



**VOLPOWER** |



# The effect of volunteering on empowerment and inclusion among EU and third-country national youth: An in-depth mixed-methods research

## VOLPOWER WP2 Final Report

December 2020

### **Authors:**

Heidi Flarer (Eurac Research)

Andrea Carlà (Eurac Research)

Marie Lehner (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Astrid Mattes (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Ursula Reeger (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

### **Based on interview material provided by:**

Austrian Academy of Sciences (Austria)

Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands)

EURAC Research (South Tyrol)

Glasgow Caledonian University (Scotland)

Irmo (Croatia)

Zavod Apis (Slovenia)

**VOLPOWER: VOLUNTEER AND EMPOWER: ENHANCING COMMUNITY BUILDING AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION THROUGH DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATION AMONGST YOUNG EUROPEANS AND THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS**

**VOLPOWER (821619)**

**Reference:** VOLPOWER deliverable No. D2.3

This research was conducted under the AMIF-funded project 'VOLPOWER: Volunteer and Empower: Enhancing Community Building and Social Integration through Dialogue and Collaboration amongst Young Europeans and Third-Country Nationals' (821619)

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: [volpower@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:volpower@gcu.ac.uk)

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## Executive Summary

This report summarizes the empirical findings of some of the data collection of the VOLPOWER project, which took place over a period of 24 months, in 2019 and 2020, in participating countries/regions (Austria/Vienna, Croatia/Zagreb, Scotland/Glasgow, the Netherlands/Rotterdam, Slovenia, and the Italian province of South Tyrol). It presents the results of a survey, conducted with a group of young people, composed by EU nationals and third-country nationals, who became part of the VOLPOWER project and engaged in voluntary activity within the formal framework of an organization. The research project investigated the impact of volunteering on empowerment and inclusion through a mixed-methods approach that foresaw two instances of data collection, one before the young volunteers started their volunteering activity in the project and one towards the end of their activity.

Findings show that taking part in VOLPOWER volunteering affected the intercultural understanding of volunteers and positively changed their way of perceiving differences. Results confirm that specific consequences and effects of volunteering are linked to the type and characteristic of the volunteering experience and highlight the importance of volunteering settings that foster “bridging social capital”. In these cases, volunteering indeed broadens social networks and facilitates new relations, which are believed to last over time. The VOLPOWER experience also contributed to volunteers’ human capital, fostering the acquisition of various skills, in particular communication skills. Learning processes furthermore unfold through the social interactions that take place during volunteering and include processes of empowerment, in particular since people were made more attentive of their weaknesses and strengths. These dynamics allowed young volunteers to better access the community where they live, contributing to a renegotiation of their sense of belonging. This becomes particularly relevant for persons with a migration background, whose migratory experience might have left them with feelings of loneliness.

In their practical implications, our findings support arguments in favour of governments promoting volunteering among the youth, both EU and third-country nationals. They also would support bridging forms of volunteering that foster intercultural interactions and unfold outside of certain communities. The importance of providing tools and identifying measures to foster volunteering and support volunteering associations to recruit youth volunteers with and without migration experience became evident.

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## 1. Introduction

Volunteering is an important aspect of today's society. It is estimated that about one billion people throughout the world partakes in one kind of volunteering activity or another (Manatschal and Freitag 2014: 208). Indeed, it is believed that “the number of people willing to do voluntary work is a ‘barometer of a society's civic health’” (Bedford, 2015: 464). Thus, many governments have supported volunteerism to foster trust and participation in the society, community revival, and social cohesion. Furthermore, volunteering is seen as filling the gaps left by the dismantlement of the welfare state fostered by the prevalence of neo-liberal policies that require cuts in public spending and the reduction of public provision of social services (Schnock and Atz, 2011: 18; Vacchelli and Peyrefitte, 2018: 14). Though with a certain degree of variation, volunteering is a consolidated reality in many European countries. Similarly, in the past decade the European Union has taken many actions to support volunteerism across its member states, ranging from the announcement of 2011 as the “Year of Volunteering,” to the establishment of the European Solidarity Corps to create opportunities for young people to volunteer as well as work, train, and run solidarity projects.

The role of volunteering in contemporary European society has been further stressed during the so-called “refugee crisis” in 2015, when volunteers played a key role in providing immediate relief to refugees and assisting their first steps towards integration. In this regard, volunteer actions not only have been a highly effective way of showing solidarity with migrants in the past years, but also still offer great potential to both EU and third-country nationals in terms of inclusion, empowerment, and social interaction. Not surprisingly, EU institutions consider volunteering a tool for favouring migrant integration as well as an indicator of successful integration (Ambrosini, 2020: 17). Indeed, various EU documents, such as the 2005 Common Agenda for Integration and the EU Commission's 2016 Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals, refer to volunteering activities with regards to participation and social inclusion.

In light of the importance given to volunteering, **this report provides insight into some of the empirical results of the VOLPOWER project, which aims at exploring the contribution of volunteering in sports and creative arts/culture to youth interaction and processes of integration and empowerment (between EU and third-country nationals aged between 18 and 27 years) in seven geographical contexts within the EU (Austria/Vienna, Croatia/Zagreb, Scotland/Glasgow, the Netherlands/Rotterdam, Slovenia, Malta and the Italian province of South Tyrol).** In particular, this report presents the analysis of part of the data collected in VOLPOWER Work Package 2 over a period of 13 months in 2019 and 2020. It focuses on the experience of a group of youths who were selected to perform a voluntary

activity within the (formal) framework of an organization in the respective VOLPOWER countries within a mixed-gender and intercultural setting.<sup>1</sup>

This report presents an in-depth examination of these volunteering experiences and how they have affected various aspects of volunteers' lives. The analysis aims at exploring different aspects of volunteering, looking in particular at how and to what extent taking part in VOLPOWER experience of volunteering in mixed-gender and intercultural settings has affected individuals' intercultural understanding and interpersonal contacts, skills and processes of empowerment, as well as sense of belonging. Secondly, gender issues are explored, along with some of the motivations for volunteering, factors affecting the desire to volunteer, and perceptions of the volunteering experience. The analysis is based on data collected through online questionnaires and interviews with the volunteers conducted in two waves, prior to and towards the end of the volunteering activity (Youth Community Involvement Survey 2 - YCIS2).<sup>2</sup>

The analysis addresses volunteering activities conducted in different geographical contexts in Western, Central Eastern, and Southern Europe.<sup>3</sup> These contexts represent a microcosm of the EU, reflecting the different European experiences with addressing migration and diversity. Indeed, it includes places with a long migration experience (Netherlands/Rotterdam, Austria/Vienna) and areas subject to more recent international migration (Slovenia, Croatia/Zagreb), as well as territories where recent migration patterns interplay with the presence of national minorities or peripheral nationalism (South Tyrol, Scotland/Glasgow). Furthermore, the research includes volunteering activities in large urban settlements such as Vienna as well as volunteering experience in smaller cities such as Bolzano/Bozen in South Tyrol.

Three caveats need to be mentioned: First, the concept of volunteering is vague and takes many forms, including a great galaxy of different types of activities such as, among others, mutual aid, self-help actions, leisure activities, and political campaigning work. Among the main elements included in various definitions of volunteering there are the aspects of "helping", "without compensation", and being

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<sup>1</sup> Although Malta was initially involved in the project as one of the VOLPOWER countries, due to insufficient data in terms of a longitudinal perspective, Malta was excluded from this analysis.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to YCIS2, within the VOLPOWER project, the Youth Community Involvement Survey 1 (YCIS1) was designed and implemented with the aim to provide a picture of young volunteering in the seven project countries. For the results of YCIS1 see the country reports available at: [www.volpower.edu](http://www.volpower.edu).

<sup>3</sup> It should be pointed out that forms and modes of volunteering activities vary from country to country, reflecting specific contexts and traditions, such as the involvement of the state in providing welfare services (Schnock and Atz, 2011: 17). For an overview of the country context in which the analyzed volunteering activities took place, see the country reports elaborated within the VOLPOWER project and available at: [www.volpower.edu](http://www.volpower.edu).



“freely chosen”. Furthermore, more recently the nature of traditional forms of volunteering seem to have begun changing (Schnock and Atz, 2011: 19). Whereas in the past volunteering tended to involve a long-term commitment with an association, today often we observe volunteering activities linked to specific projects that are more limited in time. On a more abstract level, it is possible to make a couple of categorial distinctions. In addition to the traditional division between secular and religious volunteering, it is possible to differentiate between formal and informal volunteering. The former refers to volunteering activities that occur within an organization or association, whereas the latter describes activities that occur outside of a structure or within one’s own household (Matschal and Freitag, 2014: 213). Furthermore, scholars speak of “bonding volunteering,” which “is carried out for the benefits of specific members or the entire social group to which volunteers belong”. “Bridging volunteering”, by contrast, “targets members of other social and ethnic groups” (Khvorostianov and Remennick, 2017: 338). Finally, looking at individuals’ motivations, research distinguishes between self-oriented volunteering, where volunteers stress reciprocity and mainly aim at benefiting and enhancing themselves mutually, and other-oriented volunteering that refers to “provide helping behaviors to others in need sheerly out of one’s altruistic responsibilities and humanitarian concerns” (Yeung, 2018: 812). The former is more related to volunteering in culture/recreation, environment, law/politics, and business or professional services; other-oriented volunteers are more likely to be found in health, social, religious, and other philanthropic services (Yeung, Zhang and Kim, 2018).

VOLPOWER and thus this report focused on secular formal volunteering activities carried out in the fields of sports as well as creative arts/culture. During the research for this report, volunteering was defined as an activity carried out throughout an association or organization willingly and without being forced or paid to do it. Most activities analysed here represent forms of bridging volunteering, concerned with other social and ethnic groups. VOLPOWER focusses on activities in sports and creative arts/culture, because these sectors by their very nature demand high levels of interaction between participants. Indeed, research shows that participation in creative arts enables shared experiences across youth groups and that sports forge intercultural dialogue and shared identities and also create role models (Harris 2016; Cole and Knowles 2001; Kay and Bradbury 2009).

Second, the volunteering experience gained during the VOLPOWER project was accompanied by a set of supporting activities organized for the volunteers by the project partners (see section 2). During the phase of data collection, it was impossible to separate the experience of the volunteering activity from that of the supporting programmes. Thus, the analysis of this report generally regards this broader

VOLPOWER experience rather than a single volunteering endeavour. At the same time, the broader experience has provided insight on how to better support volunteerism.<sup>4</sup>

Third, towards the end of the volunteering activities and before the second set of interviews/online questionnaires with volunteers, the COVID-19 pandemic started, affecting the project teams across countries at different times and to varying degrees. Although specific measures were taken to preserve data collection (see section 2), the pandemic might have affected some of the results. Trying to make the best of the situation, the respective empirical information provides a few insights on how the pandemic was addressed by volunteering associations and volunteers.

The report is structured along subject areas that were investigated within the VOLPOWER project. In general, results of the two qualitative interview waves guide the analysis that is then enriched by the results of the two quantitative questionnaires. The first part of each analytical section illustrates the attitudes and experiences of VOLPOWER participants in general. Afterwards, the results of the second wave of interviews are presented, providing deeper insight into the individual VOLPOWER volunteering experiences and relating them to the topics mentioned. The conclusion summarizes first- and second-wave results and the changes that have taken place regarding the given subjects. Before proceeding with the analysis, the following remarks situate this report in the existing literature on volunteering and its interplay with migration issues. Thereafter, the methodology of the research is presented in detail in section 2.

## 1.1 Review of research on volunteering and its intersection with migration

Scholars have long studied the phenomenon of volunteering from various perspectives. It is possible to identify three main trends of research focusing on the reasons, the effects, and the features of the volunteering experience (for a more in-depth overview see Wilson, 2012). First, researchers have explored why people volunteer (and why some do so to a greater extent than others), and in relation to this, which factors and variables affect this decision. It has been noted that in many contexts, volunteering tends to be more common among some categories of people, such as women, Caucasians, the well-educated, homeowners, and religious people in the USA (Choi and DiNitto, 2012). Here, scholars have pointed out various elements, drawing from psychological, sociological, and economic as well as identity theories. They have, for instance, looked at intrapsychic phenomena, such as subjective disposition, attitudes, values, morality, norms of reciprocity, and identity; furthermore they have considered socio-demographic features, such as gender, education, and income; ecological variables taken

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<sup>4</sup> In this regard, one of the tasks of VOLPOWER WP2 has been to elaborate a document of guidelines and policy recommendations to support volunteering and foster integration among EU and third-country national youth.

into account include social context, social network, and social pressure (Wilson, 2012; see also Hardill, Baines and Perri 6, 2007; Piliavin, 2010; Schmedemann, 2009; Grönlund, 2011; Van Goethem et al. 2012). Particular attention has been paid to religion and religiosity in their various aspects as a motivation towards volunteerism (Yeung, 2018; Van Tienen et al., 2011; Guo et al., 2013; Ecklund et al., 2013). In their analysis of characteristics associated with volunteering time, religious giving, and secular giving, Choi and DiNitto (2012) present these various variables in terms of individuals' human, cultural, and social capital. Human capital would refer to individuals' knowledge, skills, and tangible resources, whereas cultural capital comprises an awareness of own identity and understanding of other's identities. Social capital involves individuals' trust in others and their social connections – within a person's own group (bonding social capital) or towards other segments of the population (bridging social capital).

Second, scholars have analysed the consequences of volunteering, adopting different approaches, from measuring its economic values to considering its social, political, and structural effects. Looking at the societal level, research has highlighted several benefits of volunteering, such as enhancing mental and physical health, favouring a person's wellbeing, improving self-confidence and self-esteem, increasing social participation and social contacts, and gaining competences and professional and technical skills (e.g. Schmedemann, 2009; Sherraden, Lough and McBride, 2008). Here, some researchers have investigated how volunteering intersects with personal identity, how people relate with society, and they have considered people's sense of mattering and processes of empowerment (Piliavin, 2010; Wilson, 2012). Studies on the impact of volunteering refer, again, to different forms of individuals' capital (Smith et al., 2018; Smith et al. 2015). However, the extent of these benefits depends on the type of volunteering as well as on the specific features of the volunteer (Piliavin, 2012). Summarizing these two trends of research we witness a dual relationship between volunteering and the concepts of human, cultural, and social capital, where volunteering requires resources in terms of these three forms of capital and contributes to increase them.

Finally, studies have analysed the specific features of volunteering experiences and contexts, such as the relationship with colleagues or the volunteering associations and their staff, and organizational matters (see Wilson, 2012). Other scholars, such as Bedford (2015), have instead focused on the rules governing the volunteering sector.

Moving on to the interplay between volunteering and migration issues, this relationship has often been seen in problematic terms. On the one hand, since Putnam's seminal work on social capital, scholars have debated the argument that migration erodes social cohesion and thus the likelihood that people

would volunteer (Putnam 2007; Neymotin, 2014). On the other hand, the relationship is often considered to be unidirectional with migrants seen as passive recipients of volunteering activities (Ambrosini, 2020: 11). In this regard, scholars point out the role played by volunteering associations and third-sector organizations, which contribute to migrant integration processes in four ways: they offer services and social welfare, support the development of migrants' capacities, provide advocacy for migrants and their needs, and carry on research activities (Garkisch, Heidingsfelder and Beckmann, 2017; Strokosch and Osborne, 2017).

However, migrants volunteer as well and can act as active subjects of volunteering. Some scholars thus point out the need to shift perspectives and highlight the phenomenon of volunteering by people with migrant backgrounds in order to contribute to giving a positive image of migrants as a resource rather than as victims and persons in need, or worse, as a threat and as welfare abusers (Ambrosini, 2020; Weng and Lee, 2016). Yet, it has been noticed that migrants are less involved in volunteering compared to natives and the question emerges of how to fill this gap. This difference however disappears with increasing length of residence and in the second generation (Ambrosini, 2020; Khvorostianov and Remennick, 2017; Manatschal 2015; Qvist, 2018; Voicu, 2014). Furthermore, migrants are more likely to volunteer outside of formal organizations or to be involved in international organizations, religious volunteering and/or migrant/ethnic associations that primarily foster bonding social capital, i.e. connections within the own community rather than serving as bridges towards the rest of the population. There also are, however, occasions for developing bridging social capital (Handy and Greenspan, 2009; Khvorostianov and Remennick, 2017; Wilson, 2012; Witte and Davis, 2017). In their study on Switzerland, Cattacin and Domenig (2014) point out that migrants (or, using the author's words, transnationally mobile people) volunteer (in order of importance) for instrumental reasons, such as facilitating a professional career; for subjective reasons, i.e. to define their identity in relation to the host society, for gaining self-esteem and a local foothold in the new place; and for social reasons, i.e. to socialize with people. In addition to the common variables influencing people's decisions to volunteer, specific factors affecting migrants' involvement with volunteering are language proficiency, legal status, ethnicity, length of residence, and cultural heritage of the country of origin (Khvorostianov and Remennick, 2017; Voicu, 2014; Sundeen, Garcia and Raskoff, cited in Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014).

Prejudice and discrimination can hinder migrants' participation in volunteering. Further hindrances may include the fact that migrants might be more focused on material pressing needs, might see bureaucratic processes as a barrier, might not know how to get involved, and might be more sceptical about or less familiar with the concept of volunteering because of their experiences in their country of origin (Wilson, 2012; Handy and Greenspan, 2009; Manguvo, Whitney and Chareka, 2013;

Khvorostianov and Remennick, 2017; Ecklund et al., 2013).<sup>5</sup> In their research on Canada, Handy and Greenspan (2009) point out the importance of organizational factors and recruitment strategies of associations for fostering and facilitating opportunities for migrant volunteering (see also Boenigk, Mews and Kort, 2015; Wang and Handy, 2014). Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen (2014) instead consider the effects of integration policies on migrants' propensity to volunteer, arguing for example that policies that provide socio-structural rights foster migrant volunteering.

Research shows that volunteering provides several benefits to migrants. According to a study conducted in Belgium, volunteering for example lowers labour market discrimination against migrants, since employers consider it as a signal of better integration. Khvorostianov and Remennick argue that volunteering can serve "as a strategy or a path leading to gradual social inclusion" (2017: 353). According to Handy and Greenspan's analysis (2009) in religious congregations in Canada, volunteering benefits migrants' integration by fostering their stock of human, cultural, and social capital as well as reproducing ethnic identities. It provides an opportunity to have credentials recognised, acquire new skills, to learn and understand rules and norms of the society, make social connections, and be recognized and valued in society. In some aspects, such as employment-related benefits, recent migrants have profited more than did established migrants. Thus, volunteering has the potential to "attenuate the effects of relocation for immigrants as they seek to regain social and human capital lost in the migration process" (Handy and Greenspan, 2009: 956). At the same time, volunteering associations benefit from migrants' participation, since they can bring cultural opening, intercultural skills, and new stimulus and can help to reframe and rethink the activities of the organization (Ambrosini, 2020).

However, migrant volunteering has also been subjected to some criticism, especially when linked to civic integration approaches, which have become fashionable in many European countries. According to this type of approach, the responsibility of integrating is put on the shoulders of migrants who should prove their willingness to fit into the society, for instance learning the local language, culture, norms, and values. Manguvo, Whitney and Chareka (2013) for example point out that volunteering experiences of international students in the US have not only had positive, but also negative effects, the latter including social alienation and feelings of inadequacy. Turning to Europe, research shows that workfare volunteering, i.e., "a policy that requests welfare clients to volunteer in return for their welfare benefits," not only contributes to employment and empowerment of migrant women, but also disempowers them, for example by sparking feelings of being used (Slootjes and Kampen, 2017: 1902). Pasqualetto (2017) provides a negative reading of the Italian policy of fostering volunteering among

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<sup>5</sup> Volunteering activities are for example often imposed on the population in totalitarian regimes and might thus be connoted negatively.

asylum seekers, which the author considers as free work through which people have to show their commitment to integrate. The author argues that this policy lowers expectations and presents asylum seekers as adapting to lower and meaningless jobs. More general criticism links volunteering to the privatization of social services and considers it as unpaid work that takes advantage of migrants in the neoliberal economy. Yet, as pointed out by Ambrosini (2020) against this criticism, volunteering could be linked to the idea of “citizenship from below”. In other words, it is an act of practising citizenship and a tool in the process through which migrants can affirm themselves and acquire rights, recognition, and skills. Along the same line, even workfare volunteering has been linked to forms of active citizenship that fosters confidence and relieves social marginality (see Slootjes and Kampen, 2017).

