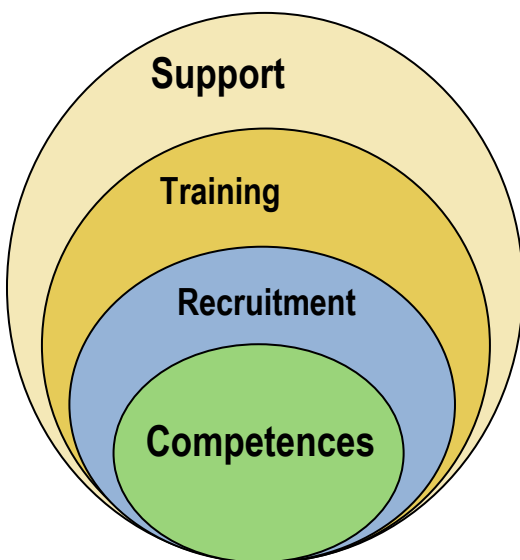




Mapping essential competences of culture volunteers
in sparsely populated areas

WP03

Survey Report



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1. Clarify the key competences for current, successful volunteers operating in sparsely populated areas.
2. Clarify the best way of engaging new volunteers across Hungary, particularly concentrating on rural communities.
3. Clarify the best training and capacity building support for volunteers
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I. Applied Methodologies

This research has been undertaken to determine the necessary competences required by volunteer investigating and promoting art and culture activities in sparsely populated areas of Hungary. The research aimed to identify areas of training needed to equip the volunteers to be able to provide local communities with opportunities of accessing and appreciating genres of art and culture participation. The research also identified volunteer progression routes for personal growth, fulfilment and learning.

Aim and Objectives of the survey

The overall aim was to map the essential conditions for successful culture volunteering in the sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage in sparsely populated areas to provide cross-disciplinary arts and culture opportunities for the local communities with an added value for civic participation, community bonding and local identity.

The objectives were:

- To outline the key competences of currently successful culture volunteers
- To outline good practice on how to engage cultural volunteers in sparsely populated areas
- To outline good practice on how to train culture volunteers in sparsely populated areas
- To outline good support from voluntary culture associations to the culture volunteers, including best practice standards.
- To outline good support from other local stakeholders to culture volunteering

Respondents of the survey

a. Learning providers:

The following adult learning providers were involved:

all member organizations of the Budapest Környéki Népfőiskolai Szövetség, Budapest, Pest county, Central Hungary region

- members, volunteers, learners of Magyary Zoltán Népfőiskolai Társaság, Komárom county, Central Transdanubia region



- Zalai Népfőiskolai Egyesület (members of the association and folk high school students), Zala county, Western Transdanubia region
- Bedekovits Lőrinc Népfőiskolai Társaság, Jászfényszarú, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county, Northern Great Plain region
- Bihari Szabadművelődési és Népfőiskolai Egyesület, Berettyóújfalú, Hajdú-Bihar county, Northern Great Plain region
- Bibó István Népfőiskolai Alapítvány, Kővágóörs, Veszprém county, Central Transdanubia region

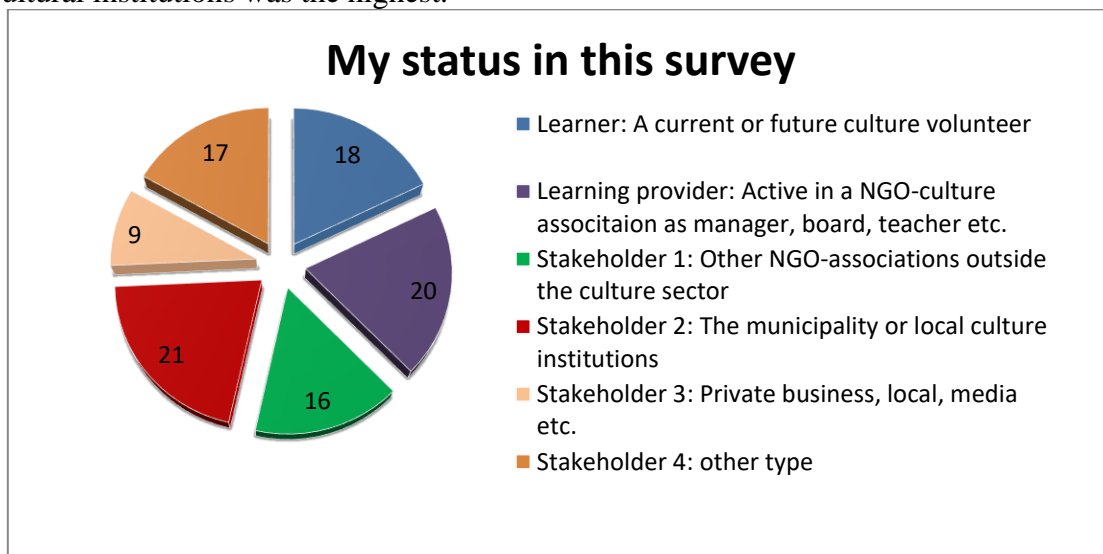
b. Learners: individuals, members, volunteers, learners of the above listed organizations were invited.

