_ockenden_strickland_2011_06_.pdf, Accessed June 19, 2013

Un sindicato de Bomberos carga contra los voluntarios por negarse a acudir a Rasquera, 20minutos.es, http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1486502/0/, Accessed June 19, 2013. Summary: A union of professional fire fighters had harsh words against Catalunya volunteer firefighters for refusing to work on extinguishing a fire that burned 3,000 acres, as leverage for improvements in their working conditions. Los voluntarios de ambulancias, en riesgo (Ambulance volunteers at risk), 5 May 2013, 20minutos.es, http://blogs.20minutos.es/tu-blog/2013/04/05/los-voluntarios-de-ambulancias-en-riesgo/, Accessed June 19, 2013

A Civil Defence in a town near Madrid laments pressure by a private ambulance companies lead the state to eliminate volunteer involvement. Protección Civil. Copyright © 2012 Ayuntamiento de Cangas del Narcea. http://www.ayto-cnarcea.es/proteccion-civil, Accessed June 19, 2013

Civil Protection Volunteers do not replace or supersede intervention services, but collaborate, complement and support the actions of those and always request of citizens or administrations concerned. Bénévoles et salariés: alliés ou adversaires ? (Volunteers and employees: allies or adversaries?). http://bdp.calvados.fr/cms/accueilBDP/la-vie-des-bibliotheques/boite-a-outils/le-benevolat-en-bibliotheque/benevoles-et-salaries-allies-ou-adversaires, Accessed June 19, 2013. This online document asserts that "The presence of employees should not be a barrier to volunteering and volunteering should not be an obstacle to the presence of an employee… The role of the volunteer is not a substitute for a lack of staff but to be complementary to a team."

Le statut des collaborateurs (the status of employees), Gestion Associative (management associations), on the Associanet media, quoting UNEDIC Directives from 1996. Accessed 19 June 2013. http://www.associanet.com/docs/collabo.html

Volunteer activities are alleged unprofessional within the following limits:

- Volunteer activities in the framework of an associative movement should not replace staff who would normally undertake the administrative activities of the organisation in question, and associations are to avoid the recruitment of such personnel that would affect the payment of benefits.

- Volunteers should not undertake functions performed by a former employee of an agency, even if it is a non-profit and even if the functions performed are not paid.

- Never considered volunteers positions held in for-profit organisations.

Analysis: Balancing staff with volunteers, Third Sector, 20 September 2011, http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/Article/1092329/Analysis-Balancing-staff-volunteers.?dm_t=0,0,0,0,0, Third Sector Haymarket Professional Publications, Accessed June 19, 2013. Volunteers are replacing staff. "When charities are forced to make redundancies, some bring in more volunteers. Stephen Cook and Ben Cook discover that it's a sensitive subject in the sector, and Mark Wilding talks to three charities about how they're handling it."

Annex F: EU-based practitioners and advocates regarding Internet-mediated volunteering

This is a list of Europe-based practitioners of or promoters of Internet-mediated volunteering, having written or presented extensively about such. This list could be expanded via interviews with those charged with supporting Internet-mediated at their respective organisations in the EU (60+ listed in Annex B) and assessing the knowledge of such regarding the elements for success in involving online volunteers in various scenarios:

Rob Jackson (http://www.robjacksonconsulting.com) - based in the U.K. (England), founder of the UKVPMs online discussion group for volunteer managers in the U.K., formerly of Volunteering England and various volunteer-involving organisations and charities, trainer and writer regarding volunteer management, in-depth understanding of legal issues and trends around volunteerism in the U.K.

Mike Bright, Founder - based in the U.K. (England). He runs Help From Home (http://www.helpfromhome.org), a micro-volunteering initiative, as a volunteer himself. Bright has been involved in the micro-volunteering arena since 2005, initially as a participant in such virtual projects as Postpals (www.postpals.co.uk) and Distributed Proofreaders (www.pgdp.net/c/).

Ismael Peña-López (http://ictlogy.net) - based in Spain (Barcelona), researcher and lecturer re: the impact of ICTs in society (e-Readiness, the digital divide), especially in development (e-inclusion, ICT4D), and educational (e-Learning, digital competence) and political (e-participation, e-democracy) institutions. Early adopter, provided advice for the UN's Online Volunteering service and the United Nations Information Technology Service ICT volunteering initiative as early as 2002.

