LESSONS AND

REFLECTIONS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

After carrying out a four-year longitudinal study on voluntary work in Spain and the internal survey *Así somos*, among organisations and volunteers from across our Network, we found it appropriate to reflect on our findings from this group of studies.

Our objective here is not to repeat data that has already been included within the reports. We do, however, intend to draw conclusions in light of this data which may be useful for the governing bodies of the Spanish Volunteering Platform (PVE - Plataforma del Voluntariado de España) and for the member organisation groups.

We intend to encapsulate the lessons that can be learned from our studies, going beyond merely drawing conclusions:

- Así somos (This is us) in 2018. A picture of volunteering in Spain.
- Voluntary Action in Spain 2018: Interest in Volunteering.
- Reflecting on volunteering. Organisations value community work.
- Voluntary action in 2019: Do you know the sustainable development goals?
- Volunteering in Universities. Reflections and proposals.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS OF VOLUNTEERING

RATE AND DEVELOPMENT

According to the data obtained in our series of surveys, we have found that the rate of volunteers in Spain (volunteering as defined by the 2017 law) is around seven percent of the population over the age of 14. In other words,

two million seven hundred thousand people volunteer in Spain, of which six out of ten are women.

The rate of those who are involved in any aspect of voluntary work, although this has decreased slightly, is close to 40 percent. This is substantially higher than the rate of volunteering.

There are two hypotheses that explain this finding. Firstly, while donating to an NGO[1] only requires a single monetary transaction, volunteering requires a sustained and personal commitment that cannot be delegated.

This is not intended to detract from the importance of monetary donations, but it does indicate that the commitment to volunteering is more intense, direct and constant and, therefore, more difficult. According to the *Asociación Española de Fundraising*[2] (AEFR), only a quarter of those who make financial donations also volunteer[3]. According to our data, the rate is even lower, at less than ten percent.

Secondly, we must take into account the hugely significant fundraising effort that third sector organisations have been making in recent years, which is reflected in our data (in relation to the question of whether this works with economic contributions) and in those of the AEFR.

One fact that we have found in our analysis is that active participation within our own membership base is low.

It could be said that both rates remain stable, with a slight downward trend in participation in general and an encouraging upward trend in voluntary action.

AGE AND GENDER

Successive studies highlight a clear feminisation of voluntary work. It would seem that stereotypes within society continue to impact on our uptake of volunteers, as more women than men participate particularly when the target groups of voluntary work are boys, girls and the elderly.

According to our data, men who volunteer have a higher involvement rate than women in terms of frequency and intensity. Therefore, it would seem that the difficulty, resistance or reluctance in men occurs in the recruitment process of volunteering, not in the commitment to it.

We understand that the balance of participation between men and women has been the focus of organisations, especially in these times in which the demand for equality is being firmly installed in our society.

Although we will return to this issue later, it is important to consider volunteering as more than just a form of help, but also as a commitment and a civic duty that opens up an opportunity for personal development[4], regardless of gender.

1. Non-governmental organisations, including charities and non-profit organisations

2. Asociación Española de Fundraising (AEFR) is a non-profit organization whose mission is the development of philanthropy and fundraising in Spain.

3. The 2018 donor profile. AEFR

4. In the process of volunteering, volunteers can expect to gain a mutually rewarding experience. This is known as the 'give-receive' dynamic.

In regard to age, we have had to make a few considerations. The first thing to be taken into account is that, proportionally, volunteering is more common among young people. The rate is very similar in all ages, but there are fewer young people in the general population in Spain. This is undoubtedly good news but it must be kept in mind that young people are in a period of experimentation and change which, in this case, should be used to reinforce the values of solidarity, cooperation and sustained commitments in the medium and long term.

In the same sense, organisations should be mindful of the participation potential of young people. Organisations should make the most of the curiosity and inquisitiveness that is experienced during this stage of life.

The second consideration refers to people over 65, who account for a lower relative rate of volunteers than other age groups. It is important to bear in mind that health and socio-cultural advancements are increasingly contributing to the deceleration of the aging process. This means that people are reaching what we consider to be old age, with more cognitive and physical abilities.