c. Other stakeholders:

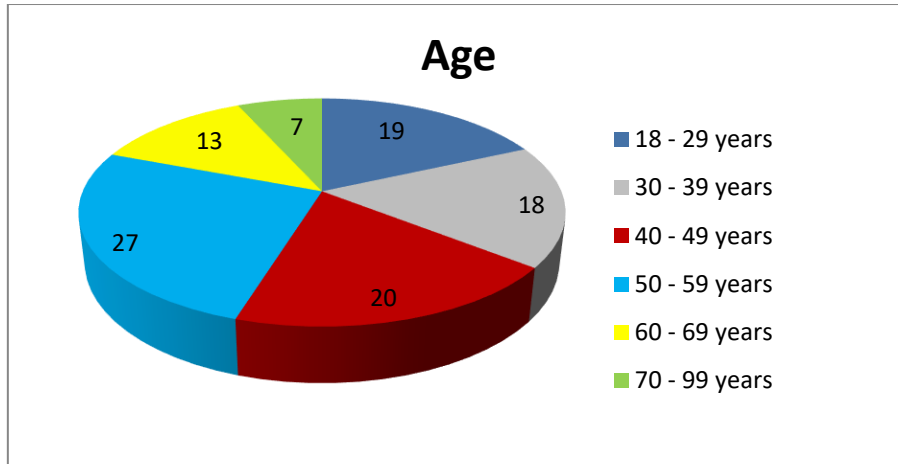
- representatives of local governments, cultural centres, libraries, local parish, fire fighters association as a civil society organisation, university students

2. The results of the questionnaires

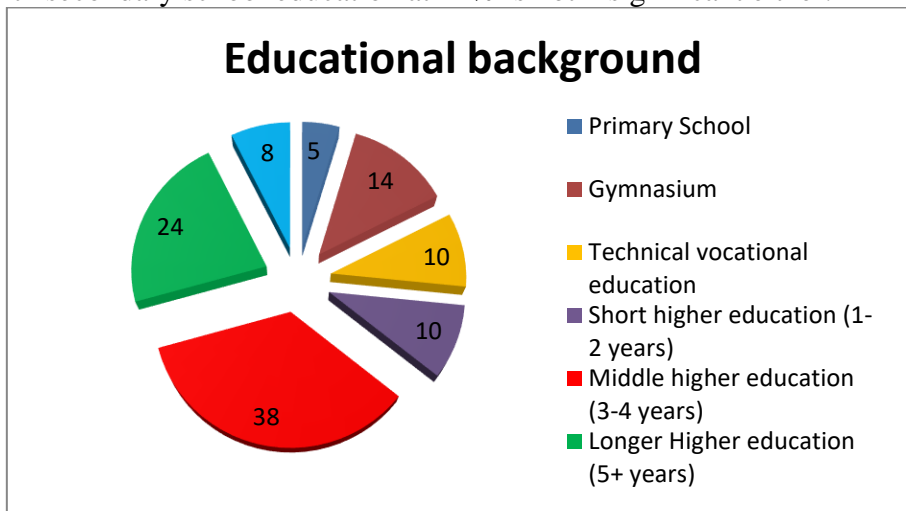
The questionnaires were filled out by 109 respondents in total, and the vast majority were Hungarian citizens. The status of the respondents was quite even. The number of private business representatives was the lowest (9%), the number of local government representatives (21%) and local cultural institutions was the highest.