This report builds on and complements this existing literature to provide a more comprehensive account of volunteerism and its role in society, focusing on EU nationals and third-country national youth volunteers in six EU contexts. Further exploring the intersections between volunteering, integration, and migration, we analyse volunteering activities in sport and creative arts/culture activities taking place in mixed-gender and intercultural settings. We explore their effects on young EU and third-country national volunteers and their human, cultural and social capital, looking specifically at intercultural understanding and interpersonal relations, acquisition of skills, processes of empowerment, and sense of belonging.

This research distinguishes itself from existing studies in two ways. First, most work on volunteering (in general and by migrants) relies on large surveys and quantitative methods and/or analysis conducted at a single point in time. However, as pointed out by Hardill, Baines and Perri 6 (2007: 401), a “more holistic” approach is necessary to capture the complexity of volunteering. Along these lines, this research applied a mixed method approach that combined an online questionnaire with in-depth semi-structured interviews with the volunteers, conducted in two waves prior to and towards the end of their volunteering experience (see section 2, “Methodology”). The research thus represents a sort of social experiment, where a group of volunteers was selected and followed over time with the intent of assessing and measuring the effects of their volunteering experience.

Second, most of the studies investigating migrant volunteering tend to focus specifically on this segment of the population, which is examined in isolation. Instead, regarding the categories of EU and third-country nationals, the VOLPOWER project adopted a mainstreaming approach, avoiding a distinction between locals and persons with migrant backgrounds as far as possible. Indeed, the dichotomy locals/migrants is misleading, since “the migrant population is stratified and naturalization processes blend populations as well mixed couples and births in the receiving society from migrant parents” (Ambrosini, 2020: 19). Thus, the project brought together youth, whether natives, refugees, or

first- and second-generation migrants, and analysed their common volunteering experiences. Even data collection tools (interview and questionnaire questions) avoided terms such as migrant, foreigner, national, EU nationals, third-country nationals, etc. as far as possible, also because of the different interpretations these terms might be given by different interlocutors. At the same time, being aware that mainstreaming might risk overshadowing specific needs of persons with migrant backgrounds, the analysis allows for an extrapolation of the peculiarities of the different segments of VOLPOWER volunteers.

## 2. Methodology

As stated in the introduction of this report, the VOLPOWER project aimed at exploring the contribution of volunteering in sports and creative arts/culture to youth interaction and processes of integration and empowerment (between EU and third-country nationals aged between 18 and 27 years) in seven geographical contexts within the EU (Austria/Vienna, Croatia/Zagreb, Scotland/Glasgow, the Netherlands/Rotterdam, Slovenia, Malta, and the Italian province of South Tyrol). To investigate the effects of VOLPOWER volunteering, the Youth Community Involvement Survey 2 (YCIS2) was designed and implemented in all the project countries. This section of the report presents the specific methodological aspects of the research.

### 2.1 YCIS2 – Mixed-method research on the effects of volunteering activity in a mixed-gender and intercultural setting

To investigate the effects of volunteering of young adults in mixed-gender and intercultural settings over time, it was important to adopt both a holistic and a temporal perspective. For this reason, the research design of Youth Community Involvement Survey 2 (YCIS2) was designed with two waves or phases of data collection to measure changes over time (pre- and post-VOLPOWER volunteering experience measurement) and to follow a mixed-method approach with qualitative and quantitative data collected in each wave. The focus on qualitative data was particularly indicated because of the research interest in feelings of belonging and in the perception of being or not being part of a community, but also because of the potential changes in the network of friends with whom volunteers speak about personal and intimate matters and, not least, because the contact with diverse people can be best

approached with the necessary openness of qualitative interview techniques. The quantitative measurement of the same aspects, on the other hand, allows for capturing changes over time and permits determining the extent of such changes.<sup>6</sup>

The data collection of each wave consisted of two connected parts: A) a semi-structured interview; and B) a quantitative self-administered online questionnaire. The first wave of data collection was conducted in late spring/early summer 2019 (May 2019 to June 2019), *prior* to the start of VOLPOWER volunteering activities. The second wave of data collection was conducted in spring 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 to April 2020), *after* VOLPOWER participants had been involved in volunteering activities with varying intensity and frequency over the course of approximately one year (on the impact of the pandemic see more below). Of the 43 initial participants,<sup>7</sup> 30 took part in both waves (the dropout rate reached 30%) so that the final analysis and the results presented in this report refer to the data collected from 30 VOLPOWER volunteers in six partner countries.<sup>8</sup>

The VOLPOWER volunteering activity in mixed-gender and intercultural settings in each country or region was developed by the project partners in collaboration with one or more volunteering organizations, active in the sports or creative arts/culture sector within their respective regions.<sup>9</sup> Participating VOLPOWER volunteers either came from within one of these chosen partner organizations, in this case taking on a new volunteering role, or from outside. The volunteering experience had to meet certain requirements so that the mixed-gender and intercultural setting was guaranteed for every volunteer. Indeed, the volunteers were carefully chosen to create groups with gender and intercultural balance (EU and third-country nationals) in each context.<sup>10</sup> The partner organizations were chosen among

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<sup>6</sup> This research design can be described as a “triangulation design,” in this specific case the “convergence model”, which represents the traditional triangulation of the results of two data sets collected on the same phenomenon, but with different methods. The results are compared only in the interpretation phase to find convergences and contrasts. The data collection and subsequent analysis take place simultaneously but separately for both methods and this clear division allowed us to rely on teams experienced in only one of the techniques without requiring a high level of knowledge of both techniques during the data collection phase. The purpose of this model is formulating conclusions on a specific phenomenon, well corroborated by the use of more than one technique, and well documented with qualitative descriptions and quantitative measurements (See Cresswell and Plano, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Excluding volunteers in Malta, whose volunteering experience is not analysed in this report.

<sup>8</sup> In the course of the project, some volunteers had difficulties to combine their daily duties (e.g., school, work, studies etc.) with an additional volunteering activity, which resulted in volunteers stopping their voluntary engagement and thus not participating in the second wave of interviews.

<sup>9</sup> The associations deal with sport or creative arts/culture. However, it should be added that some of them aim at promoting interculturalism and cultural diversity through their activities, or at addressing vulnerable groups, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and issues of inclusion.

<sup>10</sup> With the exception of Croatia, where volunteers were EU nationals, although two of them had dual citizenship (referring to a non-EU country).



those who involve, or were willing to involve, EU and third-country nationals in their volunteering activities. Finally, the volunteering activity should guarantee contacts between EU and third-country nationals. There were two possibilities in this regard: either the group of volunteers participating in a specific activity had a mixed constitution or the activity organized by the organization included interactions between the volunteer/s and external participants, creating a mixed environment. This last option was also necessary because the entire group of volunteers in each geographical context was not always involved in the same volunteering organization or in all activities at the same time. Except for these criteria and the clear mission to involve the VOLPOWER volunteers in their activities, the organizational design and the content varies strongly among the associations, single activities, and even individual volunteers.

## 2.2 Personal and structural features of the VOLPOWER volunteers

The 30 VOLPOWER volunteers who took part in the project and completed all parts of the data collection were distributed among six project partners. The final analysis included three volunteers for Scotland/Glasgow, four for the Netherlands/Rotterdam, five volunteers each for Slovenia and Croatia/Zagreb, six volunteers for Austria/Vienna and seven volunteers for South Tyrol.

**Table 1 – VOLPOWER volunteers: distribution in partner countries**

<b>VOLPOWER Partner</b>	<b>Number of volunteers</b>
<b>Scotland/Glasgow</b>	3
<b>the Netherlands/Rotterdam</b>	4
<b>Slovenia</b>	5
<b>Croatia/Zagreb</b>	5
<b>Austria/Vienna</b>	6
<b>South Tyrol</b>	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

Women were more strongly represented (60 %, N=18) and one third (33 %, N=10) of the volunteers has been living in their respective place of residence since they were born or for more than 20 years, while 20 % has lived in their place of residence for less than two years. 57 % (N=17) are EU nationals (EUN) (two of which born in a non-EU country) and 43 % (N=13) are third-country nationals (TCN) born in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Nigeria, Somalia, and Turkey.

**Table 2 – VOLPOWER volunteers: demographics**

		N	%
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	18	60.0
	<b>Male</b>	12	40.0
	<b>Total</b>	30	100.0
<b>Length of residence in the actual place of living</b>	<b>Less than one year/1-2 years</b>	6	20.0
	<b>3 - 10 years</b>	7	23.3
	<b>11 - 20 years</b>	7	23.3
	<b>more than 20 years / since I was born</b>	10	33.3
	<b>Total</b>	30	100.0
<b>Nationality (macro groups)</b>	<b>EUN</b>	17	56.7
	<b>TCN</b>	13	43.3
	<b>Total</b>	30	100.0

Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

Although the difficult attempt to create a balance of gender and broad groups of nationalities (EU and third-country national) among the volunteers was quite successful, there are major differences in the distribution of gender *within* the broad categories of nationality: In our group, nearly three of four female volunteers were EU citizens (and only 5 of 18 female volunteers were third-country nationals) whilst the proportion is the opposite among male volunteers, where two thirds (8 of 12) were third-country nationals (and only one third of the male volunteers were EU nationals). Because of this disproportion it must be kept in mind that, when considering differences based on nationality, women were proportionally better represented among EU national volunteers in our sample, while men were in the majority among third-country nationals.

**Table 3 – VOLPOWER volunteers by gender and nationality**

			Nationality (macro groups)		Total
			EUN	TCN	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>N</b>	13	5	18
		<b>% (within gender)</b>	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
		<b>% within EUN/TCN</b>	76.5%	38.5%	60.0%
	<b>Male</b>	<b>N</b>	4	8	12
		<b>% (within gender)</b>	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		<b>% within EUN/TCN</b>	23.5%	61.5%	40.0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>N</b>	17	13	30
		<b>% (within gender)</b>	56.7%	43.3%	100.0%
		<b>% within EUN/TCN</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

As defined in the introduction, the project focused on *formal* volunteering, defined as *an activity carried out through an association or organization willingly and without being forced or paid to do so*

(reimbursements are not considered as payment). As emerges in the interviews, almost every participant has gained (countless) *informal* volunteering experiences in the course of his/her life. In addition, as far as formal volunteering is concerned, only a minority of the selected volunteers had never been involved in volunteering before the VOLPOWER project (20 %, N=6) and those with experience also continued to volunteer with other organizations beside the VOLPOWER volunteering activity with the partner organizations. These precedent formal volunteering activities took place in various fields, ranging from humanitarian aid, music, language, foods, and sports to an engagement in the artistic field (film festival, dancing projects etc.). Here, the roles of volunteers varied from those of an organizational and administrative nature to being co-founder/board member of a voluntary association, or doing coaching and teaching. Many VOLPOWER participants volunteered in the field of “inclusion” – referring to refugee-related projects in asylum shelters, at NGOs which actively engage in refugee work, or related to schooling/education for refugees. Some volunteers with a migrant or refugee background volunteered as translators in formal and informal settings for other migrants or refugees with the same language background. These previous volunteering activities were highly diversified.

**Table 4 – VOLPOWER volunteers: prior volunteering experience<sup>11</sup> and type of volunteering engagement<sup>12</sup> in the project**

		N	%
<b>Prior volunteering experience</b>	<b>No</b>	6	20.0
	<b>Yes</b>	24	80.0
	<b>Total</b>	30	100.0
<b>Type of VOLPOWER volunteering involvement</b>	<b>Regular</b>	23	76.7
	<b>Occasional</b>	7	23.3
	<b>Total</b>	30	100.0

Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

The VOLPOWER volunteering activities, as already mentioned, were diverse in content, duration, and frequency – even within the same country and the same partner organization. Three out of four volunteers were involved on a regular basis (they volunteered weekly or monthly) and, in the case of a regular involvement, the average duration of involvement was seven months; one third volunteered for four months or less (N=7), but half of those who were regularly involved volunteered for more than seven months (N=11). The seven volunteers who volunteered occasionally were involved three times in average (with one volunteer active eleven times) during an average time range of three months (with a minimum of one month and a maximum of six months).

<sup>11</sup> Question: Have you ever been involved in volunteering besides the VOLPOWER Project?

<sup>12</sup> Question: How were your volunteering activities structured over time? Options: “I volunteered on a weekly or monthly basis.”, “I volunteered occasionally.”

**Table 5 – VOLPOWER volunteers: length of volunteering involvement in the project in months<sup>13</sup>**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
<b>1 month</b>	3	13.6	13.6
<b>2 months</b>	1	4.5	18.2
<b>3 months</b>	2	9.1	27.3
<b>4 months</b>	1	4.5	31.8
<b>5 months</b>	1	4.5	36.4
<b>6 months</b>	2	9.1	45.5
<b>7 months</b>	1	4.5	50.0
<b>more than 7 months</b>	11	50.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	22	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>	1		
<b>Total</b>	23		
<b>Mean: 7 months<sup>14</sup></b>			

Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

The average number of hours each volunteer spent in VOLPOWER volunteering activities was 52, although one third of the volunteers indicated having been involved more than 70 hours (half of which even more than 100 hours). In total, VOLPOWER volunteers have volunteered for more than 1,500 hours. It must be mentioned that although occasional volunteering implied a shorter time range of involvement – and fewer occasions – the average number of hours spent on volunteering are the same as for regularly involved volunteers; in other words, occasional volunteers were involved only a few times, but intensively.

**Table 6 – VOLPOWER volunteers: number of hours spent volunteering in the project<sup>15</sup>**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
<b>1 - 10 hours</b>	4	13.3	13.3
<b>11 - 20 hours</b>	4	13.3	26.7
<b>21 - 30 hours</b>	5	16.7	43.3
<b>31 - 40 hours</b>	3	10.0	53.3
<b>41 - 50 hours</b>	2	6.7	60.0
<b>51 - 70 hours</b>	2	6.7	66.7
<b>71 - 100 hours</b>	5	16.7	83.3
<b>more than 100 hours</b>	5	16.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	30	100.0	
<b>Mean: 52 hours<sup>16</sup>; Total: approx. 1,500 hours</b>			

Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

<sup>13</sup> Question: You volunteered regularly (weekly or monthly): How many months?

<sup>14</sup> Mean calculated from the frequency distribution with 10 months assigned for all volunteers in the category “more than 7 months”.

<sup>15</sup> Question: Now, with regard to the overview of your Volpower volunteer activities, please sum up your engagement: approximately how many hours have you spent volunteering? Please refer only to your volunteering activity. Do not include Volpower Group Meetings or Volpower Hubs.

<sup>16</sup> Mean calculated from the frequency distribution using the midpoint of the class. 120 hours calculated for the category “more than 100 hours”.

### 2.2.1 Annotation: COVID-19 and how it affected the project

With the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, which took different courses in the respective European countries, governments imposed various measures that affected volunteering partner organizations as well as their volunteers, requiring an adaptation of the volunteering activities initially performed by VOLPOWER participants. Especially during lockdown situations, as strict social distancing was required and public sites (e.g., soccer fields, art centres) were closed in some European countries, organizations and their volunteers were forced to find alternatives or, in some cases, to cancel their initiatives.

In all VOLPOWER partner countries, volunteering was no longer possible in their initial forms, which left organizations and volunteers with two options, either to pause their programme or to adapt to the circumstances. Both was done. In the first case, volunteering organizations whose programs were dependent on and carried out in public spaces or which took place in groups, decided to pause their volunteering programme temporarily during lockdown. In this case, volunteers were also largely without volunteering occupation. A few organizations used their social media websites to spread information about the latest COVID-19 measures announced; otherwise, volunteering programmes did not take place and/or had to end abruptly, e.g. for the VOLPOWER volunteers in South Tyrol. In the second case, organizations were keen to keep the organizational structure alive and tried to adapt their volunteering program to the greatest possible extent.<sup>17</sup> In general, online tools were increasingly used to maintain communication between volunteers and participants to send out (COVID-19 related) information, as well as to offer alternative activities for this period. Despite all the efforts that have been made by the organizations and the volunteers, it is certain that the total number of hours spent in volunteering in the VOLPOWER project (approx. 1,500 hours) has been affected by these difficulties and interruptions and could have been substantially higher. Data collection was also affected by the pandemic: In the second wave, the semi-structured in-depth interviews and the compilation of the

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<sup>17</sup> Such an adaptation process is exemplified by a Viennese sports and culture organization. Instead of having soccer matches on the field, volunteers within that organization set up online challenges via WhatsApp to keep in contact with other participants, who predominantly had a refugee background. **AT5** and **AT2**, who both volunteered with that organization, took on alternative tasks. **AT5** arranged her pre-soccer dancing (warm-up) sessions via live video stream in their female soccer WhatsApp group; while **AT2** translated the new programme of activities into Farsi and sent them out to other Farsi-speaking members via WhatsApp. Their volunteering team further focused on speaking out against conspiracy theories that were spread among participants by replacing them with reported facts and translating them into other languages as not every participant had good German knowledge. Another volunteer in South Tyrol, who volunteered in a theatre production, was supposed to continue her voluntary tasks at home during lockdown, namely creating and developing flyers for the play. However, she was not able to complete her tasks due to missing instructions from her organization during that time. These examples show that organizations reacted very differently to the pandemic situation and that volunteers were or were not able to carry out their volunteering activities depending on their individual motivation and possibilities.

online questionnaire took place at different moments and although the VOLPOWER project team members did their best to limit possible effects on the data, many interviews of the second wave had to be conducted online (via video conference tools or on the telephone).

## 2.3 Beside volunteering: VOLPOWER project activities offered to all volunteers

As part of the project, VOLPOWER participants not only volunteered within a sports and creative arts/culture organization, but they also participated in project-designed activities, such as a social media workshop in Zagreb for all VOLPOWER volunteers<sup>18</sup> (23 of the 30 volunteers participated) as well as in VOLHUB meetings in the respective VOLPOWER countries. The present report therefore also includes the experiences of the young volunteers made in these settings.

### 2.3.1 Zagreb workshop

In June 2019, a one-week social media workshop in Zagreb was also the kick-off event for the participating volunteers. Here, the participants from the respective VOLPOWER countries met and got to know each other for the first time. During the workshop, led by two social media trainers from Glasgow, participants performed specific tasks in relation to social media, photography, video making, audio design, etc. Developing social skills, such as teamwork, played an important role, as participants completed each new task in a different group constellation (constituted by individuals from different country groups). This encouraged the young adults to exchange personal information and ideas and develop a new approach according to each new task, based on their individual skills. Social interaction however went beyond the workshop setting, as participants continued to interact around sports, creativity, and informal communication. Experiences of young volunteers that were gained within that setting are also part of the empirical research and are thus included in the analysis.

### 2.3.2 VOLHUB

Another aspect of the VOLPOWER project design is the so-called VOLHUBs. These hubs were designed as social platforms of cultural exchange and knowledge transfer between volunteers, organizations, and academia. Since the scope of this concept was very broad, it was up to the VOLPOWER partners to decide how they wanted to design the hubs. In general, partners used these platforms, for instance as a cultural exchange programme, including activities such as joint cooking, theatre evenings, and dance and music events, as a creative self-discovery platform, with e.g., artistic workshops, or as an

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<sup>18</sup> These project-designed activities were fewer than originally planned. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions to travelling and social contacts, some of the activities were not possible, such as a leadership training session that was supposed to have taken place in Malta.

opportunity towards gaining information and education. As volunteers participated in the country-specific VOLHUB meetings, their experiences further contribute to this report.