Therefore this group benefits from an increase in free time, experience and knowledge, all of which make volunteering a possibility. This is a segment of the population that requires specific attention to increase its involvement in voluntary work.

Although specific attention should be paid to these age groups, we should not lose sight of the demographic whose efforts account for a large segment of our volunteering base. This demographic refers to ordinary middle aged men and women who are in their most active stage of life. These people have families and work commitments and therefore can only make volunteering possible if it is organised in a flexible way.

VOLUNTARY ACTION

RECRUITMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

As mentioned earlier, it is important to contemplate whether organisations dedicate enough attention to attracting new volunteers or whether, as we have suggested, they are more focused on fundraising. While the funding of organisations is crucial, specifically their independence from the public sector, we believe that we should continue to reflect on this topic. It is obvious that volunteering is an integral asset in the ideologies and culture of our organisations.

Regarding the economic impact of voluntary work, in the absence of an in-depth study according to the ILO criteria and methodology[5], we can make an estimate.

Taking the data provided by the UN[6], voluntary work in Spain accounts for the equivalent of 240,704 full-time workers. If we multiply this figure by the average cost of a job position, according to the sector agreement, the financial impact of voluntary work amounts to 6,094 million euros, which is around two percent of GDP. If we take our data as a reference[7], this percentage would be slightly higher (around three percent), which would increase the financial impact of volunteering to 9,445 million euros.

The data demonstrates that recruiting new volunteers should be a concern (and also a specific job role) within organisations. This is because, irrespective of the economic impact, the social contribution and human dimension of volunteering form core parts of the organisations.

Our data confirms that the Internet and social networks have gained importance. However, this growth seems insufficient compared with the sharp rise in the use of all kinds of applications, which are increasingly used by the population as a whole, and young people in particular.

We believe that this recruitment method provides a large margin of growth, especially for smaller organisations that, with focused work on the network, can optimise resources. Cooperation between organisations and networking

5. Voluntary work measurement manual. ILO 2011

6. Report on the state of volunteering in the world 2018. UN 2018

7. This is how we are in (asi somos) 2018.

can be very useful. In this sense, the assignment and distribution of the VOLUNCLOUD[8] tool, developed by the PVE, would be highly recommended.

However, the effectiveness of social media may vary due to its fast and short-lived consumption. We can only achieve awareness through powerful messages. Therefore, these circumstances make it difficult to hold the audience's attention and also make it possible for key messages to be overlooked[9].

This means it is necessary to continue making the most of the *testimonial route*. This is where the experience of current volunteers is used to attract the attention of prospective volunteers at events and activities held by the recruiting organisations. This is the most frequently used recruitment method and should be used proactively in the recruitment process.

Here we refer back to the specific attention needed for two age groups that we have pointed out in previous sections.

We have already seen that the elderly is a significant demographic to explore. Perhaps the first thing to be done is to break down the category of 65 or older. We must create a clear criteria for this category as we currently do not have one. However, we understand that the youngest of this group are in a position to work with our organisations.

The main idea should link with the "give-receive" dynamic. By volunteering, this demographic has the opportunity to gain a rewarding experience, develop personal interests and continue to act in the present, which makes volunteering an opportunity for active aging[10]

Despite the common misconception that young people are disengaged and lack interest (it is known that each generation represents itself as the last in history to have common sense), our data suggests otherwise and we can assert that their participation in voluntary work has a strong foundation, which is supported by other sources, such as the INJUVE[11] and the Basque government.[12]

The data indicates that young people in Spain have a clear awareness of their surroundings (political, economic, social, environmental) as well as an interest in their own social inclusion. It is also clear that traditional participation institutions such as parties and unions are not making the most of their abilities in terms of prestige and level of trust. Other forms of social participation, such as community projects, are not being utilised to their full potential, all of which hinder the process of youth mobilisation[13].