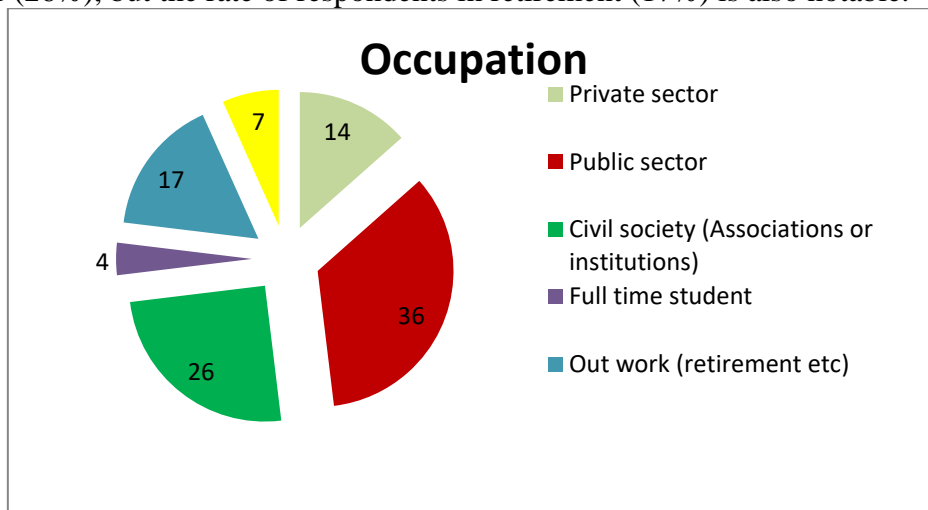
A greater number of women filled out the questionnaires, the proportion being 67% – 33 % in favour of women. In terms of age-group, most of the respondents (27%) belonged to the 50 – 59 age-group, followed by respondents from the 40 – 49 age-group with 20%, and the respondents from the 18 – 29 age-group came third with 19%. Overall, it can be stated that we received most of the responses from middle-aged or older respondents, although a good number of individuals from the 18–29 age-group also filled out the questionnaires.



In terms of educational background, the rate of respondents with higher education was the highest with a total of 62%. (Middle higher education 38 %, longer higher education 24 %.) The rate of respondents with secondary school education at 24% is not insignificant either.



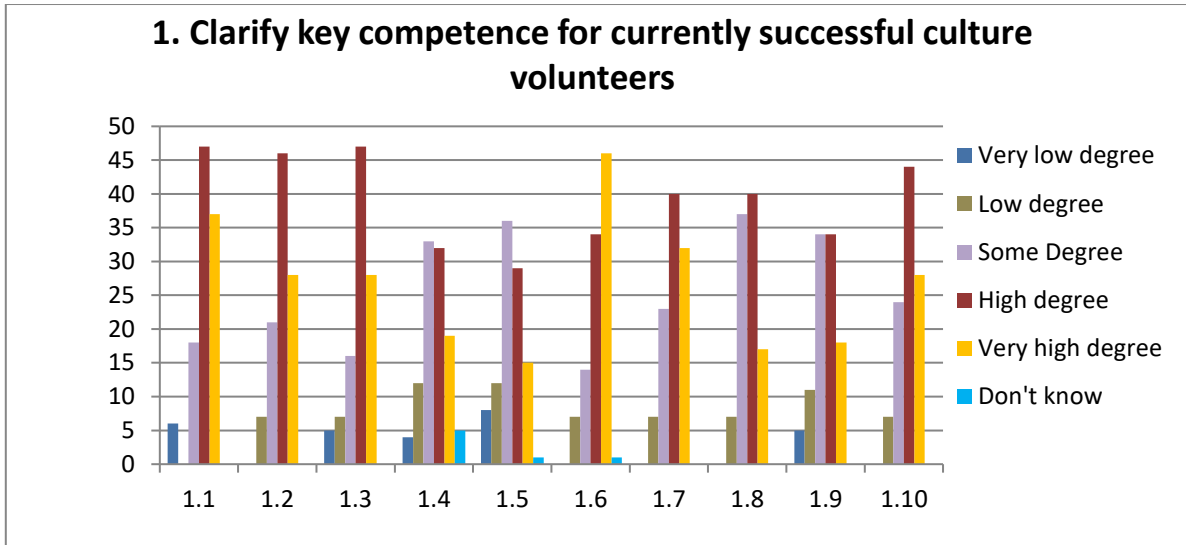
Regarding occupation, the two largest groups come from the public sector (36%) and from the civil society sector (26%), but the rate of respondents in retirement (17%) is also notable.