## 2.4 Theoretical background of methods applied in data gathering

As already mentioned for the research design, we had chosen a mixed-methods approach with data collection at two occasions; within the mixed-methods approach, qualitative research was given a more prominent role. The qualitative research was complemented by a quantitative aspect.

Prior to the semi-structured interviews (Froschauer and Lueger, 2008), and the online questionnaire, interviewees were informed about the purpose of the research and were asked to sign a consent form in accordance with data protection regulations. The semi-structured interviews lasted for 45 to 80 minutes and were conducted in any of the national languages or in English; for the completion of the online questionnaires (provided in five languages)<sup>19</sup> the average time needed was ten minutes. The first wave of data collection took place in the form of face-to-face meetings; the second wave of data collection took place mostly online without physical interaction due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The structural principle of the qualitative data collection was to start with a main question, which intended to identify the broader spectrum of a respondent's personal experience/opinion. Interview instructions stated that here, the interviewee was not to be interrupted during his/her narrative. Subsequent sub-questions offered a guide to the interviewer for further inquiry, should the respondent be rather taciturn or should he/she obviously start diverging from the direction of conversation. Should the sub-questions remain unanswered in the narrative of the main question, interviewers were instructed to address them in the course of further questioning.

The interview guideline was structured along the core concepts of the VOLPOWER project, namely volunteering experiences, interpersonal relations, sense of belonging, gender aspects, and empowerment (see Appendix).

A central element of understanding the relation of volunteering and feelings of belonging, empowerment, and processes of community building was the investigation of social contacts. Here, we used a social mapping exercise, in which participants mapped their social contacts in a mind map. In the qualitative interview setting, participants were invited to sketch their most important social contacts by

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<sup>19</sup> Croatian, Dutch, English, German, Italian, Slovenian.

means of a mind map and explain their relations in the interview setting. As Greene and Hogan demonstrate, such mapping exercises can be developed into insightful psycho-social tools of analysis (Greene and Hogan 2005).

Our understanding of the concept of belonging was shaped by the literature on politics of belonging (Guibernau, 2013; Anthias, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Belonging was perceived as an individual's deliberate claim to membership of socially constructed collectives through processes of identification. Individual politics of belonging and the identification processes that express these politics are crucial markers of one's position within a community setting. Feelings of belonging indicate the effects of manifold processes of inclusion and exclusion (Kronauer, 2010; Ataç and Rosenberger, 2012) and allow to comprehend the interrelation of individual perspectives and the collective level of community. Questions dealt with individual feelings of belonging according to the concepts of inclusion and exclusion and in relation to the current place of living. As the research is interested in local community building, the spatial component of the question is important. A set of sub-questions explored conflict, co-existence, and personal wellbeing. These questions illuminated different angles of the complex concept of belonging (Youkhana, 2015).

The interviews addressed issues of gender equality, as this aspect was considered an important factor for sustainable community building (Wemlinger and Berlan, 2016; Tuori, 2007). Therefore, a set of questions was asked on the perception of gender roles and appropriateness. Rather than asking merely general questions, gender aspects were related to leisure and volunteering activities. This data enables us to relate changes in the perception of gender roles over time to volunteering.

As discussed in the pertinent literature, volunteering experiences hold the potential of contributing to the empowerment of volunteers, in particular among young people and marginalized groups (Banducci, Donovan and Karp, 2004; Liu, Holosko and Lo, 2008; Cicognani et al., 2015). To assess empowerment, the analysis builds on previous surveys that operationalize the complex issue of empowerment through questions on self-determination and decision-making processes (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005).

#### 2.4.2 Qualitative data analysis

VOLPOWER country partners were asked to summarize the interviews (one summary for each interview) of the respective participants and translate them into English. In addition, they were asked to add several quotes made by individual volunteers relating to each subject area, which were also trans-



lated into English. Then, summaries and quotes were coded using the computer-based analysis program Atlas.ti. Hereby, codes used were based on the thematic structure of the two-waved survey. Coded summaries and quotes were then analysed, applying thematic analysis (Nowell et al. 2017).

#### 2.4.3 Self-administered online questionnaire

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, a self-administered online questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire had a maximum number of 28 questions (depending on the combination of filters applied) and its contents reflected most of the themes addressed in the interviews (i.e. sense of belonging, personal empowerment, previous volunteering experiences, interpersonal relations), together with some questions on the personal characteristics and personal wellbeing of volunteers.

During the first wave, the questionnaire was compiled immediately before the interview took place with an equipped compilation location foreseen in every setting. The compilation of the second wave data (towards the end of the VOLPOWER volunteering experience) needed some adaption because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as no personal meetings for interviews and questionnaire completion were possible. Therefore the link was sent to the volunteers, who then completed the questionnaire at home with telephone assistance if needed. The first-wave questionnaire also contained a section on demographic information and on previous volunteering experience (not included in the second wave), whereas the second wave questionnaire included a section on the VOLPOWER volunteering experience (intensity and length) and some direct questions on the perceived effects of this experience on friendships, intercultural relations, and intercultural skills.

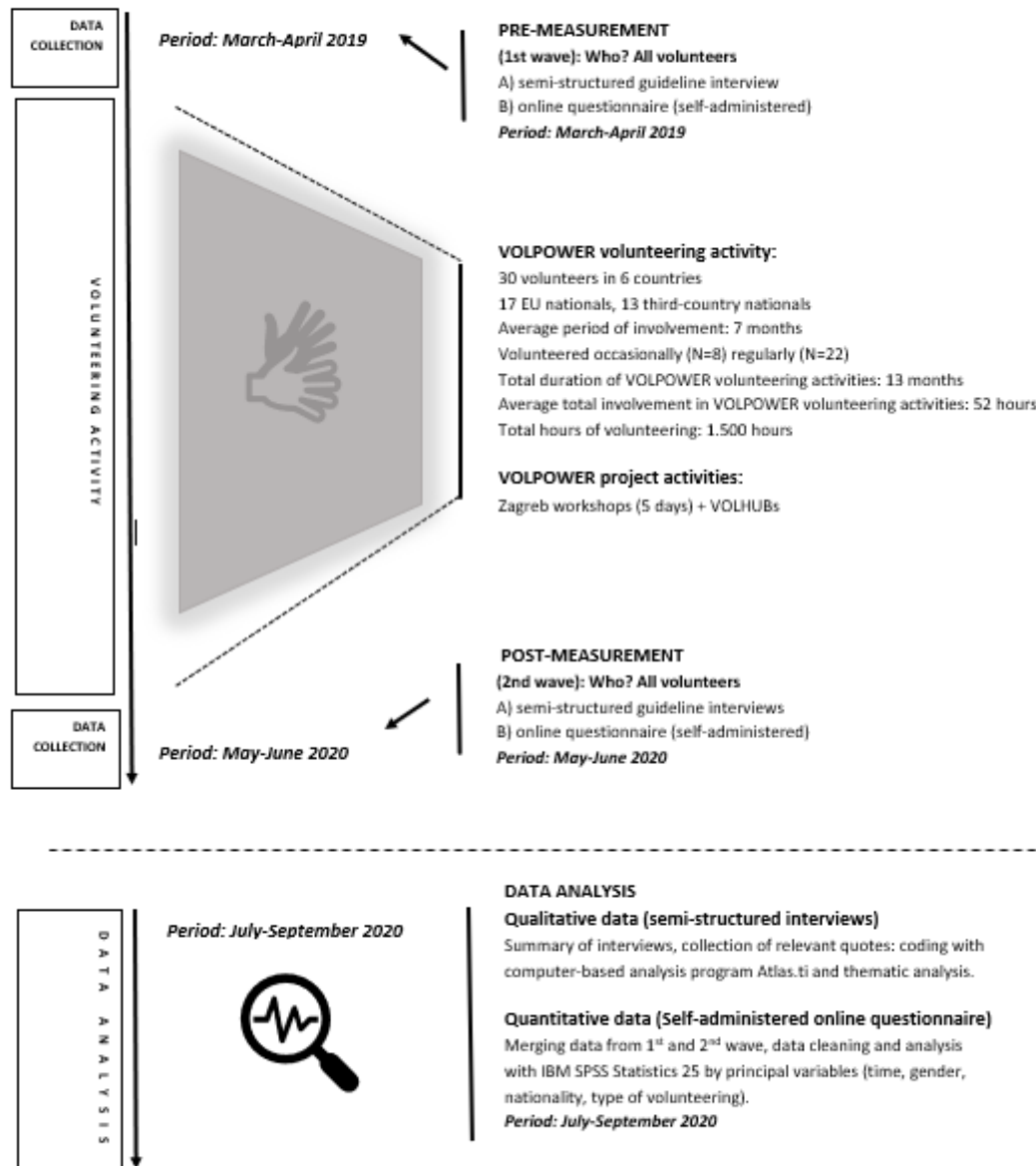
Whenever possible, the questionnaire was constructed with item batteries from established quantitative research that had already been tested; items have been adopted from sources such as the European Social Survey, the German Survey on Volunteering, and academic articles. Further information on the sources of the questions, the tested item batteries coming from other quantitative research tools, and the questionnaires used in the two waves can be found in the appendix.

#### 2.4.4 Quantitative data analysis

Once collected, the data sets of both waves were merged using the personal interview ID (an alphanumeric code assigned to every volunteer), and only volunteers who had completed both waves were considered for final data analysis. The software used for data analysis was IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The descriptive analysis contained the frequency distributions of all answers for the items that were designed for pre-and post-measurement. For this report, on questions regarding the direct effects of the VOLPOWER volunteering activity, differences have been analysed for gender, for EU nationals versus

third-country nationals, and for the type of volunteering (regular versus occasional). The results of the quantitative data analysis are presented together with the qualitative results and evidence.

**Figure 1 - Overview VOLPOWER research design (YCIS2 - WP 2): pre- and post-measurement with a mixed-methods approach**



### 3. Empirical evidence and results

This section describes the results and empirical evidence, starting with findings concerning the research focus on intercultural exchange through volunteering. This focus on diversity (EUNs and TCNs) was enhanced through the creation of intercultural settings. It has influenced young volunteers' intercultural relations to different degrees as described in the section "The VOLPOWER project, an intercultural experience?" In addition, the analysis reveals that VOLPOWER volunteering experiences have effects on friendship (section "Effects on interpersonal relations"), and that volunteering creates further social connections (networks) contributing to other contexts than that of volunteering, for instance, professional positions, project involvement, etc. These social connections enable young adults to learn from others (section "Effects on skills"), intersecting with processes of empowerment (section "Effects on empowerment") and feelings of inclusion (section "Effects on the sense of belonging").

#### 3.1 The VOLPOWER (volunteering) experience

##### 3.1.1 Reasons for volunteering and VOLPOWER experience expectations

Before commencing their VOLPOWER experience, young adults were asked about the motivational factors for their volunteering and their general expectations regarding the project in the first wave interview, including their upcoming personal volunteering experience within the framework of an organization, the Zagreb workshop, and local VOLHUB meetings.

Volunteers stated individual/personal and societal reasons as motivational factors for starting on a voluntary activity. This might include learning a new set of skills and finding new friends or, in case of disagreement with the current political agenda (e.g., discontent with the way in which the government had addressed refugee support), putting in an active effort towards helping to shape societal conditions. Especially young volunteers with a migrant or refugee background highlight their intermediate (cultural) status as important motivational factor for volunteering. Volunteering thus gives them the opportunity towards supporting people who are in similar positions (adaptation process to a country of migration) and further enables them to be a good role model to others, showing that inclusion is possible without giving up one's own cultural background(s). Thus, volunteers express mostly self-oriented motivations, according to which volunteering is not a one-sided, but rather a reciprocal effort - contributing something in order to receive something in return. This motivates young adults to engage in voluntary activities, gaining whether it be a new job position, a new set of skills, a social network of friends, or free dancing lessons.

The most frequently mentioned topics concerning their expectations of the project included personal growth, intercultural understanding, social interaction that leads to a support system and/or friendship, the acquirement of different sets of skills, feelings of belonging, and legal benefits.

### 3.1.2 VOLPOWER volunteering: roles and activities

In general, participants volunteered for periods ranging between 1 and 13 months, and as described previously, individual volunteering periods varied among VOLPOWER volunteers, as some needed more time to find a suitable volunteer position, or had changed their voluntary role and organization due to personal reasons or time limitations encountered in the course of the project. If volunteers had not yet been embedded in an organization or a voluntary role at the beginning of the project, new (VOLPOWER partner) organizations or voluntary positions were either mediated by the VOLPOWER staff, or participants selected those for themselves. VOLPOWER partner organizations operate in the sports and creative arts/culture sector (with exception of one participant, who volunteered in a home for the elderly). The VOLPOWER volunteering activities ranged from training a soccer team and teaching circus skills to children as well as helping with the planning and running of events and other organizational aspects of the associations' activities, to organizing a theatre performance. People often chose new activities in relation to the personal skills that they initially brought with them into the organizational team. Those volunteers who for instance had skills in soccer, dancing, acting, artistry, or language, predominantly volunteered as a coach and thus fulfilled a teaching role towards others. An Austrian volunteer describes her role as follows:

(...) I helped as a co-trainer, because it became more than that, because people [professional soccer trainers] sometimes don't have the time to do the training, so I am there as co-trainer. For example, I was always there while running [warm up before the soccer match] and I always tried to motivate people [players] to do something. In the past, maybe six months ago, it was only one day a week and it was training in the hall, but then, from January on, the training was also outside, on the meadow or on the artificial grass, that's how it has changed (...) **(AT2)**.

Other volunteers, who were more familiar with technical skills in social media, photography, or video making, were more likely to take on an administrative, yet creative role. Nevertheless, most volunteering roles had no linear definition, and areas of activities overlapped. A volunteer from Rotterdam, for instance, has started volunteering at a Hip-Hop club in 2012, where she has volunteered for one shift per week. This entailed working behind the counter to welcome students or visitors when they arrived. In addition, she organized discussion evenings at the club, as well as events in the broader dancing scene **(ROT2)**. A few volunteers who had started their volunteering experience irrespective of their

skills were particularly open to taking on the various tasks that arose within such organizations. A volunteer, who had started volunteering at a climbing club for refugees, states:

Well, it was my role, so it was meant to be social media and marketing and stuff like that because I am not a climbing type. I do not know anything about climbing and I like to train with them [participants]. I did not have much time; I was only there [at the climbing club] once [physically]. But I love it too, so I am like the other participants, I learn it besides and then I help with marketing and social media and other stuff (...) (**AT7**).

As volunteering roles and activities vary among participants, so does their time commitment. Volunteering hours range from volunteering for a few hours every day, one day a week, or a few times a month to an occasional engagement. Those volunteers who were not able to be involved in the project throughout (during all of the 13 months) due to personal or professional changes, mention their lack of time as primary reason for not continuing with their voluntary engagement. The number of working and studying hours thus influences participants' willingness and opportunity to volunteer. **HR3**, who volunteered at a theatre at least twice a week for three hours, was one of the organizers and therefore mostly dealt with organizational tasks, such as rehearsals and screenplays of the theatre production. In the meantime, she started working in a store, which limited her volunteering hours, so that she no longer was able to attend all rehearsals. She therefore changed her activity to preparing the papers and instructions for the rehearsals and premiere. Another volunteer from South Tyrol describes her volunteering as a duty:

(...) because it was during school week and there was a lot going on, I had a test the next day [at school] (...) that was just a lot of stress and I thought to myself at some point 'ok, now I have to go' [stop volunteering] (**ST5**).

Project participants thus have pursued their voluntary activity in accordance with their personal and temporal capacities.

### 3.2 The VOLPOWER project, an intercultural experience?

VOLPOWER specifically focused on intercultural exchange through volunteering. Therefore, third-country nationals and EU nationals were included in the project with the idea of fostering intercultural exchange between participants. Overall, this was stimulated by the Zagreb workshop week, local VOLHUB meetings, and participants' individual volunteering experiences in intercultural settings.

Although all participants live in the respective VOLPOWER countries, half of them were born outside the EU and they have different perceptions of their present place of residence when addressing intercultural aspects. Whereas local contexts are generally perceived as multicultural, VOLPOWER participants cite prejudices and discrimination against foreigners in their living area.

For instance, in Rotterdam, especially those who have a migration background from outside the EU see the city as very multicultural and consider multiculturalism as a given state, which they value greatly:

Rotterdam is a multicultural city. The volunteering place really mirrors that (...) Every time you enter it, you encounter different cultures. It is something remarkable to me. It is normal, that just happens here (...) we just know how to deal with each other and different cultures. That is the fun (...) That creates the mood at [the volunteering place]. I find that very positive. We are rich in that sense. In that sense, I notice it, in a positive way. But it is not remarkable to me  
**(ROT2).**

In Vienna on the other hand, local volunteers appreciate the multiculturalism of their city, however they are also very much aware of the outsider position of migrants and refugees, both within the Austrian majority society and in political content. South Tyrolean volunteers talk about a cold-conflict situation between Italian and German speakers and indicate that living together does not work that well among all residents alike.<sup>20</sup> Volunteers in Croatia and Slovenia did not emphasize multiculturalism as did volunteers in Rotterdam, Vienna, and South Tyrol; Slovenia was described as a country with a rather small migrant population. In Croatia, VOLPOWER participants articulated a perceived conflict between the majority population and minorities, which is most pronounced against Roma and people with a Muslim identity (Bosnian descent). Participants from Glasgow perceive Scotland as inclusive on a national level; however, some volunteers with a migration background describe feelings of alienation as well as experiences with discrimination.

In this regard, it is interesting to note how the perception of societal inclusivity has changed after the volunteering experience: Six volunteers did not have an opinion on the quality of relations in their country of residence *before* the experience. Afterwards, the general perception of these relations had deteriorated and nine of 30 respondents assessed the relation as very bad or bad, whereas only three participants had done so previously.

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<sup>20</sup> South Tyrol is characterized by the presence of a German-speaking population as well as a small Ladin-speaking minority. The relations among Italian, German, and Ladin speakers are regulated by a complex consociational system.

**Table 7 - VOLPOWER volunteers: perception of quality of relations between people with and without migration background<sup>21</sup> before and after VOLPOWER volunteering experience**

	Before VOLPOWER volunteering		After VOLPOWER volunteering	
	N	%	N	%
1 (Very bad)	2	6.7	0	0.0
2	1	3.3	9	30.0
3	12	40.0	11	36.7
4	5	16.7	7	23.3
5 (Very good)	4	13.3	2	6.7
I don't know	6	20.0	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

Since discrimination, especially against foreigners, is described on all levels (labour and housing markets, religious affiliation, language groups, etc.), young adults see volunteering as an opportunity to promote intercultural understanding and to take up an active role in changing and influencing societal conditions. When addressing intercultural experiences in the context of their volunteering activities, participants designate them as a given element due to the diversity of the people involved, as well as the type of activity taking place (in the volunteer organization, Zagreb workshop, and VOLHUBs). A female volunteer from Slovenia thus states that her volunteering experience has been intercultural, as most of the dance teachers and musicians of the volunteer organization were from Burkina Faso. Thus, and through different events which were held by the organization, she learned more about African culture (**SL5**). Another volunteer from the same country notes that:

The team was me and two other volunteers – one from Turkey, one from Spain. One was helping in culinary, in the kitchen; one was making cultural events and assisting, helping, like me. And the rest of the team was from Zimbabwe, Nigeria, India, and Algeria. So, it was a very mixed space (...) and of course Slovenian. It was mixed and we were getting along so well. And we were not feeling any different, really. It was so nice actually (**SL6**).

In addition, volunteers strongly emphasize the importance of active listening and efforts taken by all individuals involved. As an example, **ROT4** highlights the importance of taking into account the many different cultural backgrounds of the participants by setting clear general rules for everyone, making sure that everyone is included, since some participants excluded others when, for instance, compatriots spoke their languages of origin among themselves. Thus, active listening and a reflection on actions taken was required from all individuals, in order to enable reacting when feelings of exclusion arose.