Our latest research[14] shows that young people have social concerns and commitments. It appears that the fast-paced lives of young people, in which relationships and ties are more precarious, suggest that their involvement and participation may be more closely linked to social activism. This does

8. Voluncloud is an app that aims to link voluntary workers directly with those who need help https:// voluncloud.org/

9. https://www. publico.es/tremend-ing/2019/07/10/ me-encontre-a-una-persona-en-las-vias-del-tren-y-le-ofre-ci-mi-chocolate-hersheys-la-falsa-caridad-de-algunas-influencers-para-promocio-nar-marcas/

10. Active aging

11. Youth, Participation and Political Culture. IN-JUVE 2017

12. Volunteering and other forms of social participation in the CAPV. Basque government. 2017

13. The COVID19 crisis has reactivated neighbourhood support and self-help movements, movements to which we must pay due attention.

14. Volunteering in the university environment. Reflexions and proposals. PVE 2020

not exclude volunteering, although it requires more of an effort on behalf of organisations and greater efficiency in the recruitment and implementation of volunteer plans.

The truth is that NGOs, together with the Armed Forces and the Media, are some of the few organisations that are trusted among young people in Spain (according to data from INJUVE[15]). Therefore, we must use their affinity with these organisations to encourage participation.

When talking about young people, we must keep in mind that we are talking about *digital natives*[16], an aspect already mentioned at the time of recruitment, but which may be relevant when considering new areas of collaboration with organisations. In addition, it must be taken into account that young people have interests in and concerns about other areas, such as the environment, animal protection, refugees and minorities.

What should be the organisation's central message for the recruitment of new volunteers?

A lot of emphasis is placed, particularly among young people, on voluntary work being a framework for learning and personal growth. But, according to our data, the key message must be solidarity, participation and social commitment.

Notwithstanding other methods, volunteering emerges as the most direct form of social action, which allows us to put into practice the concept of fraternity to which article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights impels us[17]

This concept of fraternity should not detract from the value of learning and socialisation, but organisations should not lose sight of the fact that volunteers are, above all, allies in the development of their mission.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Firstly, let us turn our attention to the admission process. People who are already volunteer view the admission process as being quite simple. However, from the perspective of non-volunteers, the complexity of accessing the process is one of the main obstacles.

Without reviewing whether these complaints are real or simply just an excuse, there are aspects that can be improved. The first thing to take into account is the need for formal requirements. Whether organisations like it or not, these requirements must be met and the only solution is to encourage the administration to simplify the procedures (for example, organisations can, with prior authorization, request a criminal background check).

15. Youth, Participation and Political Culture. IN-JUVE.2017

16. "A person who is very familiar with digital technology, computers, etc. because they have grown up with them." https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/digital-native

17. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and, endowed as they are with reason and conscience, must behave fraternally with one another."

Meanwhile, organisations could make an effort to simplify their language. Too often when addressing the public, we tend to use technical or jargon terms, all of which are commonly understood by us within the organisation. However, to the outsider the following terminology may cause confusion and over complicate our intentions: "deed of commitment", "welcome plan", "compulsory insurance" or "voluntary work plan". In fact, these terms offer very little to the prospective volunteer and also give the impression that they are entering an administrative maze.

Ideally, the focus should be on how to go about achieving the objectives of volunteering, what you would like to do and how to do it. However, the more formal aspects, whilst remaining instrumental to our process, should be downplayed as they separate us from the aims of volunteering.

Although it may sound contradictory, it should also be mentioned that we have found that organisations, in a minor way, have not met certain basic requirements in terms of insurance and incorporation documents. This means that this voluntary work would be outside the constraints of the law. Therefore, without meeting these two requirements, a volunteer would be in an unusual administrative situation with the organisation in question.

Therefore, we understand that it is necessary to point out, and above all offer support with these issues. This support should be extended to small organisations who only offer a limited amount of resources and adequately monitor all administrative aspects.

This idea of collaboration must also be extended to other aspects of volunteer management such as training, quality management and particularly in equality plans. If volunteering is not distributed equally among men and women (as among the general population), it is necessary to take specific measures to make volunteering representative of society.

There is no doubt that regional platforms and the PVE play a proactive role in supporting smaller organisations, who cannot undertake these objectives alone.

This is made apparent in our study "Reflecting on volunteering: Organisations value community work", which reveals certain gaps in volunteer management which appear more prominent in smaller organisations.

In addition to the mandatory requirements[18] which are not yet universal, special attention should be paid to empowerment, recognition and participation in the life of the organisation, all of which increase the sense of belonging and bonding. Attention should also be paid to the reasons why people stop volunteering, as it is an opportunity to identify weaknesses and retain the social commitment of people who already volunteer.