3. Key competences for successful culture volunteers

Assess statements of key competences							
Indicate to what degree you find the statements about key competences important or relevant for being a successful culture volunteers in sparsely populated communities? (Tick one box for each statement).		Very low degree	Low degree	Some degree	High degree	Very high degree	Don't know
1.1	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the influence of cultural activities in sparsely populated areas.	6		18	47	37	
1.2	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the local civil society activities as part of the overall activities in the municipality.		7	21	46	28	
1.3	The volunteer needs to know good practise on how culture volunteering in sparsely populated areas can promote civic participation, community bonding and local identity.	5	7	16	47	28	
1.4	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the cross-cultural sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage and their activities in the actual municipality.	4	12	33	32	19	5
1.5	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the other sectors of voluntary work in the municipality, such as the social, humanitarian, welfare, and sport associations.	8	12	36	29	15	1
1.6	The volunteer needs to have enhanced social and communication skills to engage and involve different social groups in the local municipalities.		7	14	34	46	1
1.7	The volunteer needs to have enhanced skills in planning and managing cross-culture activities and events in the local community.		7	23	40	32	
1.8	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of working with social media and internet communication?		7	37	40	17	
1.9	The volunteer needs to have good skills in finding extra money by fund-raising, seeking sponsors, etc.	5	11	34	34	18	
1.10	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of other local stakeholders that may support and/or be part of the cross-culture activities in the local communities.		7	24	44	28	



Responses reveal that respondents think that volunteers should be in possession of enhanced social and communication skills in order to be able to address different social groups living in the local community. 80% of the respondents highlighted this competence. The interviews also revealed that respondents believed it was also important that potential volunteers should be equipped with the ability to involve people (convincing skills). Next in the priority of key competences is the awareness of volunteers of what influence of the cultural activity has on the place where they live. Respondents ranked enhanced skills in planning and managing activities as the third most important key competence volunteers should possess. When we look at the number of respondents and the competences they regard as important to “a very high degree” then this category is ranked high. It may be concluded from the above that key competences listed in this section cover competences that are considered to be the most relevant. As shown above, there are three competences that were rated the highest: social and communication skills, knowledge of the local area, and organising skills. On the basis of experience it can be confirmed that art and cultural groups play an important role in creating local identity in sparsely populated rural areas.

Comments:

Open comments added to the section of successful key competences show profound understanding, as well as include repetitions and amendments, which also came up in the interviews. It would be worth reconsidering our selection of competences and see which key competences should perhaps be included:

- Cultural awareness
- Ability to organise
- Enthusiasm and the wish to take action
- Taking a role in team work
- Commitment to community life
- Curiosity
- Social sensitiveness
- Contact building skills
- Professional knowledge of the cultural work delivered
- Commitment to take action for the community



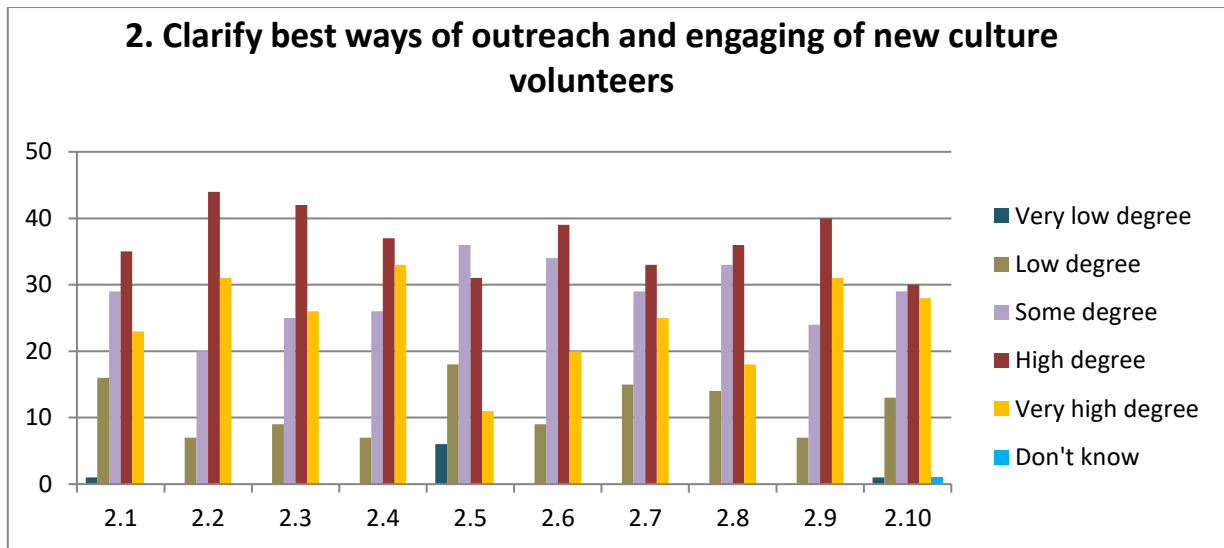
- Professional expertise and the knowledge of the local area
- Ability to adhere to and transmit authentically general social norms
- Respectfulness of values
- Foreign language skills
- Active citizenship
- Keen interest or even research in culture
- Openness, tolerance, flexibility, and courage
- Openness towards a variety of cultural activities
- Openness to accept other people's ideas even if these ideas differ from his/her conviction
- Adequate level of motivation
- Dedication
- Knowledge of the human character
- Easy adaptation to changing life situations
- Ability to receive criticism and conflict management skills
- Being unprejudiced
- Volunteers should have knowledge of voluntary activities in the cross-cultural sector, amateur art and cultural heritage in a specific local area.
- Possession of up to date information of a variety of cultural fields
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Adequate level of general culture
- Adequate level of general and background knowledge
- Problem solving skills
- Tolerant and integrative personality
- Empathy towards representatives of different social groups
- Ability to cooperate
- Practical skills in the use of social media and communication on the internet
- Ability to pass on experiences
- Ability to abandon old practice and adapt activities to emerging needs
- Inclusion, ability to address all age-groups
- Knowledge of relevant legal and financial issues
- Sense of aesthetics
- Willingness to cooperate with and some humility towards local organisations that have a long past in the local area in order to establish efficient and long-term cooperation

