REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON THE
ILO MANUAL ON THE MEASUREMENT OF VOLUNTEER WORK

Warsaw, Poland
September 28-29, 2011

The ILO, EVMP, and the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy hosted a workshop for labour statistics officials and civil society supporters in Europe on September 28-29 in Warsaw. The aim of the workshop was to connect statistics offices with civil society groups, to provide them with training in the new ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work approach, to discuss the possibility for the implementation of the ILO Manual in these countries and to share state of the art developments among countries starting or considering the implementation of the Manual.

Participants reviewed the definition of volunteering provided in the ILO Manual and discussed on how to preserve the rigorous method that can grant comparability of data over time, while taking into full consideration the cultural differences, the specific needs of the country and the linguistic adaptation. Discussion also addressed the target variables, survey module, classification systems, and data reporting tables.

Adriana Mata, the ILO’s focal point for the Manual, provided clarifications on technical points and clarified certain global perspectives of the measurement of volunteering. She also addressed how volunteer work fits within the larger context of informal work, clarified fundamental concepts such as definitions (or lack thereof) of household and family. On this point, the need to clearly differentiate the beneficiaries of the voluntary work, between the different types of organizations, individuals, and family members, where possible, was stressed.

The workshop also provided the opportunity to hear from Poland’s Central Statistical Office which has implemented the ILO Manual and is preparing to release the final results at the closing conference for the European Year of Volunteering, announced for 1-2 December in Warsaw. Statistics officials had a number of lessons to offer their colleagues in Europe, including:

- Ensuring proper training and motivating of the interviewers is essential.
- Proxy response (answering on behalf of another member of the household, such as spouse) should not be used in the volunteer module. In Poland, proxy respondents provided twice lower number of volunteer activities, and most proxies are not even aware that they are lacking information about the person they are meant to be responding for.
- Identifying several types of organizations for respondents is a useful way to ensure proper identification of organization-based volunteering.
- The sub-sample of persons rotating out of the LFS is not the ideal group to interview, and should only be considered if strong motivating techniques are employed. When the rotating out sub-sample must be used, face-to-face interview which is felt to be the most appropriate method for the implementation of the Manual.
- Consideration should be given to the other types of modules being implemented simultaneously as they have the possibility to adversely affect the outcome.
- ICNPO proved to be a better way to code volunteering activity because it is a system that was developed for the nonprofit sector and reduced the incidence of inaccurate coding.
Other countries reported on the status of volunteer measurement, and their plans to implement the ILO Manual:

- **Hungary** has adopted the ILO Manual and has already translated and adapted the module which is being implemented in the third quarter of the regular 2011 Labour Force Survey.
- Italy’s statistics office (ISTAT) has agreed to adopt the ILO Manual approach in 2012 and is working with EVMP partner SPES to translate and adapt and test the module.
- **Montenegro’s statistics officials at Monstat** are working closely with the country’s volunteering community to explore implementation possibilities, and are hoping to make a conclusion in this regard in advance of a major national volunteering conference being held in January in Podgorica. They are also proposing the idea of networking with statistical offices and civil society representatives from neighboring countries as part of a regional effort to measure volunteering.
- **INSEE** in France appears closer to officially adopting the ILO Manual and we are awaiting word from them on this point.
- **Latvia** considered the idea of measuring volunteering for the first time.
- Although unable to participate to the Warsaw meeting, national statistical offices of the **Czech Republic**, **Slovakia**, **Portugal**, and **Spain** expressed strong interest to be kept in the loop in order to discuss possible implementation.

John MacDonald, the head of the European Commission Task Force on the European Year of Volunteering, provided closing comments to the group. He emphasized the relevance of measuring volunteering as a means of providing a lasting legacy for the Year of Volunteering, and brought the recent Communication issued by the European Commission, which endorses use of the ILO Manual, to the attention of the participants. In particular, on 20 September 2011 the European Commission officially recommended that:

“Research and data collection on volunteering should be encouraged at the national level. In this context, the use of the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work and the United Nations Handbook on Non-Profit organizations is recommended.”

The implementation of the ILO Manual by governments will address the problem of “insufficient data,” which the European Commission identified as one of “the potential obstacles to volunteering” in Europe. Noting that the contribution of volunteers “can be very important during times of economic difficulty and austerity,” the Communication emphasized that “better comparable data on volunteering in the Member States can help identify best practices and improve policy making.”

Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy representative Aleksandra Krugly then provided relevant excerpts of the EPSCO Council Conclusions, released on 3rd October. The Council Conclusions on the Role of Voluntary Activities in Social Policy invited Member States to:

“Consider encouraging production, publishing, and sharing of research tools / methodologies and results concerning voluntary activities and active citizenship, along with statistical data including studies on the impact of voluntary activities on the economic and social condition of the Member States and social well-being, also taking into account the gender dimension.”
And the Council invited the European Commission to:

“Analyse the system of existing indicators concerning voluntary activities and their role in relevant EU policies, taking into account the gender dimension, and consider where appropriate to look for statistical tools, e.g. the ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work, to ensure comparable data and indicate, where appropriate, current or new areas of voluntary activities which require closer cooperation with the EU.”

In the end, perhaps the most important outcome from this workshop was the formation of a nascent community of statistical officials and civil society partners working together to ensure that this vital resource is measured and allowed to blossom, and that will continue to grow as more countries join in the effort. The group agreed to keep in touch in order to communicate with other each other on issues pertaining to testing and implementation of the module, to continue to share technical resources and lessons from implementation, and to pool the results through EVMP in order to build a sustainable and comparable source of information on the scope and nature of volunteering. To that end, EVMP partners agreed to maintain a technical section of the EVMP website to facilitate this kind of information sharing.

A list of participants is attached.
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON THE
ILO MANUAL ON THE MEASUREMENT OF VOLUNTEER WORK

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