18. Insurance, reimbursement of expenses

IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS

According to our data, volunteers are involved in organisations with a high level of frequency and intensity. Beyond economic impacts, upon which we have touched earlier, there is no doubt that, regarding this frequency and intensity, we are talking about people who have a high impact on the life and activity of organisations and the individual recipients of voluntary work.

It is, without doubt, a positive piece of data: a volunteer is not someone who sits on the side-lines, but someone who engages in the organisation. However, what this data demands us to look at is how to optimise the role of volunteers. That is to say, equipping them with sufficient tools including knowledge, training and mentoring so that their work isn't potentially useless, or worse, damaging, if it does not align with the principles and methodology of the chosen organisation.

In fact, without the work of volunteers, many of the organisations' activities would not be possible. Moreover, volunteering notably increases the social impact of organisations and is one of their core values.

Regarding the tasks carried out by volunteers, that of accompaniment stands out as one of the most prominent.

However, the frequency with which volunteers are assigned logistical or management jobs must be changed (as seen in the responses of both organisations and individuals). This is something that, in our opinion, does not comply with what is expected of volunteers (except in very specific cases).

This information must be a wake-up call for organisations to reflect upon whether, in more cases than is desirable, voluntary action is replacing a paid position. Volunteers being viewed as cheap labour must be completely eradicated; they are undoubtedly important human capital, but they are incorporated into organisations from a perspective of collaboration and social participation.

At the same time, we can look at the screening process that some organisations put young people through, whereby they have age requirements higher than those which are outlined by law.

It is true that, regarding age, the demands of certain activities can restrict the profile of adequate volunteers. For example, there are certain groups with which it is not entirely appropriate for children aged 14 to 16 to work, and they would probably require further attention (in terms of training or supervision) from the organisation.

However, it is significant that organisations are refusing volunteers with such profiles on account of their lower productivity, an action which does not comply with our philosophy and concept of voluntary work.

As we indicated earlier, focusing on young people and facilitating their access to volunteering seems like a good idea to us. This is because they appear to be a willing demographic and it also constitutes an investment for the future, as much for the organisations and the direct beneficiaries of voluntary work as for society in general, that this group is made to be more active, participative and civic.

Volunteer contribution is highly valued by leaders and professionals. They understand that, in addition to their consistent involvement in activities and programmes, volunteers are valuable to the development of organisations' missions. Beyond what we have already referred to regarding the social impact, volunteers further enrich the organisation's involvement and therefore become models to the recipients of their work. The use of "models" in this context does not have professional, but purely interpersonal and humanitarian connotations.

MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION

Volunteers exist because the voluntary work itself, due its supportive nature and the chance to provide help to others, is enough motivation to become a volunteer.
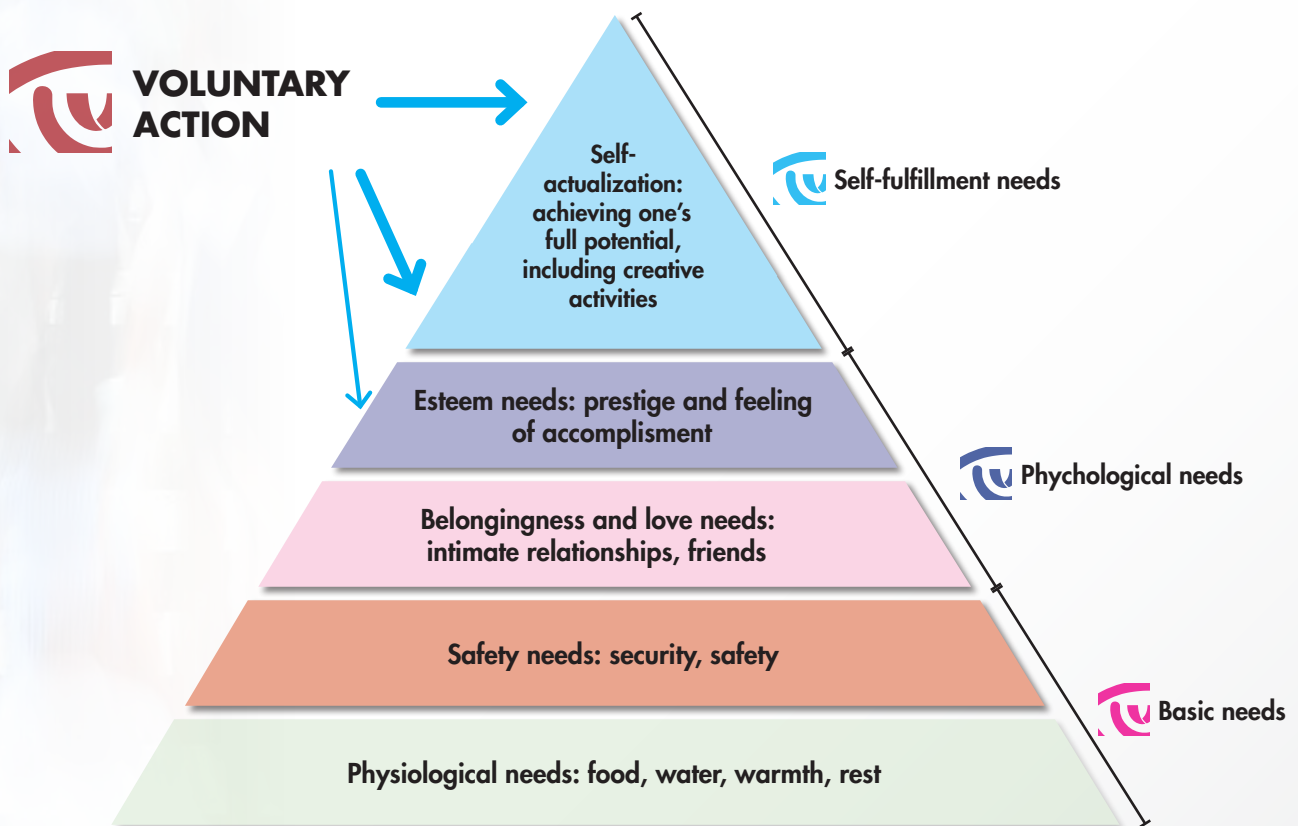
Furthermore, volunteers are satisfied with their voluntary work. Beyond the obvious point that they can simply stop volunteering if they are not satisfied working in exchange for nothing, it is interesting to note that their satisfaction stems from intrinsic aspects of voluntary work. That is to say, volunteers find their satisfaction in both the activity itself and the impact it has on the recipients.

It is important to highlight that certain pre-existing aspects such as religious beliefs or ideologies could be playing an important role as motivators. On the other hand, elements such as the social dimension of voluntary work are not primary sources of satisfaction. Naturally, due to the fact voluntary work is undertaken by a group of people (and usually for people), the social dimension will always be present. However, whilst it is one source of satisfaction, it does not equal the satisfaction gained from the voluntary action itself.

Thus, we have found that, in addition to having a positive impact on organisations and recipients of voluntary work, volunteering offers a solid framework for the personal development of those who are involved in it.

This is, in our opinion, a central aspect in the concept of voluntary work. Looking beyond our motto "Do voluntary work, change the world" (*Haz voluntariado, cambia el mundo*), what this emotional correlation between satisfaction and motivation suggests is that voluntary action offers an optimal framework for personal development.

Upon looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one can see how volunteering is related to the top section of the pyramid.

VOLUNTARY ACTION

Self-actualization: achieving one's full potential, including creative activities

Esteem needs: prestige and feeling of accomplisment

Belongingness and love needs: intimate relationships, friends

Safety needs: security, safety

Physiological needs: food, water, warmth, rest

Self-fulfillment needs

Phychological needs

Basic needs

Therefore, in its alloplastic nature, voluntary work is an opportunity for social change, to improve the quality of life of those who benefit from voluntary work. However, volunteering also has an autoplastic nature, as it presents the opportunity to develop oneself as a human being, which in itself is a highly valuable reward.

AND YET...

Being so valuable to organisations, voluntary work should have a prominent place in the management process. However, this does not happen, or at least not to the extent that it should.