4. Recruitment of volunteers

Assess statements about outreach and recruitment of volunteers		Very low degree	Low degree	Some degree	High degree	Very high degree	Don't know
Indicate to what degree you find the statements about outreach and recruitment of volunteers important or relevant for promoting culture volunteering in sparsely populated communities? (Tick one box for each statement).							
2.1	The culture organisations need to provide elaborated presentation materials, where the possible tasks as culture volunteer are presented.	1	16	29	35	23	



2.2	The culture organisations should emphasise that the volunteer tasks is important for the local community and the common good (using an idealistic appeal)		7	20	44	31	
2.3	The culture organisations should emphasise that the volunteer tasks will strengthen the social network of the volunteer (using a social appeal)		9	25	42	26	
2.4	The culture organisations should emphasise that the tasks as volunteer brings personal competence development and an improved CV by offering extra training courses, mentoring, etc (the personal career appeal)		7	26	37	33	
2.5	The best way to recruit culture volunteers is by more traditional announcement means in the local news media and at notice boards in shops, libraries and community centres.	6	18	36	31	11	
2.6	The best way to recruit culture volunteers is by using the new social media, where key persons from the culture associations use their own social media network.		9	34	39	20	
2.7	The best way to recruit culture volunteers is to let the key persons in the local voluntary culture associations use their own contact lists and personal network.		15	29	33	25	
2.8	No, the best way is to involve other local NGO's in the recruitment, because then we get contacts to new groups which may have an interest to be engaged in the culture work.		14	33	36	18	
2.9	The culture organisations that try to engage new volunteers should mention a personal contact, which interested volunteers can call by phone or mail.		7	24	40	31	
2.10	The culture organisations that try to engage new volunteers should use an online enrolment site at their organisation's website s the first step.	1	13	29	30	28	1



The respondents chose two statements as most important in this section, the combined rate of responses reached 70-80%. There are three important messages from respondents:

1. Respondents find it important that future volunteers should be made aware that their personal competences will develop and they will have an improved CV. This can be regarded as an important motivational factor.
2. Respondents feel that it should be emphasised that volunteer activities are extremely important for the well-being of the local community. Some of the elements how common well-being could be strengthened were mentioned in the open comments: e.g. tackling problems young people face, collaboration, community building.
3. Respondents believe that it is important to be in informal touch with a contact person, that is a relationship based on personal trust has an important role in the recruitment of volunteers.

Additional comments given in this section highlight the following as essential:

to a very high degree:

- Interactive discussions
- Presentation of examples of good practice
- Acceptance, exchange, and utilisation of experiences
- Special attention to themes and problems relevant to young people
- Self-fulfilment
- Defining goals relevant to age-groups
- Issues relevant to a variety of social groups should be in the focus of an organisation
- Involvement of younger age-groups (school students, young adults)
- High quality activities that address issues relevant to people living in the local area
- Organisations should regard voluntary work as something really valuable
- Cultural (civil society) organisations are to set examples, pass on values, be personal and authentic
- Keeping in touch in person
- Opportunity for volunteers to present their work
- Good partnership
- Activeness and right disposition



- Creativity
- Global awareness to be drawn to the importance of culture and voluntary work
- Delivery of lectures
- Own network of connections of the staff of cultural institutions
- Collaboration and community building
- Motivation intellectually

to a high degree:

- Knowledge of the local area
- Communication skills
- Meetings
- Widening the network of connections
- Discussions
- Flexibility
- Knowledge of people's personalities
- Involvement and gaining commitment of leaders of the local church
- Gradual contact building with the local community and organisations, or own ideas cannot be "forced" to be accepted by the other partner straight away

to some degree:

- Professional practice

Additional aspects in recruitment that were not rated include:

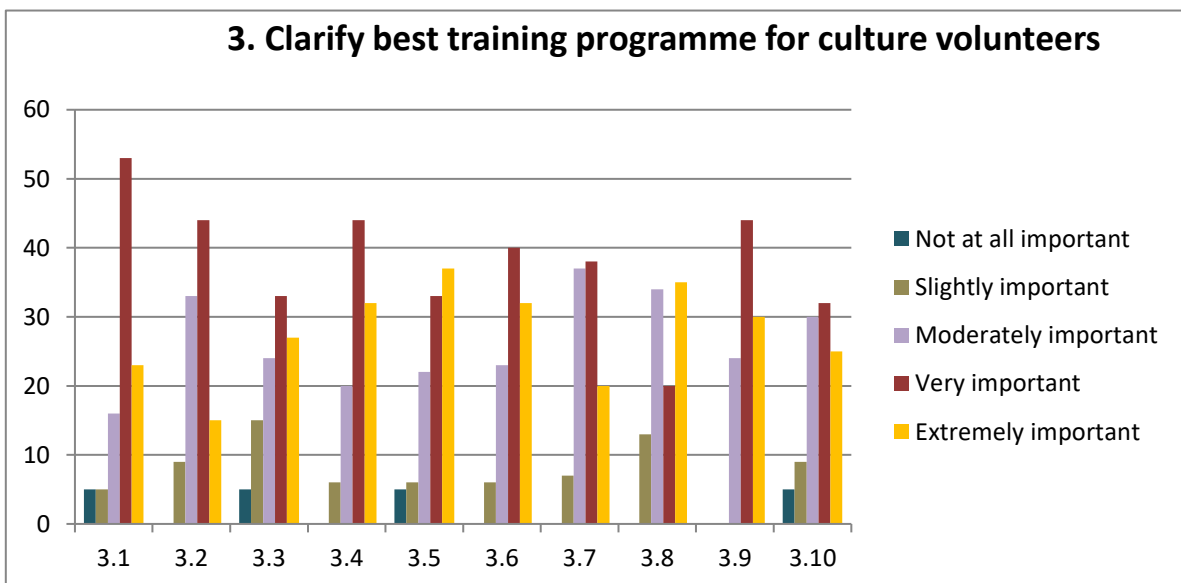
- Personal discussions with potential volunteers
- Vision for volunteers
- Work practice for university students
- Highlighting the importance of the connection network
- Importance of learning

5. Training programme

Assess statements about training programmes for culture volunteers		Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important	Don't know
Indicate to what degree you find the statements about the training programmes for volunteers important or relevant for promoting culture volunteering in sparsely populated communities? <i>(Tick one box for each statement).</i>							
3.1	The volunteers must learn to recognise and assess their key competence profile as culture volunteer (their strength and weaknesses)	5	5	16	53	23	
3.2	The volunteers must learn to articulate their possible needs and priorities for extra training events to gain the needed extra competences.		9	33	44	15	



3.3	The volunteers must understand / have a clear well-argued opinion on the main challenges for our sparsely areas to counter the trend for movement to the bigger cities.	5	15	24	33	27
3.4	The volunteers must understand / have a clear well-argued opinion on why the voluntary culture associations and their volunteers can make a difference.		6	20	44	32
3.5	The volunteers must have knowledge of the positive relations between improved culture activities and promotion of civic participation, community bonding and local identity	5	6	22	33	37
3.6	The volunteers must know the main activities of the voluntary culture associations and their interactions with other main stakeholders in the local communities.		6	23	40	32
3.7	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the other sectors of voluntary work in the municipality, such as the social, humanitarian, welfare, and sport associations.		7	37	38	20
3.8	The volunteer needs to have good skills in finding extra money by fund-raising, seeking sponsors, etc.		13	34	20	35
3.9	The volunteer needs to have enhanced skills in working with social media and internet communication?			24	44	30
3.10	The volunteer needs to have enhanced skills as project leaders in planning and managing cross-culture activities and events.	5	9	30	32	25