Jaume Albaigès (http://www.tecnolongia.org) - based in Spain (Catalunya). Escurçant la distància entre les TIC i les ONL/ONG / Reduciendo la distancia entre las TIC y las ONL/ONG.

Isidro Maya Jariego (http://centro.us.es/facpsi/isidro-maya-jariego/) - based in Spain (Sevilla). Experto Universitario en Gestión de la Innovación e Iniciativas Emprendedoras de Base Tecnológica. Profesor Titular de Psicología Social de la Universidad de Sevilla. Coordina una línea de investigación sobre Redes Personales y Comunidades. Translated & oversaw other volunteers translating the Virtual Volunteering Guidebook.

Rolf Kleef (rolf@drostan.org), based in the Netherlands, he is a founder of Nabuur.org, an online volunteering platform. He has extensive experience both as a manager of online volunteers and as a volunteer, especially in the context of international online volunteering.

Marzena Kacprowicz, e-wolontariat, e-volunteering initiative in Poland. The initiative has existed since 2009.

Hannes Jähnert <organisationsreferat@ehrenamt.de> - based in Germany, affiliated with the Akademie für Ehrenamtlichkeit Deutschland, organised a February 2009 day-long workshop and an evening meeting in Berlin with government officials regarding online volunteering, writes on his own blog about online volunteering.

Annex G: ICT4EMPL Internet-mediated volunteering wiki contents

This report represents the bulk of the information sought by the ICT4EMPL Future Work with regarding to Internet-mediated volunteering, employability and social inclusion. In addition, the author created a wiki for this part of the research project at http://ict4empl.wikispaces.com, serving as a publicly-shared knowledge base for resources used to inform this project and to invite further submissions of relevant information from any wiki visitor.

The wiki includes a full list of all online and offline literature referenced in this paper, as well as other literature that was used to inform this project. The literature cited on the wiki could play a role in supporting the growth of Internet-mediated volunteering in the EU, in terms of:

- informing policy discussions and decisions,
- informing and supporting other researchers,
- supporting organisations that wish to link online volunteering with goals regarding employability and social inclusion,
- supporting organisations in the development of online volunteering opportunities and effectively supporting online volunteers,
- supporting people in becoming successful online volunteers,

The content of Annexes A and B appear on the wiki in full. The report narrative and the case studies do not.

Wiki Contents

- More about the overall project and researchers
- About Internet-mediated volunteering
- **The information we are seeking / How to submit information**
- Outreach for this project
- Challenges to this research (obstacles faced in gathering information)
- Case studies (how organisations were identified)
- Online Volunteering-related recruitment or matching web sites
- Organisations that involve online volunteers in the EU
- Resources related to volunteering as a contributor to employability
- Resources related to arguments against and concerns about volunteering by unions/professionals in Europe
- Resources and research related to Internet-mediated volunteering (focused on, but not limited to, Europe)
- Resources related to telecommuting, virtual teams and remote management
- Legal status and regulations regarding volunteers
- Resources related to volunteer engagement and volunteerism in EU countries statistics, studies, volunteer centres, volunteer matching sites, sites for volunteers, sites for those that want to involve volunteers, etc.
- Online work sites for pay (rather than virtual volunteering sites, for no pay) – examples and studies
- RSS feeds for keywords associated with Internet-mediated volunteering
- Información en español, français and Deutsch.

Abstract
This is a review of Internet-mediated volunteering in European Union (EU) countries. It assesses the current status of such in EU countries and identifies key actors and stakeholders, drivers and barriers, uptake and usage, and potential challenges and risks for users, donors, policy makers and service operators. It reviews the early history of Internet-mediated volunteering, also known as virtual volunteering, online volunteering, micro-volunteering, crowdsourcing, and various other names, in Europe. This report also reviews possible linkages between Internet-mediated volunteering and greater employability and social inclusion for online volunteers, particularly young people. Finally, it identifies areas for EU policy development, review and refinement, and makes recommendations for future research.
Keywords:
Internet, volunteering, volunteerism, community engagement, virtual volunteering, online volunteering, microvolunteering, crowdsourcing, charities, non-governmental organisations, NGOs, employability, social inclusion (NGOs).

As the Commission's in-house science service, the Joint Research Centre's mission is to provide EU policies with independent, evidence-based scientific and technical support throughout the whole policy cycle.

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Key policy areas include: environment and climate change; energy and transport; agriculture and food security; health and consumer protection; information society and digital agenda; safety and security including nuclear; all supported through a cross-cutting and multi-disciplinary approach.

Publications Office