<sup>21</sup> Question: How would you assess the quality of relations between people with migrant backgrounds and people without migrant backgrounds in \$Country? \$Country = piping for actual place of living.

This social encounter within the volunteering context functioned as a mirror for young adults, reflecting the own cultural influences, habits etc. and promoting self-perception, which in turn furthers intercultural understanding.

As an example, a volunteer from Rotterdam remarks that volunteering makes her ask herself “why people act the way they do, why they are different to me in what way”. Hearing and listening to other people’s interpretation of Dutch and Eritrean habits (she was born in Eritrea but lives in the Netherlands now), makes her aware of her own position. It further makes her aware of the habits she has unconsciously taken over. When participants (from Eritrea) of the organization tell her of certain Dutch habits that are remarkable to them, it makes her realize how accustomed she has already become to the Dutch culture, “Okay, I have become very Dutch” (**ROT4**).

Volunteering further highlights similarities between people, as they usually share a common goal or interest and have increased and intensified social contact with people who are perceived as “different” from oneself (if the diversity factor is given). In addition, young adults undergo similar life cycle events (such as moving away from parents, studying and/or working, growing importance of friendships etc.), which support them in feeling close to each other and thus help to dismiss barriers of understanding, such as having a different cultural background.

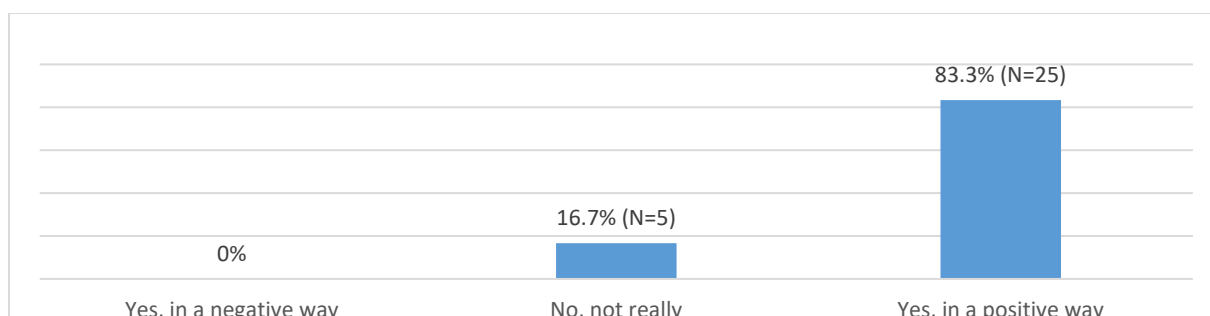
**HR4** believes that her perception of cultural similarities has changed greatly through volunteering, that she has only now realized how culturally similar she is to people of Bosnian descent. Despite the revelation of commonalities in volunteering, cultural understanding is also limited, due to one’s own societal upbringing. By volunteering in a sports and culture organization for refugees, **AT8** has gained a better understanding of what it means to be a refugee in Austria at present times, as he is confronted with their daily challenges and personal stories.

So, what it means to be a refugee, and to be repressed or expelled, is something that I could not have imagined before. And I mean, I would not say that I can imagine it now either, but at least now I certainly have a better insight. That has nothing to do with culture per se. Interculturally, I think, on the one hand, what has been confirmed for me is that the differences between people are not so big, whatever culture they come from and on the other hand, my understanding has its limits. For example, when we talk about things such as not letting girls play soccer (...) it depends on how you define understanding, but I don’t think that that is okay and I lack understanding on the one hand and on the other I understand now where they [participants with refugee background] come from, more (**AT8**).



The participants widely confirmed that the VOLPOWER experience has changed their relationship with other cultures and the experience with differences *tout court*: 25 of 30 VOLPOWER volunteers indicate that their involvement has changed their intercultural experience in a positive way and none of the participants indicates a negative influence. These results do not vary according to the gender of the volunteer, their nationality, or the type of volunteering involvement (regular versus occasional), but the positive influence is higher among volunteers *with* precedent volunteering experience. This seems to indicate that volunteering in standard settings does not automatically mean that intercultural contacts are established or that differences are experienced. It does however seem to indicate that the artificially created VOLPOWER intercultural volunteering setting is a powerful element that fosters intercultural understanding.

**Figure 2 - VOLPOWER volunteers: perceived change in the relationship with other cultures before and after VOLPOWER volunteering experience. Question: "Did your involvement in the VOLPOWER Project change your relationship with other cultures and shape your experiences in encountering difference?"**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

A few volunteers state that their voluntary engagement has not increased their intercultural understanding significantly, which is mainly explained by the lack of diversity of people in their volunteering groups. Nevertheless, some of those respondents were able to gain intercultural knowledge by participating in Zagreb as well as at local VOLHUB meetings.

(...) The internationality is so different, because when I am at my festival [voluntary role], the background [of festival visitors and himself] is much more similar [being from the same region]. For example, volunteers in Zagreb, they are all young, I know roughly what they do, but they have completely different backgrounds (...) who may not have been living from the beginning on where they are living now (...) and the quality is different [between volunteering site and Zagreb workshop], just what you can learn from it. So, at my festival, I can say I am learning organizational skills, I am learning how to lead people in the best case and how to organize them best. But the things you learn through VOLPOWER are very different because they broaden your horizon **(AT4)**.

Concerning the Zagreb meeting, volunteers emphasize different patterns of diversity and therefore different intercultural experiences.

(...) So, in Vienna I know exactly what to expect. It is always Afghans, Syrians, or other countries, or from Europe and so on, so it was already something different to Vienna. (VOLPOWER) it was much more fun, more colour. (...) And for me it was interesting to know more about these countries, to know more about how people there really live, or what they eat, or how they interact with each other and so on (...) that I just got to know a new perspective of the world, which I did not know before, I haven't seen such an existence from these countries, so I think for example 'wow, he [a fellow volunteer he met in Zagreb] comes from this (African) country, he talks like that, he reacts like that, he gives me a ticket for a concert even though he lives in another country and that was really interesting and nice for me **(AT7)**.

Another volunteer, originally from Armenia, mentions the Corn Husking activity that was implemented at their local VOLHUB as intercultural experience. Corn Husking, she explains, gave her an opportunity to come into contact with rural parts of Slovenia for the first time and have a first-hand experience of something traditionally Slovenian, which she valued very much **(SL6)**.

To conclude, VOLPOWER volunteers took the intercultural focus of the project as an incentive to participate and noted an increased positive experience of intercultural exchange in the course of the project. This experience further enabled young individuals to acknowledge their own intercultural experiences, their in-between status (coming from one or more cultures and living in another), which enables them to draw the best from each culture – for instance, Austrian humour and Persian food – as **AT7** confirms.

### 3.2.1 Effects on interpersonal relations

This section refers to the social networks of the young volunteers, focusing on their interpersonal relationships. The focus is first on the general social relations in everyday life, as young volunteers in the first interview, prior to their VOLPOWER participation, described them. The social relationships that relate to the framework of their VOLPOWER volunteering activities are addressed subsequently.

In the first interview, volunteers were asked to illustrate their social relations on individually designed “social-contact maps”, which show that social relations are built around the communities and clusters young adults move in, such as school, university, the workplace, gym, hobby activities, volunteering sites, etc. Individual social networks of the participants therefore reflect a representation of the people who are part of such communities and clusters. The intensity of the type of relationship is illustrated

by closer and looser relationships (strong and weak ties), which is often described as a close and steady core, surrounded by a more flexible and looser circle. Social media and online communication platforms, however, play an important role for social contacts on all levels, such as childhood friends, colleagues from work and/or school, friends from volunteering, etc. These relationships are therefore not limited to a certain region, but rather exist around the world, which further highlights the importance of online communication. Especially young participants with a migrant or refugee background remark that online platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram help them to stay connected with family and friends living in another region. In general, young volunteers consider it important to remain open-minded to meet new people, including those with a different cultural, social, economic, and religious background than one's own.

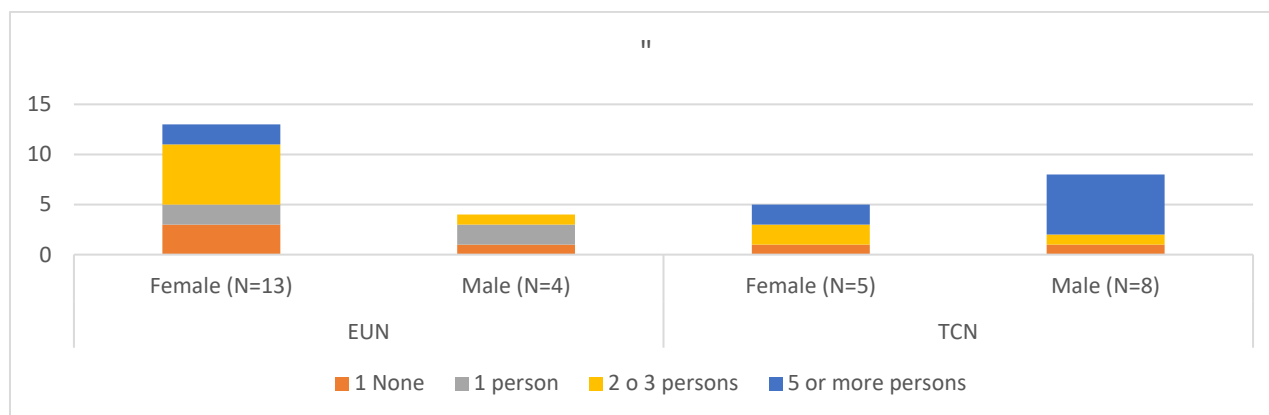
In the longitudinal perspective, the social relations mainly remained the same during the project period. However, there have been single variations in the social networks of young VOLPOWER participants between the first and the second interviews, for instance brought about by a new boyfriend, a new colleague at work, new friends from hobbies or volunteering activities, etc.

Referring to their VOLPOWER volunteering, a common willingness and open-mindedness towards engaging with others and getting to know new people constitutes part of the decision to volunteer. However, personal character traits define individual volunteering experiences in terms of social relationships. Participants who describe themselves as socially highly active and communicative in their daily life, already tend to be engaged in activities that include several people and where social exchange is a given. Participants who state being shy or having difficulties with addressing strangers or meeting new people appreciate the setting and structure of volunteering organizations, as they provide easy access to social interaction and new friendships.

Male third-country nationals particularly tended to engage in social contacts with people known through VOLPOWER beyond the framework of the project (6 of 8 also indicated meeting many VOLPOWER contacts on other occasions). Considering all volunteers, 6 of 30 indicated that they did not meet apart from their volunteering for project activities. The structure of the volunteering activity seems to matter in this respect: Only two of the 23 volunteers who were regularly engaged (on a weekly or monthly basis) did not meet outside, while 4 of 7 volunteers who were occasionally engaged did not maintain social contacts outside the project. Differences are less conspicuous regarding the perception of possibly more enduring friendships emerging from project contacts: 24 of the 30 volunteers believe that new connections will persist over time. This proportion is slightly higher among

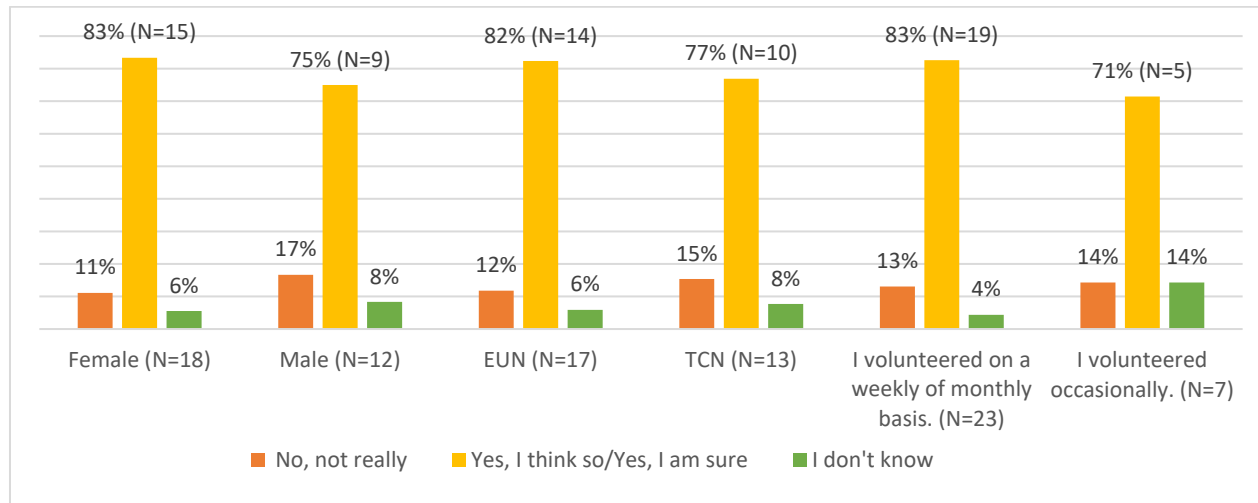
women, EU nationals, and those whose volunteering activities were not occasional. All volunteers considered, there was an increase in the number of volunteers who indicated having 3 or more persons with whom to discuss intimate and personal matters (from 19 to 23 respondents).<sup>22</sup>

**Figure 3 - VOLPOWER volunteers: number of social contacts outside the project with people met through VOLPOWER by gender and EUN/TCN; absolute numbers. Question: With how many people you got to know through the VOLPOWER Project do you meet outside the project?"**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

**Figure 4 - VOLPOWER volunteers: perception of longer lasting friendships after the project by gender, EUN/TCN and type of volunteering. Question: "Do you think that one or more longer lasting friendships developed through your involvement in the VOLPOWER project?"**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

In addition to regular meetings, common interests (e.g., field of volunteering activity) and personal similarities simplify the process of getting to know others and making friends:

<sup>22</sup> Question: How many people, if any, are there with whom you can discuss intimate\* and personal matters\*\*\*? "intimate" implies things like sex or family matters. \*\*\*"personal" could include work or occupational issues as well. Options: None, 1 to 2, 3 to 6, 7 or more.

(The volunteering project) is a bit of a family and I have found people who are like me. When I think of any group of volunteers, be it in Zagreb, X1 or X2, I always find people who are quite similar to myself. They have a bit of the same way of facing things, the same point of view (...) **(ST6)**.

Such relationships might have intensified during the volunteering experience and go beyond the volunteering site, as a volunteer from South Tyrol explains:

I met XY (there). I knew him before, when we arrived in Italy you know, we arrived on the same day. But we were not as close before as we are now. Yeah, before VOLPOWER we were (just) friends, playing soccer together, but now we are really friends and we tell each other things (...) Now, if I had something in Italy, at work or so (...) the first person I talk to would be him. It used to be my uncle or XY1, but now it's him **(ST4)**.

Other volunteers by contrast restrict their volunteering contacts to the place and time of their volunteering activity. **ROT2**, for instance, indicates having gained many friends from her volunteering experience; these contacts however are limited to the volunteering time and space.

I always see them there and you have these deep conversations, which you do not have with just anyone. But these (people) are not necessarily friends that I am in touch with every day, but people who you share these conversations with, which you appreciate very much **(ROT2)**.

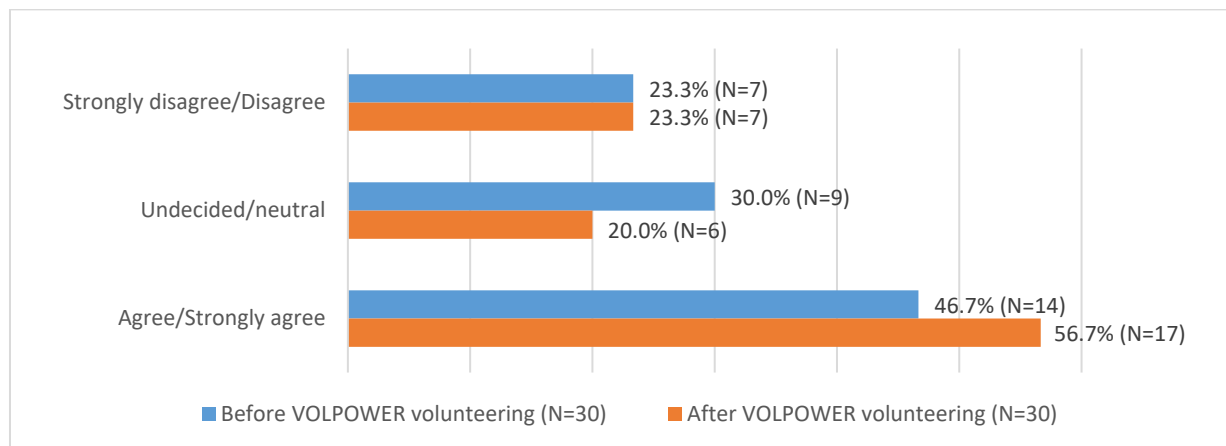
Furthermore, the relations that were established among project participants at the Zagreb workshop week mainly remained via online communication, such as the shared VOLPOWER WhatsApp chat group or social media sites (Facebook, Instagram etc.) in the further course of the project.

The whole group that was there (in Zagreb), we (afterwards) networked on social media and on Instagram. I still see the stories and stuff, I see what people are doing most of the time, especially the Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Dutch group with the dancing. I think they are really cool; I follow them (on Instagram). Then Malta, they are activists (...) they had a political crisis, so it did not come in (our) news, but I noticed that through the people's social media. And the South Tyrolean team too (...) I am still relatively connected with them (via WhatsApp) **(AT4)**.

A few volunteers kept in personal contact with each other through visits in the respective VOLPOWER countries, e.g., a volunteer from Austria travelled to Slovenia to meet with his VOLPOWER friends **(AT7)**. The social relationships established during the VOLPOWER experience thus have different effects on the lives of young volunteers, who shape those relationships according to their own needs.

In addition to volunteers' personal social relationships, the quantitative part of the analysis also addressed the ways in which volunteers relate to the rest of society, investigating their level of trust in other people. In this regard, there appears to have been an increase in trust following the VOLPOWER volunteering experience, when more volunteers agreed/strongly agreed that most people can be trusted (increasing from 14 to 17).

**Figure 5 - VOLPOWER volunteers: self-assessment of level of trust in others before and after the VOLPOWER volunteering experience. Question: How much do you agree with the following statement “Most people can be trusted”.**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

### 3.2.2 Effects on skills

This section discusses the overall skills volunteers have acquired during their volunteering experience. First, various skills that have been acquired prior to VOLPOWER participation are briefly addressed, as discussed in the first wave of interviews. This of course only refers to volunteers who have had volunteering experience prior to their project participation (24 of 30 volunteers). Subsequently, skills are pointed out that have been acquired during VOLPOWER participation, which were discussed in the second interview wave.

In their previous volunteering experience, participants stated that volunteering had helped them to become aware of their individual talents that had remained unnoticed previously. In addition, volunteering revealed the own weaknesses and strengths, providing the opportunity of working on or developing them. Through social interaction and communication at the volunteering site, respondents (especially those who have not been familiar with the official local language before) were able not only to improve their language skills, but also to become more flexible and patient when interacting with others. Furthermore, engaging in different volunteering organizations, talking to people, and presenting various contents in groups give volunteers the opportunity to practise their communication skills and team-building qualities, as well as to learn how to speak freely and better argue for themselves.

Beside social skills, a better understanding of different cultures and aspects of social inclusion (especially in relation to refugees) were gained through interaction with a diverse group of people. In general, even by volunteering in one voluntary role, young adults were able to acquire not only one, but a diverse set of skills.