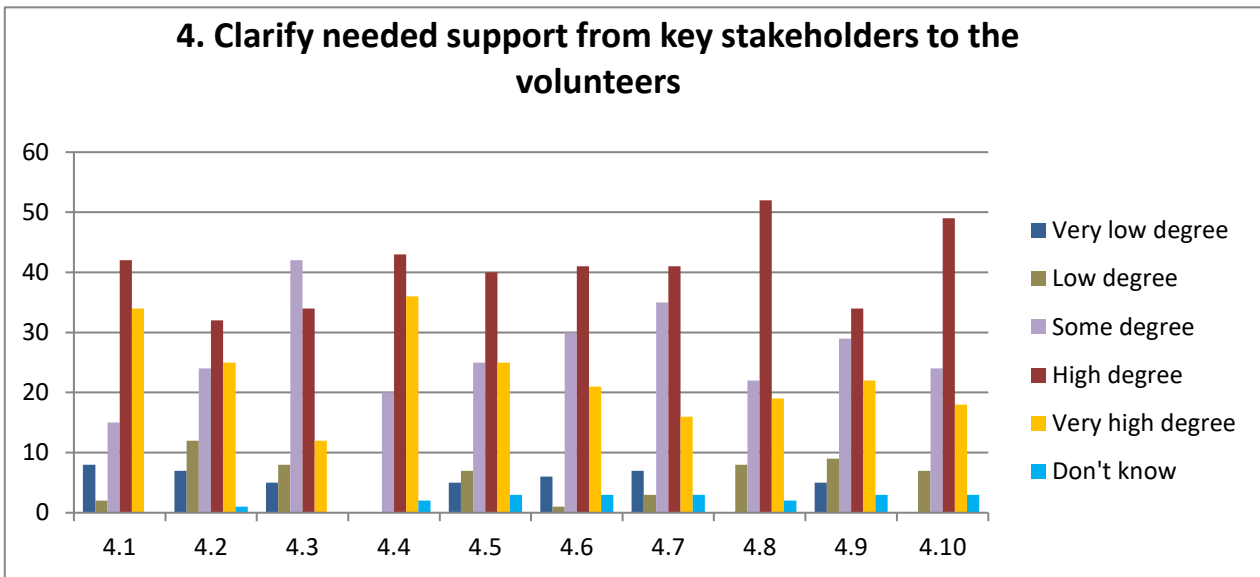
Respondents highlight three important factors in their expectations related to training programmes for volunteers. They consider it important to stress how training for volunteers can strengthen local identity and to be able to analyse how local cultural associations and volunteers can make a difference. These two responses place the focus on reinforcing local identity (permanence) and changing the local community at the same time. The third factor responses reveal as important highlights that volunteers need to be able to assess their own key competence profiles clearly in order to improve competences efficiently. Thus clear self-knowledge is indispensable for the training programme. It is a new, surprising and positive finding that respondents also consider it to be important to improve skills in fund-raising and seeking out funds.

6. Support needed by volunteers

Assess statements of key competences							
Indicate to what degree you find the statements about the needed support important or relevant for promoting culture volunteering in sparsely populated communities? (Tick one box for each statement).		Very low degree	Low degree	Some degree	High degree	Very high degree	Don't know
4.1	The volunteer needs support to complete fund-raising to get support to cost demanding activities.	8	2	15	42	34	
4.2	The volunteers needs help to secure the book-keeping, payments and accountant of the activities.	7	12	24	32	25	1
4.3	The volunteer needs support to solve some more practical tasks as rent of venues, making pr-materials, distribution materials, etc.	5	8	42	34	12	
4.4	The (new) volunteer needs some personal sparring or mentoring from more experienced culture volunteers or managers or consultants from voluntary associations.			20	43	36	2
4.5	The volunteer needs help to contact local authorities and get the wanted agreements or support from the municipality	5	7	25	40	25	3
4.6	The volunteer needs help to contact local culture institutions and to get the wanted agreements about support or collaboration about specific activities.	6	1	30	41	21	3
4.7	The volunteer needs help to contact the local business and commerce associations, the tourist bureau, or local media and get the wanted support or collaboration.	7	3	35	41	16	3
4.8	The volunteer needs help to get contacts with similar initiatives in other municipalities to exchange experiences and learn from each other.		8	22	52	19	2



4.9	The volunteer needs help to find and contact the appropriate nationwide experts, speakers and advisers in the field.	5	9	29	34	22	3
4.10	The volunteer needs help to secure an efficient promotion and dissemination of the results to other stakeholders outside the municipality and to the wider national audiences.		7	24	49	18	3



The overall pattern of the responses indicate that respondents think that voluntary work is variegated and manifold that requires variegated and manifold forms of support. This is also reflected by the rate of responses. However, responses tend to reveal three aspects here as well. Firstly, mentoring from more experienced volunteers can be very valuable help to volunteers. Secondly, it is important and necessary to have support in the form of fund-raising to finance cost demanding activities. Thirdly, it is important to secure the support of the local government (local authorities in general), which can be closely related to the second factor.