Volunteer participation is not widespread within the inner workings of organisations. Moreover, voluntary work does not appear integrated as a strategic element in organisations, nor essentially linked to operational plans.

A very relevant problem is the under-estimation of costs that voluntary work represents for organisations; one would expect that managing volunteers barely impacts an organisation's resources, but upon reflection this is revealed to be untrue.

Anticipating the need for volunteers, recruiting, accommodating and training them are all processes that, above all, consume human and administrative resources. If this is not taken into account, it can be assumed that resources are not sufficiently allocated, something which can be seen in our data.

NON-VOLUNTEERS

THEIR PERSPECTIVE ON VOLUNTEERING

The 2017 study revealed a certain confusion between the conception of voluntary work, as is defined by the law, and the opinion of the everyday person. The former is, naturally, the official definition, thus more precise and closely defined.

However, put in the position of those people who are not directly involved with voluntary action, this confusion is to be expected, especially when we, the Spanish Volunteering Platform (PVE) and voluntary organisations aren't the only ones talking about volunteering or voluntary action.

In fact, it is not unusual to see volunteers participating in different activities on the news. This may include the search for a missing person, providing aid to a group of people that have suffered some type of accident or that have just arrived in the country in extreme conditions. In these instances, it is not always clear if this volunteering conforms exactly to the legal definition, and nor does it have to.

On the other hand, there are more and more companies that generate noise around volunteering through actions with an obvious purpose of corporate reputation. Their conception, design and development often stray from the true nature of voluntary action.

This reflection clarifies the need for our communication policy to influence the spread of the true meaning of 'voluntary work'. This comes with the obvious difficulty that, in a communicative sense, the word 'volunteer' fits well with any form of civic contribution and thus it is difficult to associate with a suitable definition. The reflection also serves to point out the possible threat posed by corporate strategies in promoting voluntary work, insofar as companies having a greater capacity than organisations to influence how voluntary work is viewed.

Therefore, the need for a brand positioning policy arises, thereby cementing our leadership in the field of voluntary work and how it is perceived. This policy should not involve confrontation - after all, how is it not possible to recognise the value of spontaneous collaboration when faced with any type of emergency situation? However, especially in the case of corporate voluntary work, it should signify differentiation.

That being said, it should be emphasised that voluntary work benefits from a good reputation and public image. The question is, could this ever not be the case? After all, how could a person or group of people that *does something for nothing* ever have negative connotations?

We could try to imagine a situation in which all those that contribute to an NGO take advantage of this opportunity to carry out hidden motives. But this is not the case. Volunteers inspire trust, they have a good reputation and recognised values.

It is important to note that the values associated with voluntary work align with both the motivation and satisfaction of the volunteer as well as our idea of voluntary action (we will return to this subject later on). The most remarkable thing is that, for the majority of people, voluntary workers are seen as caring and wanting to change the world, not due to religious beliefs or political motivations but simply in a demonstration of solidarity. At the same time, it is not suspected that they have hidden motives or interests, nor that they are easily taken advantage of in the name of social intervention.

We view this as a strength, and although the general population doesn't interpret voluntary work from a formal perspective such as it is understood within this organisation, there is a mutual understanding of its physical expression. It is this crossover that seems to us like a good starting point for any promotional or recruitment strategy.

SO, WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES?

The first thing worth noting is that around a third of people who do not volunteer would be willing to do so. It is difficult to assess whether this is a high percentage, but it presents, in any case, a clear opportunity for organisations to expand, and an important demographic towards which we can direct our efforts.

It is therefore advisable that we identify what prevents these people from taking the next step and passing from intention to action.

The first reason is a lack of time, which is understandable when considering long working days and family commitments. These kinds of tasks, and the movement between them, consume all of one's time leaving no chance to incorporate anything new.

One thing that is certain is that if you ask any adult, they will say they have no free time whatsoever. This is likely true, but probably because they spread every task across the entirety of their free time (the same thing would happen when someone moves to a new house because they need more space, but quickly ends up spreading their belongings throughout the house, thus once again having no free space). We cannot control time, but we can work around it. For example, we all operate with the knowledge that if presented with a big enough opportunity (a holiday, a theatre show or something similar) it would undoubtedly be possible to rearrange our plans to fit around this new activity.