The degree of skill acquisition differed strongly among participants with and without previous experience during their VOLPOWER participation. For those who have held a previous volunteering position, the VOLPOWER experience added to their existing skills. Those without prior experience acquired completely new skills in the course of the project, as a volunteer from South Tyrol exemplifies:

(...) when I first sang, when I said 'no, I don't sing, I've never sung in my life' and he said 'ok, let's try it'. And so it was at the beginning and then we did little exercises, this and that, and then at the end, well for the first time it's not that I was, who knows what, but at least I made an effort. That's it, the effort to try something new (...) even if at first you thought you couldn't. So, this ability to make an extra effort for a new thing surely was good (**ST1**).

Both groups however acquired additional (new) skills in their own specific sphere of expertise, be it a professional dancer who volunteers as a dance instructor and learned new dancing moves through socializing with other volunteers or participants (e.g. **AT5**), or an artistic acrobat, volunteering in a circomotricity project and developing new artistic techniques (e.g. **ST6**).

Overall, volunteers acquired a broad spectrum of different skills in the course of their voluntary engagement. This skill spectrum ranges from practical everyday skills to specialized skills for professional use, the most frequently mentioned being organizational, technical (also in relation to sports and art), social, (inter)cultural, communication, and leading skills - the latter includes caretaking skills associated with coaching and leading a group of people. To exemplify and elaborate on some of the above-mentioned skills: Organizational skills have been acquired during VOLPOWER volunteering by, for example, organizing a soccer tournament, writing grant applications, or calculating the budget for volunteer organizations. **HR1**, who had volunteered in a theatre production claims that she has developed organizational skills by coordinating work activities and planning for 10 to 15 people in her voluntary position. **HR6**, who had also volunteered in the theatre production, states that his participation and acting on a stage has given him communication skills, the acquisition of which had been a former goal of his as mentioned in the first interview. As he claims to have achieved that goal through his VOLPOWER volunteering experience, he is confident about the future of his political activities, where his acquired public speaking skills will now be of advantage. A South-Tyrolean volunteer also highlights his acquired

communication skills through volunteering. Now he sees it as a necessity which helps him to express himself:

(...) the ability to express myself in front of people. I mean, even if that hasn't been a normal thing for me, I still have a lot to improve. But I couldn't really, really talk to people before. If they are people I know well, I talk a lot. But people I've just met, or I am getting to know, I am always quiet. But it's different now. It's something I need, to be able to express myself in front of people, not to keep everything inside all the time. It's important and it's an ability that thanks to VOLPOWER I (now) have and that I am improving on now **(ST4)**.

Interviewees further address communication skills in the field of sports, especially in team sport activities such as soccer. Competitive games and matches hold the potential of aggression and (physical) conflict. Gaining and developing communication skills thus served as a non-violent communication strategy and an answer to conflicts and problems on the field, but also for life in general. Especially those volunteers who did not speak the local official language very well were able to improve and develop their language skills during their volunteering activities through communication and interaction with others. As stated by a volunteer from South Tyrol:

(...) those interviews I did in German, I don't know how I did them in German. And in fact, I did an exam at the end of January for the university, which was B2 (...) and before I got into the oral exam, I thought (to myself) 'No, I did that interview with the volunteering organization, where I spoke German with these actors, who were German native speakers, and they answered my questions and so it must surely be ok'. It [the volunteering experience] gave me a bit more charge **(ST2)**.

Through volunteering with a group of diverse people, participants developed various social skills. Their activities enabled volunteers to assess people better, show more patience in interactions with others and be more attentive to their surroundings in general. Team-building and networking skills further contributed to other spheres of life of these young adults, including new friendships and job positions. Interaction with a diverse group of people at the volunteering site additionally contributed to participants' (inter)cultural skills. Locals and newcomers learned more about the cultural behaviour, customs, and traditions of other members through social exchange. Particularly volunteers with a migrant or refugee background report having learned more about their new country of residence. A volunteer, originally from Eritrea and now living in the Netherlands, gives an example of respectful communication, as in the Netherlands one is supposed to look at people directly when speaking to them, rather than looking down as it is customary in Eritrea **(ROT7)**.



Through their volunteering experience, participants remark that they also have gained on a personal level, having succeeded, e.g., at pursuing a goal and showing perseverance, committing and carrying on if something was not going easy, as a South Tyrolian volunteer states:

I think I have already learned to persevere in a certain sense at the circus week, because it was really fun, but it was really exhausting because I had to get up at 5:30 and I also live rather far from the train station and I have to go back there and then back home. So, it was mostly that I did not come home until 9 or 10 pm... So, I am also proud of myself that I have done it all... **(ST5).**

A volunteer from Austria realised that for him, developing individual skills was not the most important aspect of volunteering, but rather discovering the importance of social cohesion and togetherness, e.g., playing together as a team, which does not only apply to sports but to other spheres of life too **(AT1).**

During the VOLPOWER Zagreb event in June 2019, volunteers participated in a one-week social media workshop with a focus on photography and video-making. Digital skills, such as working with social media and other online platforms, as well as photography and video-making skills were acquired here. Especially those volunteers who did not previously have much expertise in these fields were able to use their newly acquired skills in their volunteering and/or work context. An Austrian volunteer highlights his newly gained ability to create a better content for his volunteer organization's social media page by learning how to post the right pictures and informational paragraphs. In his opinion, it is important for volunteering organizations to create good social media content, as this fosters publicity for volunteering and furthermore might attract young people to join in and take on a voluntary role – contributing to the association's existence and keeping voluntary work alive.

(...) and I think that also helps the art and culture associations like mine or the music festivals. Social media has an extremely strong effect if you do it well, instead of making bad publicity. This old marketing only works very rarely with young people and I think that is something that you have to do in the arts and culture sector, but also in the voluntary sector in general, so that you can reach young people, so that you stay active and interact (...) **(AT4).**

Another volunteer from Glasgow supports this statement:

(...) when we went to Croatia, with the digital's training, ah we have learned a lot of it out there. I was able to make videos, how to help to take pictures properly, and I've learned that

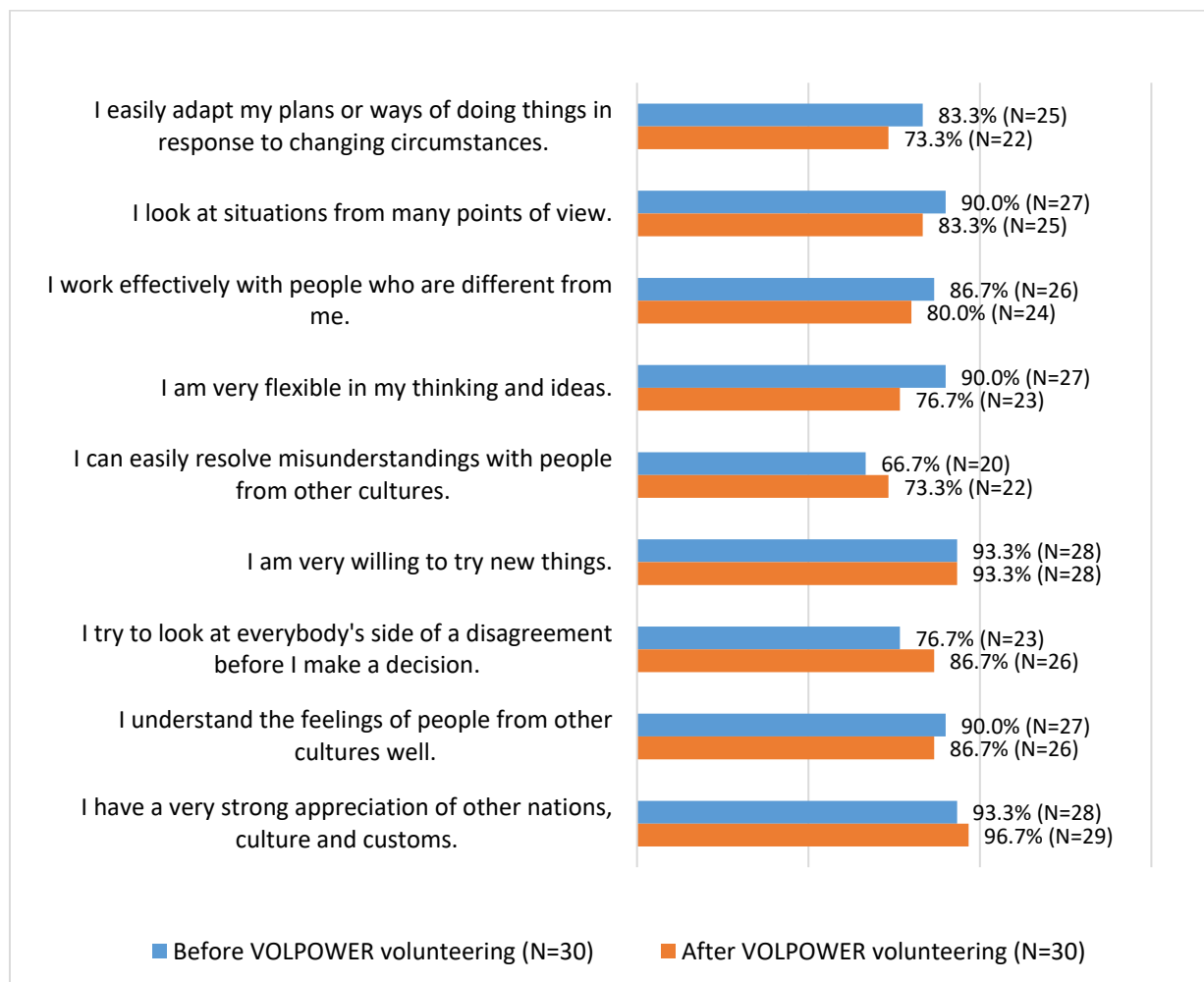
and I am still using it (...) and I have learned a lot from other people in the VOLPOWER group as well (**GLA2**).

Thus, beside digital and creative skills, participants acquired social and (inter)cultural skills through numerous group work sessions within the framework of the workshop. As young adults from one country team were mixed with participants from other country teams, the group constellation changed with each new task. This type of group composition helped participants to approach new people. Together, they exchanged their individual skills as well as personal information and worked on each prescribed task. Thereby an inclusion of diverse people into one group took place repeatedly. An interviewee from the Netherlands remarks upon his “social growth” during that time and on how he had learned to connect with new people. He describes his experience of meeting new people in a very short time and being able to build a connection with them, which made him realize that there is much to gain in such encounters, even if they were brief. It encouraged him to strike up conversations with strangers, such as someone in the tram or metro, which he did not dare before: “These are skills you learn just by doing it” (**ROT3**). This example further demonstrates that skills are gained primarily through social exchange and interaction, which has been an essential part of the VOLPOWER volunteering experience. The once acquired skills thus contributed to many other spheres of life and further enabled individual empowerment processes of young adults.

Interviewees attest the effects of their VOLPOWER volunteering experience on a wide range of different skills acquired. However, in the online questionnaire they present partly diverging outcomes regarding general intercultural and interpersonal skills. Comparing the affirmative answers (“strongly agree”/“agree”) on certain skills before and after the VOLPOWER volunteering experience, a number of volunteers attest themselves a *lower* level of flexibility in thinking (four volunteers), in adaptation to changing circumstances (three volunteers), in the capacity of considering other points of view (two volunteers) and working with people different from oneself (two volunteers). The indicated curiosity and openness (measured by the willingness to try new things) remains stable on a high level and a number of volunteers indicate an *increase* in their effort to consider other points of view before taking a decision (three volunteers) or in their capacity of dealing with misunderstandings in intercultural contacts (two volunteers). The appreciation of other nations and cultures among the volunteers was confirmed on a very high level (29 of 30 volunteers). The interpretation of these results, which concern the measurement of self-perception regarding more general interpersonal and intercultural skills, requires the consideration of the context in which the second wave of data collection took place. Personal limitations were in force in all European countries to limit the spreading of the COVID-19 disease. The accompanying growing level of insecurity regarding the educational and work-life future of the

volunteers could reasonably have influenced (if not caused) the worsening in the perception of the respondents' own flexibility and capacity of adaption to changing circumstances.

**Figure 6 - VOLPOWER volunteers: Self-assessment of interpersonal and intercultural skills before and after VOLPOWER volunteering experience (share of positive responses on Likert scale: "agree"/"totally agree")**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

### 3.2.3 Effects on empowerment

Numerous decision-making processes in all areas of life characterize the everyday life of young adults. Among other things, these relate to the personal as well as the professional level. In this section, the personal perceptions of individual decision-making are first outlined, as stated in the first interviews by VOLPOWER volunteers. Subsequently, further influences of participants' volunteering experience on their decision-making processes are discussed.

VOLPOWER volunteers generally see themselves as independent decision makers but they do include opinions of others into their decision-making processes, especially those from close relations and people with expertise in the questions to be decided upon. Their emancipation processes take place on

various levels, such as moving out of their parents' home, finding and following own interests, being financially independent, traveling alone, etc. Participants' environmental context contributes to the possibility of free decision-making. Some volunteers with a migrant or refugee background for example see limitations within a legal or/and societal setting (legal status, discrimination), which prevents them from taking action and following their aspired path. On a personal level, young adults articulate their weaknesses and strengths, which are described as important factors of an empowerment process. Volunteers however view these aspects as intertwined and not as a matter of "either-or" decision-making, which makes their interpretation dependent on its context. Volunteering is thus perceived as a strategy that contributes to a volunteer's personal weaknesses and strengths by making them a "better" person and helping to achieve personal goals.

Those are experiences that you take with you. I consider it a backpack that I take everywhere **(ROT2)**.

Personal features are decisive for volunteers' choice of VOLPOWER volunteering activity. Volunteering is therefore understood as an activity that makes young adults more attentive to their own weaknesses and strengths.

Well maybe through volunteering you become more aware of what you are good at and what you are not, that it shows that. I know now that I am quite good at planning things, that I am not the best craftsman, so here [at the volunteering association] there are people who plan more, there are people who tackle more and I always try to do both. But with one I am definitely better than with the other, I know that and everybody in the association knows that. I cannot even hammer a nail in it, well maybe it is not like that either, but I just plan better **(AT4)**.

VOLPOWER volunteers furthermore see their volunteering as a challenging activity. It is described as empowering, as it gets young adults out of their inner "comfort zones", for instance by requiring of them to attempt their hand at new tasks and having them learn from their own mistakes. If such tasks are achieved, volunteers gain self-confidence, as a dance volunteer from Rotterdam elaborates:

To stand for something and speak up. To feel confident. To go for what you want. That sort of stuff. Dance is personal growth too. It goes hand in hand. The show is one thing, but the classes itself, you show yourself, which is quite vulnerable. That alone is a big step. But if people look at you and you learn something new, that is what you must get over. That is what I have learned from dancing but also music and culture. You can also find me in music studios. Show

a bit of yourself, be vulnerable. It is scary, but also powerful. I think I learned to do that better. That obstacle becomes smaller every time the more you do it **(ROT2)**.

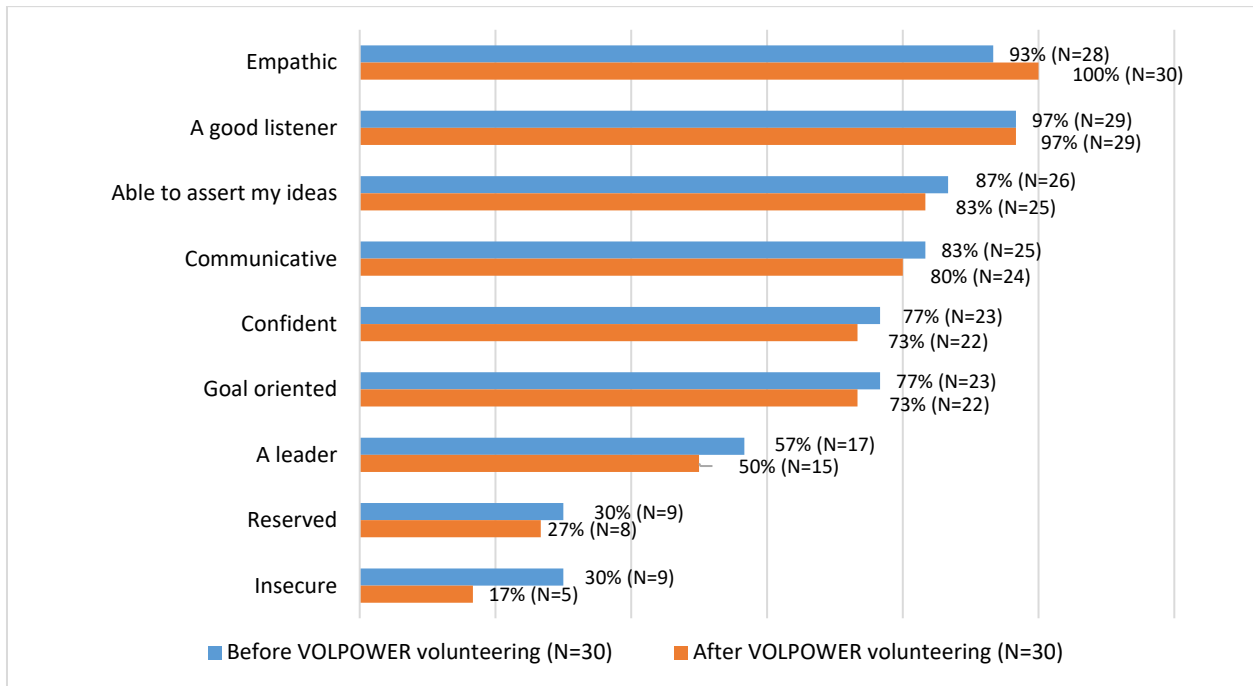
Thus, the very fact of achievement seems more important to young volunteers than *what* they achieve. Exchanges of ideas and new perspectives acquired during the volunteering experience contribute to the emancipation process of individuals.

I cannot remember who said this stuff in the grouping of VOLPOWER, someone said 'we are all drivers of each other, we are our own bosses'. When he said this, I was like 'ok, I got it, damn'. You are your boss, you are the driver, anywhere you go. Then, when I started telling myself 'ok, I am the controller of my own destiny, also I want to go' [quit his job]. I decided, ok. This is where I wanted to go. If it goes bad, I know it is my fault, if it goes well, I know it is my fault **(ST3)**.

Volunteering is connected to making one's own choices, as the decision to volunteer already constitutes a choice. It furthermore is a consequence and extension of individual freedom and empowerment: "That I volunteer is an example of my freedom (...) I chose this myself" **(ROT3)**. Volunteering also questions individual priorities as it is connected to time capacity and personal effort. The resulting self-awareness in turn contributes to an empowerment process of young volunteers by leading them toward learning more about themselves.

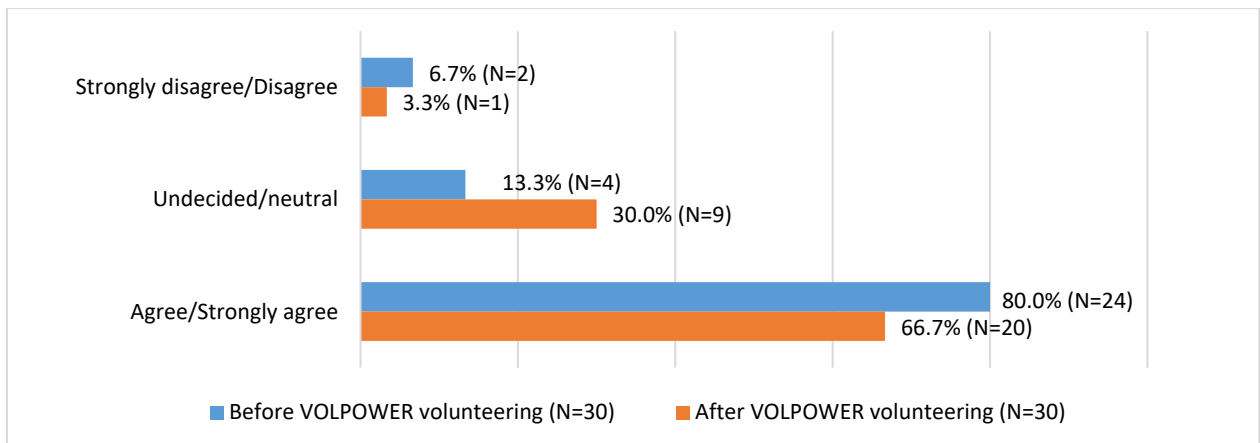
The qualitative interviews provide insight into a process of empowerment related to the VOLPOWER volunteering experience. However, it should be noted that the answers to the questions in the online questionnaire show nearly no change in the majority of self-assessed personal characteristics before and after the experience. Noteworthy positive changes are a smaller number of volunteers that indicated feelings of insecurity (from nine to five volunteers) and a slight increase in the number of volunteers indicating empathy (from 28 to 30 volunteers). On the other hand, the number of volunteers indicating a strong sense of empowerment regarding the situation they live in has diminished from 24 to 20, and the volunteers indicating to be a leader diminished from 17 to 15. Other personal characteristics, including being communicative, confident, and a good listener, remain stable or diminish slightly. As for the interpersonal and intercultural skills, it is difficult to estimate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on self-perception, particularly concerning feelings of having situations under control.