7. Reporting on the interviews

General remarks:

- The questionnaire formulates essential questions. The number of variables could be reduced.
- Such surveys are necessary in my opinion. (Values of responses may shift due to the understanding of the concept of culture volunteering.)
- It is important to clarify the concept of culture volunteering as it is not obvious to everyone.
- The “Background Information” section is not enough inspiring to individuals who volunteer to fill out the questionnaire. For instance, an introductory sentence saying that “Your opinion is important to us, please help us with your responses”, etc.
- The questions go into too many details.
- The questions sound too “expertly” (too professional in character). At the same time some types of questions related to e.g. empathy, contact-building ability, etc. are missing.
- It would be helpful to have an introduction to tell what the survey is about, and to have an address to send the questionnaire back (we might get a lot more responses).



- I did not know exactly what tasks and responsibilities would be delegated to potential culture volunteers.

Key competences for successful culture volunteers

- Requirements are important, and they develop and strengthen with good practice.
- Necessary competences depend on the type of tasks volunteers would be involved in. Some volunteers can only be involved in performing simple tasks, but they will do their tasks in an excellent way while others can be involved in more complex tasks. It is important to include everyone and to find the right activity they can perform. Therefore it is not possible to talk about general competences.
- The competences that are needed depend on the task to be performed.
- First of all the versatility and personality of individuals should be brought to the surface, should be developed, enriched, and polished. Anyone can become a cultural volunteer; it is only a matter of attitude. It is essential to perceive and understand things otherwise you are not authentic. It is only possible to reinforce and improve competences after these foundations have been laid.
- It would be a good idea to have classifications for volunteers so that volunteers could contribution would meet the needs of a particular institution.
- Knowledge of the characteristics of various ethnic groups and generations.
- More details of tasks and profiles would have been helpful to determine competences more accurately.

Recruitment of volunteers

- Personal connections and contacts could be important in this respect.
- It is forbidden to force anything, it is important to convince, to proceed gradually. To do good requires a lot of work and discipline.
- Recruitment is rarely successful through public announcements. Involvement in voluntary work is mostly successful through personal contacts. It is much harder to engage younger generations than those over 50. It is important to identify personal motivation (e.g. through the individual's children or friends) in order to try to involve an individual in voluntary work. Typically, it is communities that are good at creating values where adults are open to perform voluntary activities.
- The opportunity, way, and form of recognition for the work volunteers perform are missing.
- The positive effect of voluntary work on personal development cannot be stressed enough.
- Greater emphasis should be put on the psychological well-being of individuals who do voluntary work.
- Currently facebook offers one of the best forums.

Training

- Training programmes should not be compared to form education.



- The ideal training programme for volunteers improves all the skills formulated in the questions, but it is not possible to put such training into practice. The majority of individuals who do voluntary work do not attend any training programmes, they draw on their existing knowledge.
- The questions asked are only partially adequate to map training needs. It is a fundamental question what kind of volunteers we are talking about. It makes a difference whether we are talking about a volunteer who performs minor tasks in an association or about a volunteer who contributes to the management of an entire organisation by being e.g. a board member and/or an office holder.

What support is needed by volunteers?

- Collaboration is indispensable to achieve common goals.
- Support for volunteers is good if results show it.
- It is important to create and organise work conditions for volunteers, to identify tasks that fit their personal competences otherwise volunteers will not feel happy with the activities they need to perform. It is also important to provide accurate description of tasks beforehand and to give positive feedback, evaluation, and a feeling of belonging to a community.
- It is not the task and responsibility of volunteers to keep contact with authorities or to raise funds.

Summary and proposals:

Respondents:

The majority of respondents were women; mostly middle-aged; they are employed by government institutions or the representatives civil society organisations or pensioners; mostly in possession of higher qualifications.

On the basis of the presumptions of the questionnaire and the responses given, the training programme to be developed should take many factors into consideration.

A summary of what respondents highlighted in our case is given below:

1 Successful competences:

- social and communication skills
- knowledge of the area where they live
- ability to plan and organise

2 Successful recruitment

- highlighting personal development to motivate
- doing something for community well-being
- informal contact with an experienced mentor

3 Training programme

- strengthening local identity
- making a difference
- awareness of one's own competence profile

4 Support

- guidance of a more experienced volunteer
- financing cost-demanding activities
- supportive attitude of local governments and authorities