Therefore, the interesting issue is making volunteering attractive enough to motivate that change in routine. We will attempt to outline an idea of this later.

Aside from the generic reason of 'a lack of time', the obstacles relate to having a lack of knowledge, and we would say, a lack of contact with social surroundings and voluntary action in general by a large part of the population, along with a lack of awareness of the need for this action and a perceived inability to make a difference.

This leads us to believe that this lack of contact is what prevents people from knowing what must be done to become a volunteer, or what to do once they have joined an NGO.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The public's knowledge of SDGs is still scarce, although there was an increase between the two points at which we conducted our surveys (May and October 2019).

Volunteers displayed higher levels of awareness, something that could be related to their greater social participation which, consequently, generates a greater interest in being well informed.

The majority of the population considers that the main bodies responsible for the advancement of the SDGs are the State, companies and institutions; however, young people attribute a more active role to NGOs.

For the general population, this role consists of raising awareness among citizens, which indirectly means awarding this group a highly important role.

This role fundamentally revolves around making demands and applying pressure, but there are some nuances.

In the case of the SDGs relating to dignity (e.g. the fight against poverty and inequalities), the majority of people choose to help via an economic option such as supporting ethical consumption or making donations. However, in the case of the SDGs relating to wellbeing and equality between the sexes, direct action takes precedence.

In general terms, with respect to the type of action citizens should take, women are more in favour of participating in organisations, volunteering, or donating. On the other hand, men prefer protesting, associating themselves with an NGO that is working towards these goals and boycotting non ethical or unsupportive businesses.

It is mostly young people who prefer voluntary work to further the fight against poverty, hunger and inequalities. However, even including voluntary work, this group particularly opts for participating in protests as their first choice to advance goals involving health, education, and equality for the sexes.

Volunteers are shown to be more demanding than the average person towards public powers in respect to carrying out the first set of goals (those related to the fight against poverty and inequalities). Meanwhile, in relation to the second

set of goals (those related to health, education, and equality for the sexes) the belief is that what particularly needs to be done is to actively participate in organisations that promote them.

On an individual level, opinions on how to further the goals tend towards actions of a smaller scale. Although previous responses appealed to civic responsibility, when one descends to a personal level, expectations are lowered and the possibility of increasing social participation levels drops. In the case of the first set of goals concerning dignity, the majority would be willing to cooperate with in-kind donations, buying in fair trade stores and by consuming more environmentally and socially sustainable products, even if they are more expensive. In relation to the objectives regarding well-being and equality, the main responses were to contribute to a change of attitudes and behaviours regarding equality and the improvement of healthy habits. In both sets of goals, the action that gained the least favour (although less so in women than in men) was an increase in taxes in order to finance the achievement of these goals.

In all cases, voluntary workers are more willing to contribute than the rest of the population, including paying more taxes, an option seldom valued by others. Perhaps it is the fact that volunteering generates social awareness, or maybe greater knowledge of the SDGs leads to a further sense of responsibility.

Thus, according to the data obtained, it is possible to hypothesize that being a volunteer makes a difference with respect to assuming responsibilities in order to move towards a more just and sustainable future.

IN SUMMARY

What should an entity truly and deeply committed to volunteering do? In light of the data our studies reveal, these would be some of the questions you would have to tackle:

...Giving volunteering a central role in the organization.

This means managing the volunteering cycle in a comprehensive way, from recruitment to exit.

Clarity in this management is what will allow the necessary adjustments to adapt to the university context.

...Include volunteering in its strategic plan and your management plans.

If volunteering is given this role, it must be reflected in all the management tools developed by the entity.

Volunteering cannot be unseen; If for volunteer organizations this is one of their core elements, this must be clearly reflected in all management support documents.

...Giving specific meaning to volunteering.

Volunteers have a clear and different role from that of other figures in the entity, a role that must be taken care of and used to the maximum, avoiding, in any case, that they replace a job.

...Give priority to its cause, mandate or mission.

In all contexts, entities must put their mission first, so that it is associated with it unequivocally and clearly, and can become a social reference with respect to it.

...Spread and seek adherence to its cause or mission.