**Figure 7 – VOLPOWER volunteers: self-assessment of personal characteristics before and after the VOLPOWER volunteering experience (share of positive responses on Likert scale: “agree”/“totally agree”)**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

**Figure 8 - VOLPOWER volunteers: self-assessment of sense of empowerment before and after the VOLPOWER volunteering experience. Question: In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

### 3.2.4 Effects on the sense of belonging

This section highlights aspects of inclusiveness and exclusiveness in relation to the current place of living, as discussed by the participants in the first interview. It then illustrates volunteers' feelings of belonging and aspects of (local) community building in relation to their VOLPOWER volunteering experience, as mentioned in the second interview.

Volunteers connect feelings of belonging to inclusive ideas and behaviours common among the people living in a certain region. Related to this are the social and political environment, as well as the possibilities available to a person. Equal opportunities within a region, i.e., making a living according to individual aspirations, is an important factor for the respondents when addressing their feelings of belonging. Referring to *“People make Glasgow”*, **GLA1** expresses feeling included in the city. He highlights the opportunities, including education, that are available to all people in Scotland and in the same sense he feels treated the “same as a Scottish person” by his supervisor at work. He feels at home in Scotland, having spent more of his childhood there than in his original home country, Somalia. In general, the degree of diversity in a certain region plays an important role when addressing inclusivity, especially for volunteers with a migration background. Volunteers thus view urban regions as more inclusive than rural areas due to greater multiculturalism involving many diverse communities (e.g., cultural, social, economic, and regarding educational background). **ROT3**, who was born in the Netherlands, while his family originates from Ghana, describes aspects of his feeling at home in the city with “fitting in” and “not standing out”. He considers this “blending in” in the city as feeling at home in contrast to feeling like an outsider:

You are just part of it. I am not paying attention you know. When you walk into a room, where everyone knows each other and you are the outsider, then everyone is looking at you. But if no one is paying attention, you feel at home (...) a sort of fitting (...) that you can just blend a little (...) (**ROT3**).

A lack of diversity in areas with a more rural nature thus has a negative influence on feelings of belonging, as another volunteer from the Netherlands with Eritrean roots illustrates:

(In the urban areas) you are together with a lot of people who have a migration background. They understand you better. They won’t look up if you walk around in your traditional Eritrean clothes. You cannot do this in Den Bosch. Then they would look at you as you have lost your mind. Are you crazy? As if you would not fit in. That is the difference (between Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Den Bosch) (**ROT4**).

Although urban surroundings offer multiple public meeting places for diverse groups (e.g., soccer enclosures in Vienna) with the possibility of social, cultural, and creative exchange, interviewees also address feelings of exclusion within an urban context. Different levels of belonging are therefore associated with specific places in which the volunteers move around. These feelings of exclusion above all affect young adults with a migration background, as a Slovenian volunteer from Myanmar points out:

Young people mostly are very helpful, welcoming. But older people (...) one time, I was walking down the street and this old couple, they were making Chinese noises at me (...) that is the first time. Maybe racism? I am not sure, but they were talking bad about me, because I was walking past them (...) **(SL2)**.

Inclusivity is thus further connected to being accepted by others. Communication with others thus has a supporting role. Volunteers see language as an essential element of their sense of belonging. **ST2**, who lives in South Tyrol, defines the language spoken in a region as the most decisive characteristic of her feeling of belonging:

So, linguistically, I feel like I belong. Just looking at the sphere of language. Although my German is a bit sad. But I know that If I go abroad (...) if I go (...) if I go abroad, if I go to Italy, if I visit another city (...) go to Verona, I feel a bit out of it. I don't know why, I feel a little bit (...) Then I come back here, and I hear them talking on the bus in the South Tyrolean [German] dialect and I feel at home, even I maybe understand one word of what they say, but I feel at home (...) I feel excluded if I leave South Tyrol, a little bit, I feel a bit foreign (...) **(ST2)**.

Above all, people with a different language background indicate (a non-spoken) language as a barrier of inclusivity.

When I came to Glasgow, I felt left out; you know I was just a regular African-English speaking girl. I had an English accent, but I did not have any idea about the Scottish accent. When I was in class, I cried because I did not understand the teacher **(GLA3)**.

Similarly, a Viennese volunteer voices concern about the limits of potential inclusion:

(...) the biggest thing that bothers me and leads me to the point where I think 'yes ok, I'll never speak the language the way I speak my mother tongue, that is why I'll never be like that', you know what I mean, I'll never be an Austrian (...) **(AT2)**.

Besides being able to communicate with others, respondents state that being embedded in an institution (school, university, organization, etc.) promotes their sense of belonging. Hereby, social interaction with others within an institutional setting gives young adults the opportunity to get to know people better and even build friendships. Feeling comfortable with people fosters inclusiveness on a general level. Participants ascribe a more important function to the social than to the spatial component regarding their sense of belonging. This is supported by the fact that a lack of intimate contacts contributes to feelings of exclusion, for instance, when the family is not around on national holidays.



To illustrate the interrelation of volunteering and belonging, the participants' VOLPOWER volunteering experience is now taken into account. First, different dimensions of a sense of belonging influence the motivation to volunteer. Volunteers who share feelings of belonging on a regional/city level (feeling part of society), see their volunteering as a chance to influence societal settings. The volunteers who do not feel part of a society or region, (might) find feelings of belonging on a smaller scale – within the volunteering group. Participants with a migration background who came to the respective VOLPOWER countries without their families particularly struggle with adapting to a new society and with feelings of loneliness.

Yeah, that's the big thing with social life (...) you are just alone, disappointed. Maybe you accepted it as a culture (...) if it is their way, they grew up like that, and maybe they are good with this [individualism]. But when I came from a different culture and see it from far away, I was like 'Whoah! Something is different here' (SL8).

Volunteering thus represents a possibility for these young adults to gain access to a community where social and intercultural exchange takes place, contributing to their feelings of belonging. SL6 has lived in Slovenia for a year. Since she has started volunteering, VOLPOWER has supported her to such a degree that she started to feel much more included in the group of volunteers. She states that she now understands other cultures better, including the Slovene culture to some extent, although she still does not feel that she belongs to the place she lives in. The repetition of an experience shared with others is a determining factor when addressing feelings of belonging. These feelings are connected to the development of getting to know others better and of building on those established relationships. The volunteering context thus enables social exchange and promotes community building. Many volunteers remark that volunteering gives them a feeling of being part of a community. However, volunteers share such feelings in different ways. Some participants state that these feelings go beyond that of a community. They associate their volunteering experiences with being part of a family:

(...) Not that we are just a soccer group and that we meet and train every week, or twice a week, but it is like a family. There are also exchanges between the coaches and players, we exchange opinions, we exchange memories or now, especially in this corona crisis, especially the problems we have or everything, just everything. We see that, so the whole group sees it as a family, that we do something together and everybody does a part of it, or two, three parts of it and it's not a must to really do it, but everybody does it because they want to and because it is fun and because we are doing well. And so I think it is not just a soccer group for me, it is not just a voluntary thing, but I see it as my family (AT2).

Other volunteers emphasize spatial and temporal limitations in their volunteering community. **ROT4** considers herself as part of the volunteering group; however, she restricts participation to Saturdays only. Although she enjoys seeing participants and colleagues at the volunteering organization, she would not “invite them over at home or go to their wedding”. She remarks that the fact that she lives outside the area of her volunteering place might play a role here, too. **AT5**, a female volunteer from Austria adds to that:

(...) well, it is a community, definitely, but it is what I call a temporary community. So again and again, suddenly (you feel) full of community and then again (you feel) full away (...) well, I also meet people outside that community (...) it is up to me, for example at my volunteering organization, how much (deep) I am getting into it. But I have just noticed that I have so many other communities that I want to take care of, so to speak, not taking care of in that sense, but just circle of friends and if you neglect them, then they neglect you too. That, yes that is how I feel from time to time (...) (**AT5**).

The degree of personal involvement in the volunteering activity is strongly connected to a sense of belonging and feeling part of a (volunteering) community. Those respondents who have been volunteering in the organization for a longer period as well as those who volunteer for more hours, notice greater or increased feelings of belonging. As **ROT3** has increased his volunteering hours, taking over shifts from others, he feels part of the community now (due to the growth of his volunteering role):

I really am part of the community now (...) I realize I see it more as a second home than just a place where you are sometimes (**ROT3**).

To return to the spatial dimension of volunteering: feelings of belonging to a certain region are also influenced by the various places visited by volunteers throughout their volunteering experience. This idea was reinforced by the many VOLHUB meetings within the project, which took place at different locations in each VOLPOWER region. Feelings of belonging are therefore connected to the memories that participants share with certain places in the VOLPOWER regions. As **AT2** points out:

For example, where we had soccer matches, or where we trained, or where we met and talked and this city [Vienna] is all of us together, which gives me a good feeling when I think I belong to it (...) (**AT2**).

In addition to the volunteering experience, the activities carried out within the VOLPOWER project also have an impact on the personal sense of belonging. **ROT4**, originally from Eritrea, explains that the international workshop in Zagreb made her feel aware of her Dutch background. She really felt that

she was representing the Dutch team, together with the other Dutch volunteers. Being in such an international context made her aware of her “Dutchness” and she connected with the other Dutch team members over this:

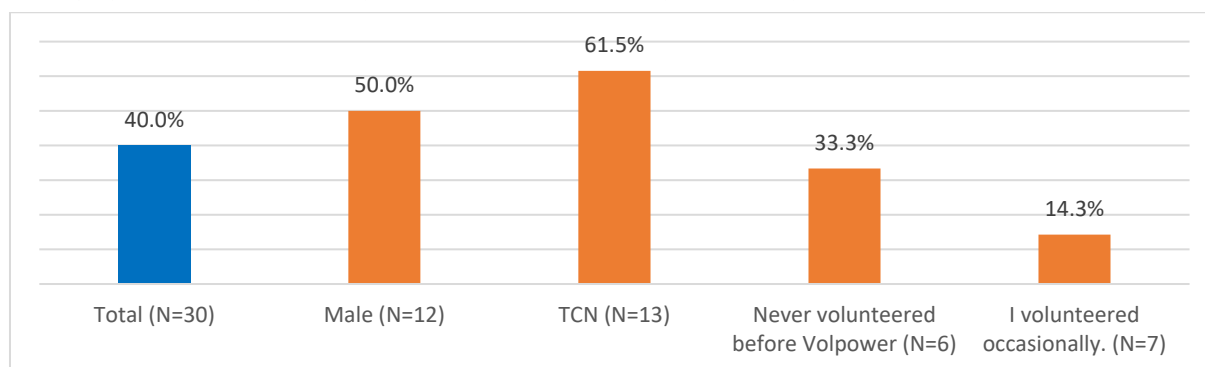
”Sometimes I wonder, if I would wake up tomorrow and suddenly would be very good at running marathons, which country would I run for, Eritrea or the Netherlands? I would not know. Maybe the Netherlands right now” **(ROT4)**.

Here, the (international) setting has led to a renegotiation of a sense of belonging to a certain region. Feelings of belonging are therefore further influenced by the perception of others. This was also the case with **AT4**, who, although he has lived in Vienna for eight years, feels a stronger sense of belonging to Carinthia (a federal province in the south of Austria), again due to his work in a Carinthian volunteer organization.

I see myself more as a Carinthian than before, even if I introduce myself at other meetings and say ‘hey, I am with the club from Carinthia’ (...) I think it’s the same as when you are in a soccer club (...) I think that you develop a sense of belonging to the club, which is then also carried to the outside world, because you say ‘you play at the sports club (...) or at FC (...)’ and others see you that way. And I think that counts more than the fact that you now identify yourself with it (...) for me it came more from the outside to the inside (...) **(AT4)**.

Results from the online questionnaire display variations regarding the impact of volunteering on the sense of belonging. A large number of volunteers indicate that the experience has not really changed their sense of belonging (14 of 30) but 12 (40 %) state that taking part in the VOLPOWER project has positively influenced their sense of belonging; this proportion is higher for third country nationals and males and much lower for volunteers that didn’t engage on a regular basis (only one of seven). No volunteer chose the option that the experience influenced their sense of belonging in a negative way.

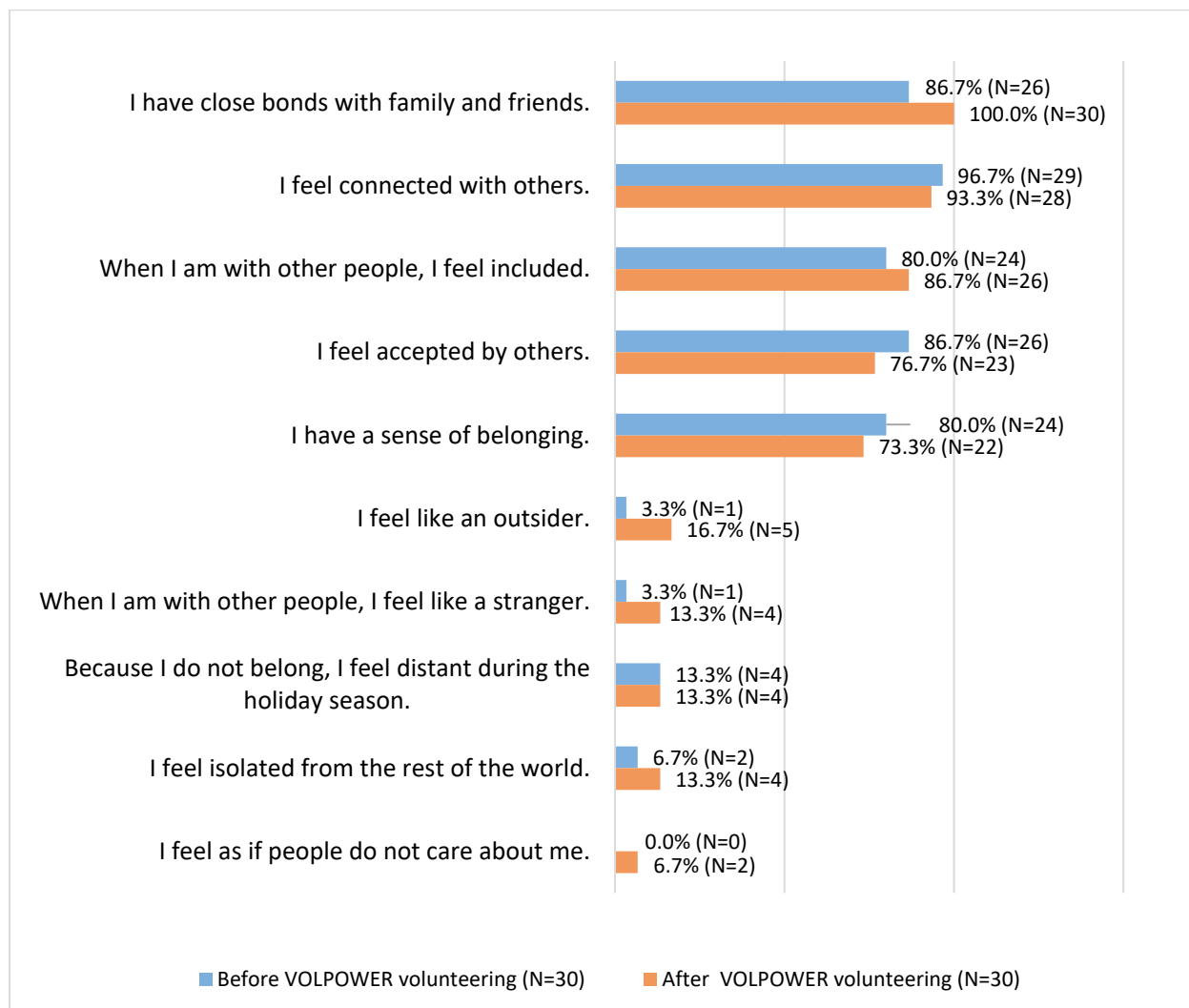
**Figure 9 – VOLPOWER volunteers: Change of sense of belonging through taking part in the VOLPOWER Project. Question: Do you feel that taking part in the VOLPOWER Project has changed your sense of belonging to \${Country}? Share positive answers “Yes, in a positive way”**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

In general, the VOLPOWER volunteering experience has contributed to a renegotiation of feelings of belonging among young volunteers, where aspects of belonging show different dimensions (contextual, spatial, temporal, cultural, social, etc.).

**Figure 10 – VOLPOWER volunteers: self-assessment of questions on sense of belonging before and after the VOLPOWER volunteering experience (share of positive responses on Likert scale: “agree”/“totally agree”)**



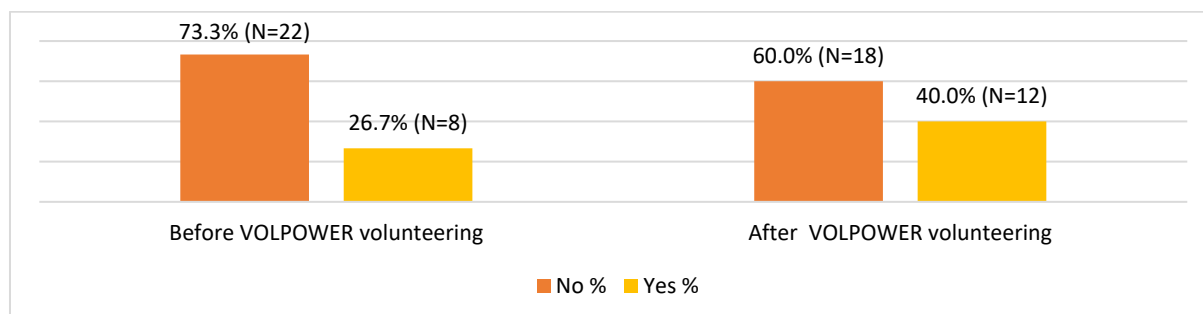
Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

Incidentally, it is interesting to observe the answers to the query of the online questionnaire on the general sense of belonging given by the volunteers before and after their VOLPOWER volunteering experience. The existence of close bonds with family and friends and the feeling of inclusion when in the presence of others both increased and were confirmed by the great majority (or totality) of the volunteers. Furthermore, the feeling of connection with and acceptance by others was confirmed on a high level, although in slight decrease. The same can be said for the indicated general sense of belonging. On the other hand, a small number of volunteers reveals an increase in the perception of

feelings of exclusion and alienation. Indeed, after the volunteering experience, the number of participants that “strongly agree”/“agree” that they were feeling like an outsider has increased from one to five. The number of participants feeling like a stranger when they are together with other people has increased from one to four, and the number of persons indicating feelings of isolation from the rest of the world has increased from two to four. Those sensing indifference towards them from other people showed an increase from zero to two. Again, the situation due to COVID-19 may have affected the answers.

At the same time, it should be noted that VOLPOWER intercultural settings might foster self-perception and create consciousness about differences. This becomes clear when observing the self-perception of volunteers before and after the VOLPOWER volunteering experience. Before the actual engagement, 8 of 30 participants indicated being a member of a discriminated group in their current place of living; after VOLPOWER volunteering this number grew to 12 participants with an increase in perceived discrimination mostly based on language (+5 selections), ethnic group (+3), sexuality (+2) and colour, religion and age (+1).<sup>23</sup> Similarly, an increase in the number of respondents that indicate not feeling valued in the actual place of living (from 8 to 12 participants) should be noted.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 11 - VOLPOWER volunteers: Perception of being a member of a discriminated group, before and after VOLPOWER volunteering experience. Question: "Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against in \${Country}?"**



Source: Youth and Community Survey (YCIS2), Project VOLPOWER.

### 3.2.5 Effects on gender aspects

This section addresses gender as a category in the volunteer area and illustrates the participants' own perceptions and experiences prior to their VOLPOWER involvement in this matter, as well as the attitudes of the people close to them, such as family and friends. Subsequently, individual experiences of

<sup>23</sup> The question was a multiple-choice question with the following options: colour or race, nationality, religion, language, ethnic group, age, gender and sexuality.

<sup>24</sup> Question: How much do you agree with the following statement I feel valued in \${Country}? Options: Yes, No.

the volunteers in their VOLPOWER engagement in relation to gender in sports and creative arts/culture activities are discussed.

In general, participants highlight the importance of gender equality in sports, arts, and culture activities. They choose their (leisure and volunteering) activities according to personal interests and character traits and not according to (their own) gender. Thus, the acquisition of skills tends to depend on the amount of practice a person has gained. However, cultural and social norms determine the correlation between gender and chosen activities. Soccer is for instance perceived as a male-dominated sport, whereas dancing, arts, and culture are perceived as more female-oriented. These gender-specific activities are associated with gender-ascribed attributes: male sport is conceived as strict, physically challenging, and aggressive; women on the other hand are more inclined to show their emotions. As volunteers with prior volunteering experience have been involved in mixed teams as well as in same-sex teams, they note different group dynamics depending on the gender involved. **AT4** for instance states that when playing soccer with male-only players, the game tended to be more aggressive as players started to point out errors during a match, but where women were involved, the game atmosphere became more amicable. One female interviewee illustrates her experiences with gender/sex-related behaviour while being part of a mixed sports group, although she interprets these masculine comments rather as flirtatious teasing than a verbal offence.

(They say) that I am so small, that I am so short, that I am weak sometimes, but they don't really mean it, but they say it because they are men, but no, something like that (**AT2**).

Thus, for some participants, same-sex groups might also create a safe space. Especially girls, who tend to be more insecure than their male counterparts, have a greater feeling of security and confidence when performing an activity in a same-sex group. Nevertheless, young participants advocate mixed-teams in the field of sports, arts, and culture, as they give a broader sense of perspective by including males and females, which further challenges the respective opposite sex in multiple ways.

Including the perspective of family and friends, young adults see generational and cultural differences in gender-specific activities. As parents and grandparents are perceived to have a more traditional understanding of a division of gender (e.g., physical traits: men are stronger, women are weaker), their different views often result in conflicts with the younger volunteer generation. Furthermore, participants also see the cultural background as a decisive factor when referring to gender-specific activities. Especially in sports, for instance soccer, gender is a dividing category, as some cultures dismiss girls and boys playing together. A volunteer, originally from Burma but now living in Slovenia, relates such

division of gender to the traditions of his culture, which have further manifested in people's social behaviour:

We even have like traditions that men cannot sit lower than women, otherwise they get unlucky (**SL2**).

Volunteers furthermore see a difference in the perception of gender-specific activities between urban and rural areas, with the latter being attributed a more traditional image. However, close peers of the respondents share a similar perception of gender-specific activities, emphasizing gender equality in all areas of life.

Regarding the VOLPOWER experience, the attitudes towards gender-specific activities among volunteers have broadly remained the same. Both male and female volunteers continuously advocate gender equality in the fields of sports, arts, and culture. Some of the participating volunteer organizations explicitly dealt with gender issues. The area of volunteering had a decisive role in this. In the field of sports for instance, volunteers note different perceptions between soccer and climbing. They perceive soccer as a more male-oriented sport, whereas men are perceived as stronger and better players, resulting in a same-sex team preference. Climbing on the other hand is less marked by a gender bias. Here, both sexes are perceived as equally strong and skilled, causing climbing to be a more liberal and democratic sport. Thus, some interviewees encouraged mixed-gender interaction as part of their volunteering position, hoping for a reduction of gender disparity.

(...) it is much more difficult than you think. Because on the one hand, it includes cultural conflicts that don't allow girls to have the same opportunities as the boys in the family and it can also be that girls are more likely to withdraw because they were brought up with others, simply because they were raised differently. They were brought up with the fact that they have to pay attention to their clothes, that they are not allowed to do that, or that they are allowed to do that and that has also given them a feeling of oppression that even now they dare less" (**AT1**).

Social and cultural backgrounds must therefore be included in the gender debate, as a Viennese volunteer with Iranian roots claims. **AT2** volunteered as a soccer co-trainer in a girls-only team, consisting of players both with and without a migration background. Growing up in Iran, she further highlights a strong differentiation between men and women as a cultural phenomenon. Within her team, some parents were against the idea of their daughters playing soccer in a mixed team due to the social norms prevailing in the respective culture. However, after a change in head coaches, a male trainer was assigned to the girls' team. In addition, the girls occasionally joined the boys' team when both (male and female) teams lacked players. This new arrangement contributed positively to the dynamics of the

game, as female players improved their soccer-playing skills due to a stricter and technically more challenging trainer. The parents, who were initially against such a composition, seemed to have accepted the new training arrangement, as they have seen that the sex/gender of the trainer in fact made no difference (**AT2**). Especially female volunteers state that their volunteering experience inspired them to stand up for themselves, act on their feminist ideas, support other women's achievements, and get rid of feelings of jealousy (**SL5, HR2**). Overall, volunteering experiences contributed to a greater awareness and open-mindedness towards gender in relation to volunteering in the respective fields, as **GLA1** illustrates:

(...) but then we were doing activities together. She was better than all of us (boys) because she has been playing professionally from the age of five and she was at least 21, last year. So, I was really surprised – that I would never thought I would get (to play with) a girl that would be better than me (**GLA1**).

Through social interaction (for example in mixed teams), volunteers gained different perspectives on gender-related topics and thus gathered more informed about aspects of gender in general, which adds to the experiences prior to their VOLPOWER participation.

Volunteering is one thing, volunteering needs time, you have to take your time to do something now, because in my opinion, volunteering is not only one time in an organization, being the case that you visit once and that is perfect, super, done. But it is something that you do again and again. For me volunteering is more about the future, what you can achieve in the future. Through volunteering, I have experienced many developments, many differences, which have been strongly influenced by volunteering alone. That means that you can achieve a lot through volunteering, you can change and shape many situations around you (...) (**AT1**).

### 3.3 Additional features of volunteering

#### 3.3.1 (Perceptions of) VOLPOWER volunteering – leisure or work?

This section explicitly refers to the VOLPOWER volunteering experience within the sports and creative arts/culture organizations in which volunteers performed their voluntary roles. In discussing whether they saw their voluntary engagement rather as work or as a leisure activity, many volunteers struggled to distinguish clearly between these aspects and predominantly characterized their experience as a blurred area between work and leisure. However, participants who associated either a leisure or a work context have made the following statements.



Firstly, a work-leisure association depends on the role a volunteer has within an organization, the level of requirements from the organization, and the volunteer's personal commitment. A volunteer from Rotterdam describes her responsibilities within her voluntary role as a decisive factor of perceiving her voluntary engagement rather as work than as a leisure activity: “[Volunteering] it just became part of me. It is just work, even when you volunteer. It is fun, but you are at work and you have responsibilities, things you need to do and the responsibilities that come with that. You are at work, but then in a fun way” (**ROT2**). A volunteer from Austria on the other hand identifies his personality, which is characterized by a precise work ethic and strong commitment to a task, as a decisive factor:

(...) as I am at work, I try to be precise, as with the volunteering role and with university for example. I always try to take everything as serious as possible and as professionally as possible. That means, I always have a (...) the volunteering organization for example, I continue do educate myself and that I do my job as well and as efficiently as possible. That means, I never saw volunteering as leisure time, I see it very much as work (...) and it also exhausts me a lot, partly. Sometimes it gives me back some things, but as I said that is not, I think I said that the last time [first interview], that is not the reason why I do it. I do it because I think it makes sense and that it is cool. That it is needed right now. Meaning, I am trying to think of it as work. I am going to a meeting right now and I am getting ready for it and try to be as attentive as possible. It doesn't mean that I am super serious, but (...) but I (...) we don't sit there [in the volunteering organization] for fun in my eyes right now (**AT8**).

However, if the requirements of the volunteering organization are not that demanding and strict compared to those at the working place, a relaxed atmosphere creates a predominantly free-time characterization, as **ST2** describes. She considers her volunteering activities as leisure time despite practising her profession (making photos and videos), as the volunteering activities follow a different approach. Indeed, although remaining professional and trying to produce work of quality, her volunteering environment feels more relaxed to her.

Secondly, (good) friendships established at the volunteering site contribute to a more leisure-like feeling. Social interaction therefore takes place on a more personal level rather than perceiving communication as having a conversation with (working) colleagues, as a volunteer from Rotterdam describes it. He considers volunteering in a Hip Hop club as spending free time because of his contact with other volunteers. While work feels more obligatory to him, his volunteering feels as if he was “being and hanging out with friends” as they talk to each other: “it's just fun” [during the volunteering shift] (**ROT3**).

Thirdly, a great passion for a volunteering role fosters a feeling of a more leisurely activity. **HR3**, for example, considers her volunteering as a purely free activity as she loves art, which contributes to her volunteering wholeheartedly, diminishing a feeling of obligation or work.

Participants who have additional volunteering hours within their work context, on the one hand, find it easier to differentiate and ascribe volunteering to a more leisurely activity in having more freedom of time and topics to discuss. On the other hand, for them, the setting never changes, which blurs these two activities once again. **GLA2**, who works for a community renewal organization, also volunteers with them. Thus, his personal work and volunteer time is embedded in the Roma community, which he is also part of. For him, it is difficult to know when he is “working” and when he is volunteering:

My job is kind of the main thing and then I am doing the volunteering, which is more about helping out with experience that I have to pass on to others (**GLA2**).

The tightrope walk between work and leisure is further manifested in the individual experiences of volunteering, which on the one hand function as a stress reliever and on the other hand as a cause of stress. **GLA3** remarks that after ending her volunteering position:

It does feel like, this fun part of me has been taken away really, you know, because I really don't do that much things for fun, because I am, you know, I've got quite a lot of things to do, so volunteering was like a stress reliever” (**GLA3**).

On the other hand, **HR6** thinks that although volunteering was a wonderful experience, it was very demanding, and he is not sure whether he will be able to uphold such a pace any longer. He thinks that he will probably give up volunteering due to the difficulty of balancing volunteering and his private life. The work and leisure attribution of individual volunteering experiences thus strongly relates to individual approaches of a voluntary position as well as to the everyday life context of young adults.

### 3.3.2 Prior volunteering experiences

To contextualize the VOLPOWER activities and their effects on the volunteers comprehensively, the analysis provides some further insights into eventual previous volunteering experiences. Participants with previous experience (N=24 of 30) indicate that volunteering had helped them to put their personal problems into perspective in relation to those of others (e.g., flight experiences of refugees). It further enabled them to see personal problems from a different angle through social interaction with others, especially in interaction with people who have a different (social, cultural, economic, etc.) background than their own. In developing a new set of skills, volunteers gained self-confidence, which resulted in

a personal empowerment process (for instance, young volunteers with a migrant or refugee background state that they have gained better language skills from volunteering through their interaction with people who spoke the local language very well). Their volunteering experiences gave them an opportunity to gain new insights in fields that had been unfamiliar before and further pointed out the difficulties involved with that very field. For instance, **AT4**, who volunteered in the social sector prior his VOLPOWER participation, dismisses working in that sector now, although he initially had conceived it as a possible future field of work. His experience had showed him the many challenges people faced when working in the social sphere, such as earning little income and being exposed to a nerve-wrecking working environment. In general, participants stated that their previous volunteering experiences had contributed to multiple spheres of life (social, professional, personal, etc.).

Finally, regarding these prior volunteering experience, the most common reasons for stopping or ending a voluntary engagement were disappointed expectations, dissatisfaction with the content of their activity or the setting (structure of organization), time limitations, moving (away), and the lack of a win-win situation for everyone (volunteers and participants). As stated by an Austrian volunteer,

It was not quite voluntarily as it seems – what seemed to be a short-term and flat-structured civil initiative at the beginning, resulted in a hierarchically structured formal organization (**AT4**).

This example demonstrates unfulfilled expectations in the former volunteering context.

## 4. Conclusion

This report contributes to our general understanding of the role that youth volunteering plays in society and more specifically, to the understanding of its role in the process of migrant integration. In addition to existing research, it presents an innovative approach which provides an in-depth picture of volunteering and its effects. The project had brought together EU and third-country nationals in somewhat of a social experiment. The participants volunteered in the fields of sport and creative arts/culture in mixed-gender and intercultural settings over a period of 13 months. These volunteering activities were examined in a mixed-methods approach, which foresaw data collection prior to and towards the end of the volunteering experiences. The analysis reveals the interaction between volunteerism and individuals' human, cultural, and social capital. Volunteering in VOLPOWER activities particularly affected participants' intercultural understanding and interpersonal contacts, skills, and processes of empowerment, as well as their sense of belonging.

Summarizing the main findings of the research, for most of the volunteers, taking part in VOLPOWER affected their intercultural understanding, positively changing their perception of differences. Interestingly, this dynamic particularly concerns those young people with previous volunteering experience, bringing the specific features of VOLPOWER volunteering to attention, namely its focus on intercultural settings. This insight confirms the observation that the specific consequences and effects of volunteering are linked to the type and characteristics of the volunteering experience, as well as to specific volunteering settings that foster bridging social capital. In this context, the analysis shows that volunteering intersects with individuals' network of social contacts, with new friendships, believed to last over time. However, at times, new social contacts remained limited to the volunteering sphere. Yet, it is relevant that it is especially the vulnerable group of male third-country national volunteers, that pursues the new contacts outside of volunteering in their daily life, also making use of the network gained by volunteering outside of VOLPOWER.

In addition, the VOLPOWER experience contributed to volunteers' human capital, fostering the acquisition of various skills, ranging from more specialized skills to a broader set of abilities, particularly communication skills. Such a learning process is not only linked to the specific volunteering activity and related practice and training, but it also unfolds through the social interactions that take place during the volunteering process. At the same time, a process of empowerment emerged, particularly because people were made more attentive of their weakness and strengths. These dynamics allowed young volunteers to improve their access to the community in which they lived, contributing to a renegotiation of their sense of belonging. This becomes particularly relevant for persons with a migration background, whose migratory experience might have left them with a feeling of loneliness. However, at the same time, volunteering in VOLPOWER intercultural settings might have rendered some persons more aware of their cultural specificities: at the end of the activity, more volunteers considered themselves part of a group that is discriminated against and they had a more negative perception of the degree of inclusiveness of society. A few of these participants expressed feelings of alienation.

Finally, the research reveals several instrumental and practical issues affecting youth volunteering. Regardless whether they considered volunteering as work or leisure, VOLPOWER volunteers tended to pursue self-oriented volunteering, during which they offered their help and time to gain something for themselves in return, be it new knowledge, social contacts, or other types of benefits. This intention is often countered by the problem of time limitations and disappointment with the volunteering experience in cases where outcomes did not match expectations. Seeing that these two factors represent common reasons for terminating volunteering activities, the analysis emphasizes that volunteering should be adapted to meet the specific needs of today's young population.

Thus, consistent with other studies, the research shows that volunteering is an opportunity and a resource that helps processes of youth empowerment and fosters social interactions, intersecting with dynamics of inclusion. It is a bottom-up beneficial and valuable device that strengthens society and its members as well as the process of migrant integration. In this context, it should be stressed that VOLPOWER has operated in the field of sports and creative arts/culture, as a reminder that volunteering plays a positive role in society even when it does not concern social activities aimed at directly providing help to persons in need. In addition, this report more generally wishes to contribute to highlighting the phenomenon of volunteering by people with a migrant background in order to change perceptions surrounding migration, presenting migrants as “one of us” and as active citizens that contribute to society, rather than as a problem, as victims, and/or as passive receivers of help and support. At the same time, the research has presented the volunteering experience of young EU and third-country nationals on an equal footing. We thus agree with Erminio (2020: 71) that the volunteering sector reflects the increasingly diverse and multicultural features of today’s society. By favouring cultural exchange among persons with different origins and cultural backgrounds, volunteering can support society in the process of becoming more inclusive of people with different backgrounds.

As is the general case in social science research, the analysis presented in this report might have some limitations. As was mentioned, VOLPOWER activities for example represent an enriched form of volunteering. It thus does not reflect common formal volunteerism, nor other types of volunteering. Furthermore, our perceptions might have influenced the research design, the questionnaire and interview questions, thereby affecting the collected data. However, we believe that our findings are relevant for understanding the role played by youth volunteerism in an ever more diversifying European society.

It should finally be noted that this research has practical implications for issues of public policy. Indeed, its findings are in favour of governments promoting volunteering among the youth, both EU and third-country nationals, at the same time supporting bridging forms of volunteering that foster intercultural interactions and unfold outside of certain communities. However, there are factors that hinder migrants’ involvement in volunteering or lead people with a migrant background towards serving their specific ethnic group. Migration processes however will continue, and European countries will become more and more diversified. In other words, the potential pool of volunteers will increasingly include people with migrant background. Thus, the importance of providing tools and identifying measures to foster volunteering and helping volunteering associations, including those organizations that are not embedded in migration issues, to recruit and maintain youth volunteers, also among the migrant population, becomes evident. This task became more pressing at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic and government efforts to stop the spread of the virus have hindered volunteering activities and volun-

teering organizations. In this regard, one of the tasks of VOLPOWER work package 2 has been to elaborate a document of guidelines and policy recommendations to support youth volunteering, addressing the particular challenges regarding the involvement of young migrants, and foster integration among EU and third-country nationals.