As a first step for any type of collaboration, including volunteering, it is necessary, at the very least, to be sensitive to the cause. This also makes long-term adherence more likely.

The commitment to this cause has to be the hitch flag, the fundamental motivational element, since this is the case both for those who volunteer and for those who would be in a position to do so.

...Dedicate resources to volunteering.

Well, resources, especially human and organizational, are necessary to increase the base of volunteers, to keep the people who form it active and activated.

It is also necessary to pay attention to each segment of the population to obtain the best of each one.

...Integrate the SDGs

The 2030 agenda offers, in our opinion, an adequate frame of reference to guide its action and align it with that of governments and supranational entities.

Also in relation to its interior and, in particular, volunteering, with equality plans (gender, promotion of volunteering in groups at risk of exclusion) and sustainability in a broad sense.

Activating citizenship is, in this sense, a challenge and a necessity for entities, seeking the commitment of all and all in the development of the 2030 agenda.

EPILOGUE

So far this is what we have been able to extract from the set of studies to which we have referred. However, given the situation since March 2020, it is necessary to ask some questions that seek to introduce a reflection regarding what changes can occur as a result of the crisis of uncertainties which all of us have experienced.

VALIDITY OF THE 2030 AGENDA

The objectives, undoubtedly ambitious, which until now enjoyed high attention, although with a development not as widespread as necessary, are they going to stay in the center of political and social attention?

There are several risks to be observed. In the first place, that the urgent is not articulated with the importance needed and that economic recovery is done without a mind towards sustainability (social and environmental).

In this context, rights can become particularly vulnerable (equality in all its dimensions), pushing them into the background, branded as ideology.

The COVID19 pandemic, among many other things, has highlighted the vulnerability of our system, of a way of life that we believed was safe from otherworldly contingencies and that we could not even imagine being challenged like it has. Is this verification going to lead us to try and make our lifestyle better and more secure? Will we tend to isolate ourselves, even more so from underdeveloped countries, and thus avoid illnesses from these places spreading to us? The conclusion is, or should be, that there are no particular solutions. However, we may not have understood it well.

THE WELFARE STATE

The crisis has also taken a shot at the welfare state's waterline. So far the impact on the health system has been very evident, but in the short and medium term, the entire social protection system will also be put to the test.

It is plausible that a process of rethinking health is taking shape. This rethinking should be done in a broad sense, because we are increasingly seeing and proving how psychological and social factors have clear consequences on people's health.

The precariousness of the foundations of our production system has left many important social sectors fully exposed when faced with a situation like the current one, a situation for which there is no social protection agreed, established or developed.

In light of this new situation, what will be the role of the third sector? What new challenges is it going to face? How will it help rebuild the welfare state? What new needs should it pay attention to?

There is no doubt that this crisis is very bad for people who, due to their complicated personal situations, were in some process of social integration. But it is not unreasonable to think that we must also add new profiles of excluded people, victims of the precariat to which we have just referred.

With regard to volunteering, the good news is that citizens have mobilized to help people in need.

An important question, but one which is impossible to foresee, is whether that impulse of volunteering among citizens is going to be maintained over time or if, after the rush and once the sentimental burden associated with this situation declines, the spirit of solidarity also fades.

And, in that sense, we believe that it is the entities, even with the difficulties that this entails, who must take a step forward to capture, guide and channel the strength that society has shown in such difficult times.

THE THIRD SECTOR

In light of this new situation, what will be the role of the third sector? What new challenges is it going to face? How will it help rebuild the welfare state? What new needs should it pay attention to?

There is no doubt that this crisis is very bad for people who, due to their complicated personal situations, were in some process of social integration. But it is not unreasonable to think that we must also add new profiles of excluded people, victims of the precariat to which we have just referred.

With regard to volunteering, the good news is that citizens have mobilized to help people in need.

An important question, but one which is impossible to foresee, is whether that impulse of volunteering among citizens is going to be maintained over time or if, after the rush and once the sentimental burden associated with this situation declines, the spirit of solidarity also fades.

And, in that sense, we believe that it is the entities, even with the difficulties that this entails, who must take a step forward to capture, guide and channel the strength that society has shown in such difficult times.