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## Appendix 1: VOLPOWER volunteers, Interview ID and other characteristics

Interview ID	Partner	Gender	Year of birth	EUN/TCN	Field of engagement
AT1	Vienna/Austria	Male	1998	TCN	Sports
AT2	Vienna/Austria	Female	1993	TCN	Sports
AT4	Vienna/Austria	Male	1991	EUN	Sports
AT5	Vienna/Austria	Female	2000	EUN	Sports
AT7	Vienna/Austria	Male	1992	TCN	Sports
AT8	Vienna/Austria	Male	1992	EUN	Sports
GLA1	Glasgow/Scotland	Male	1996	TCN	Sports
GLA2	Glasgow/Scotland	Female	2000	EUN	Sports
GLA3	Glasgow/Scotland	Male	1998	TCN	Sports
HR01	Zagreb/Croatia	Female	1998	EUN	Creative arts/culture
HR02	Zagreb/Croatia	Female	1998	EUN	Creative arts/culture
HR03	Zagreb/Croatia	Female	1996	EUN	Creative arts/culture
HR04	Zagreb/Croatia	Female	1998	EUN	Creative arts/culture
HR06	Zagreb/Croatia	Male	1996	EUN	Creative arts/culture
ROT2	Rotterdam/The Netherlands	Female	1995	EUN	Creative arts/culture
ROT3	Rotterdam/The Netherlands	Male	1997	EUN	Creative arts/culture
ROT4	Rotterdam/The Netherlands	Female	1991	EUN	Creative arts/culture
ROT7	Rotterdam/The Netherlands	Female	1999	TCN	Creative arts/culture
SL1	Slovenia	Male	1996	TCN	Creative arts/culture
SL2	Slovenia	Female	1996	TCN	Creative arts/culture
SL5	Slovenia	Female	1991	EUN	Creative arts/culture
SL6	Slovenia	Female	1994	TCN	Creative arts/culture
SL8	Slovenia	Male	1996	TCN	Creative arts/culture
ST1	South Tyrol	Female	1992	TCN	Creative arts/culture
ST2	South Tyrol	Female	1995	EUN	Creative arts/culture
ST3	South Tyrol	Male	1995	TCN	Creative arts/culture
ST4	South Tyrol	Male	1992	TCN	Creative arts/culture
ST5	South Tyrol	Female	2001	EUN	Creative arts/culture
ST6	South Tyrol	Female	1999	EUN	Creative arts/culture
ST7	South Tyrol	Female	1999	EUN	Creative arts/culture

## Appendix 2: Qualitative interview guidelines (first wave)

### Face-to-face interview with participating volunteers (YCIS2 1<sup>st</sup> wave)

Interview ID \_\_\_\_\_

Location/Place of interviewing: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of interview (in minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

*Dear volunteer!*

*VOLPOWER explores the contribution of volunteering to youth interaction and processes of empowerment between EU and Non-EU-citizens.*

*As a participant in VOLPOWER activities, we will ask you a few questions about your personal history, your volunteering experience, your personality and your social contacts. The questionnaire consists of two parts. First, we want to ask you some survey questions and in the second part we will have an open conversation.*

*Of course, your data will be treated anonymously and the information you give us will be treated with extreme confidentiality. In case you don't feel comfortable answering questions you can stop the interview at any time. The duration of the interview will approximately be 90 minutes. In which language do you want to be interviewed?*

☐ English

☐ German

☐ Italian

☐ +Add others

[NOTE to the Interviewer: Ask the respondent to fill in the online survey first. Then start with the open questions - see interview instructions]

*We will now conduct a little interview with you in order to hear some more about your personal stories and individual experiences. Thus, you are invited to share longer narratives. Please try to answer the questions with as much information and detail as you consider important – we are very interested in what you have to say!*

*Since the interview should be more like a talk between the two of us, it would be easier for us to record it while having our conversation, are you OK with having the interview recorded?*

☐ Interviewee agreed to recording.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION TO OPEN QUESTIONS

*[Comment: The structural principle here is to start with a main question, which intends to identify the broader spectrum of a respondent's personal experience/opinion. Here the interviewee is not to be interrupted during his/her narrative. Following sub-questions will offer a guide to the interviewer for further inquiry, should the respondent be rather taciturn or should he/she obviously start diverging from the direction of conversation. Should the sub-questions remain unanswered in the narrative of the main question, they need to be addressed in the course of further questioning].*

Main question:

*Now, as you have already given us some general information about yourself, we would like to ask further questions about your life in [region]. **When you think about the last month until now, what did a typical weekday look like for you – what did you do, where did you go and whom did you meet?***

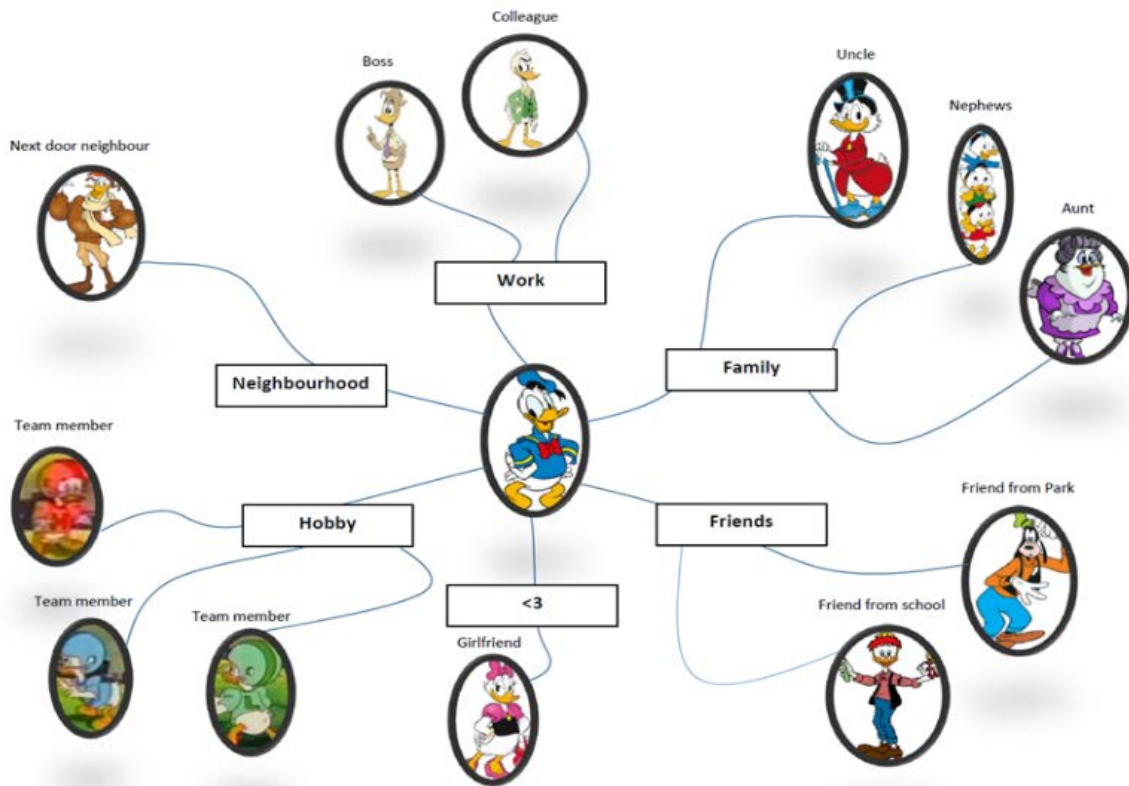
Sub question:

- a) How did you spend your leisure time? What did you do in your free time (during the time you were not involved in any "work" activities)? And with whom did you spend time?

#### 2. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Main question:

We are now interested in the people that are part of your present life. Thus, we would like you to **draw a mind map** of the **most important people** in your life. A mind map helps to visually organize your social contacts. This includes people that are very important to you, as well as people that are not as close but are part of your daily/weekly life in [region]. By drawing a line between individuals or groups (e.g. family: mother, father, brother, ..... ) you can put the people in your life in relation to each other – here is an example:



[Comment:

Show the printed example of a mind map on a separate page to the respondent]

When looking at your map of contacts, we would like to hear a bit more about the people who play an important part in your present life.

Sub questions:

- Who are the people that you drew in the map, what is your relation to them?
- How and where do you meet with them – can you locate your social contacts spatially (i.e. meeting place, e.g. home of close family members, etc.)?
- How often do you interact with them – how important are they to you?
- When having personal problems, would you ask any of them for help and if yes, whom?
- Are there any people with a migrant background among your personal contacts – if yes, is that relevant for your relationship with them?
- Did you meet any of these people in a volunteering context – if yes, do you otherwise engage with them outside of that context? Can you tell us about that?
- Do any of your social contacts hold a powerful position in society (e.g. an executive position in the business world/public administration/politics)?

### 3. SENSE OF BELONGING

Main question:

**When you think about living in [place of interview: here: Vienna] what/who contributes to your feeling of inclusion and/or exclusion?**

Sub questions:

- a) Can you think of certain situations/places in which you feel especially comfortable/ uncomfortable? What or who contributes to that feeling and why?
- b) As [region] is a place where people from many different cultural backgrounds live together – how do you assess the social coexistence of these diverse people?
- c) Do you see areas of conflict – where and why?
- d) Do you feel that certain groups of people belong or do not belong to [region]?

#### 4. VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

*We would now like to know more about your participation in volunteering activities.*

Main question:

**When you think about the volunteering activity you are about to pursue during VOLPOWER, what are your expectations?**

Sub questions:

How do you think you will benefit from that experience – are there certain skills you would like to acquire?

**[Refers to volunteers with prior experience – If answer to the main question is "NO EXPERIENCE", main question and sub-questions can be skipped]**

Main question:

**Can you describe the volunteering activities you were engaged in (prior to the current one)? To what extent did it contribute to your life in [region]?**

Sub questions:

- a) What was your role within the volunteering activities – what did you do?
- b) To what extent were the activities focussing on migrant integration?
- c) Where did the activities take place (location/organisation)?
- d) What were the benefits of doing volunteer work?
- e) What motivated you to volunteer for the particular activities?

#### 5. GENDER

Main question:

**Are there any leisure activity "fields" you would consider as more masculine or more feminine? What are those "fields" and why or why not would you associate them with a certain gender? What role does gender play when performing sports/cultural activities?**

Sub questions:

- a) Are there any hobby activities that you would prefer to pursue with people of the same gender or in a mixed group?
- b) What is your experience with mixed-gender activities?
- c) How do the people who play an important part in your life perceive gender roles?

#### 6. EMPOWERMENT

Main question:

**Do you have the feeling of having the ability and opportunity to make choices and decisions by yourself (self-determination)? What and who are influential factors/people that contribute to your decision-making?**

Sub questions:

- a) Do you agree or disagree with the people who have a great influence on your way of life and the way in which you take action?
- b) Is there anything you would like to do/try but do not feel confident enough to act out on?
- c) When thinking about yourself, where do you see your strengths and weaknesses in general but also in interaction with others?

## Appendix 2b: Qualitative interview guidelines (second wave)

### Face to face interview with participating volunteers (YCIS2 2<sup>nd</sup> wave)

Interview ID \_\_\_\_\_ (Use the same Interview ID as in the first wave)

Location/Place of interviewing: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of interview (in minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

*Dear volunteer!*

*Thank you for taking part in VOLPOWER!*

*As a participant in VOLPOWER activities, we will ask you a few questions about your personal history, your volunteering experience and your social contacts.*

*Of course, your data will be treated anonymously and the information you give us will be treated with extreme confidentiality. In case you don't feel comfortable answering questions you can stop the interview at any time. In which language do you want to be interviewed?*

*We will now conduct an interview with you in order to hear some more about your personal stories and individual experiences. Thus, you are invited to share longer narratives. Please try to answer the questions with as much information and detail as you consider important – we are very interested in what you have to say!*

*Since the interview should be more like a talk between the two of us, it would be easier for us to record it while having our conversation, are you OK with having the interview recorded?*

☐ Interviewee agreed to recording.

*[Comment to the interviewer: As this is a longitudinal interview, it is necessary to re-read the first interview of every respondent prior to the second interview. There should be flexibility to discuss issues that have come up in the first interview. Feel free to adapt the questions accordingly.]*

*The structural principle remains the same: We start with a main question, which intends to identify the broader spectrum of a respondent's personal experience/opinion. Here the interviewee is not to be interrupted during his/her narrative. Following sub-questions will offer a guide to the interviewer for further inquiry, should the respondent be rather taciturn, or should he/she obviously start diverging from the direction of conversation. It is up to the interviewer to assess an acceptable length for the interview and as many sub-questions as appropriate. Sub-questions can be left out when the interview needs to be shortened.]*

### 7. INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

Main question:

*In the first interview (YCIS2 1<sup>st</sup> wave) you told us about your everyday life: how, where and with whom you spend your weekdays as well your leisure time. **Now, we would like to know about your volunteering experience that you have taken on/pursued within the Volpower project. Please think of your routines prior the Corona crisis. Can you tell us about that?***

- b) In how far has your volunteering experience shaped your weekly schedule or routines?
- c) How would you characterize your volunteering role, is it leisure or work?
- d) How did you get involved (with your volunteering position/organization)?
- e) Tell us more about your volunteering experience (What do you do? Where? Who is involved? For how long? How often?)
- f) To what extent is your volunteering experience an intercultural experience?

### 8. VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE – SPORTS/ARTS SPECIFICS

Main question:

**You volunteered in the field of sports/arts. What is specific about volunteering in sports/arts?**

- a) What do you find interesting in sports/arts as opposed to other fields – what is your relation to sports/arts?
- b) Has your relation to sports/arts changed during your VOLPOWER Volunteering?

For sports volunteers:

- c) To what extent did you experience sports as an area of conflict?
- d) How do you deal with conflict, rivalry, aggression in sports?
- e) To what extent did you experience the field of sports as an area of togetherness?

For arts volunteers

- c) To which extent did you get involved with the wider scene of culture/arts during your VOLPOWER volunteering experience?
- d) In how far did you experience culture/arts as a field of diversity and inclusion?
- e) As a young volunteer, in what ways did you feel part of arts and culture during your VOLPOWER volunteering experience?

## 9. GENDER

Main question:

**What has been your experience with gender-relations within the framework of your VOLPOWER volunteering experience?**

Sub questions:

- d) Are there any areas of conflicts/togetherness in relation to gender?
- e) Have you perceived any changes in the attitudes and behavior of your peers concerning gender relations during your VOLPOWER volunteering experience?
- f) Has your volunteering experience changed/influenced your perception of gender relations – Why? Why not?

## 10. SKILLS

Main question:

**Are there any specific skills you have acquired from your VOLPOWER volunteering experience? If so, how?**

Sub questions:

- a) Which particular sports/arts skills have you acquired?
- b) Which organizational skills have you acquired?
- c) Have you acquired skills that help you to better understand people of different cultural background?
- d) Which social skills have you acquired?
- e) Which personal skills have you acquired?
- f) Which technical skills have you acquired?
- g) Did the VOLPOWER trainings play a role in you learning these new skills?

## 11. EMPOWERMENT

Main question:

**Do you feel you have the ability and opportunity to make your own choices? Again, please think of your situation before the Corona crisis. In how far does your VOLPOWER volunteering experience contribute to that feeling?**

Sub questions:

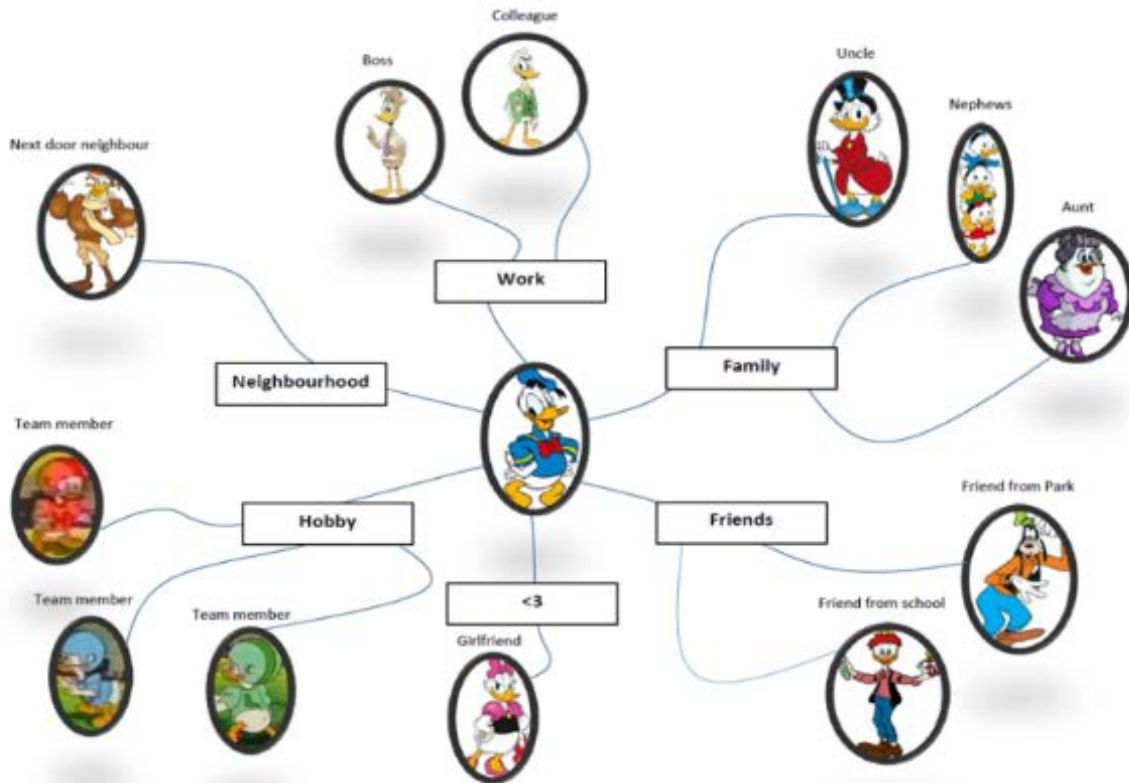
- d) When thinking about yourself, has your volunteering experience influenced in what you see as your strengths and weaknesses? In which way?
- e) When thinking about yourself, has your volunteering experience influenced your way of interacting with others? In which way?

## 12. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Main question:

*Once more, we are interested in the people that are part of your present life. Thus, we would like you to **add those people to your social-contact map (from your first interview) that are part of your present life but not yet mentioned on your map. Can you explain to me, how this map has change since then? Again, please think of your social contacts prior to the Corona crisis.***





[Comment: Provide a picture of the social-contact map the respondent drew in the first interview and send it via video conference tool or E-mail. Let the interviewee explain changes in that map and add them yourself.]

***We would like to hear a bit more about the new people who play an important part in your present life.***

Sub questions:

- h) Who are the new people that you drew in the map, what is your relation to them?
- i) How and where do you meet with them [prior to Corona] – can you locate your social contacts spatially (i.e. meeting place, e.g. home of close family members, etc.)?
- j) How often do you interact with them [prior to Corona] – how important are they to you?
- k) When having personal problems, would you ask any of them for help and if yes, whom?
- l) Do any of your new social contacts hold a powerful position in society (e.g. an executive position in the business world/public administration/politics)?

***Now we are interested in the people you interacted with during volunteering, can you please tell us more about them?***

Sub questions:

- m) What are the people like you met with in your volunteering?
- n) Are there cultural differences between yourself and those you met through your volunteering?
- o) Are there cultural similarities between yourself and those you met through volunteering?
- p) Has your perception of cultural similarities and differences changed over time?
- q) Do you think that your volunteering has made you feel part of a community – in how far?

### 13. SENSE OF BELONGING



Main question:

**When you think about living in [place of interview: here: Vienna] in how far does your volunteering experience contribute to your feelings of inclusion and/or exclusion? I know it's hard but once again we would like you to think about the situation prior to the Corona outbreak.**

Sub questions:

- e) Can you think of certain situations that made you feel especially comfortable/uncomfortable?
- f) Can you think of certain situations during your VOLPOWER volunteering experience that made you feel especially comfortable/uncomfortable?
- g) Has your volunteering experience helped you to better understand (or interact with) people of different cultural backgrounds in the local area? If so, can you tell why?

## Appendix 3a: Source document pre-tested survey questions

 <b>VOLPOWER</b>   		
<b>VOLPOWER Online Questionnaire: Question Design Template</b>		
<b>Questionnaire development: Institute for Minority Rights, Eurac Research &amp; Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences</b>		
<b>Questions and their sources</b>		
Note! If no source is indicated the question has been developed by the research team of VOLPOWER.		
<b>Research area</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Interpersonal relations</b>	How often do you meet socially* with friends, relatives or work colleagues?	European Social Survey (Source Questionnaire, Round 7 2014/15): C2 Card 22
	How many people, if any, are there with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters?	European Social Survey (Source Questionnaire, Round 8 2016/17): C3 Card 21
	Compared with other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities*? *The expression "social activities" indicates events/encounters with other people, by choice and for enjoyment rather than for reasons of work or duty.	European Social Survey (Source Questionnaire, Round 8 2016/17): C4 Card 22
<b>Intercultural and Interpersonal skills</b>	I easily adapt my plans or ways of doing things in response to changing circumstances.	Lough, B. J. 2011. "International volunteers' perception of intercultural competence." <i>International Journal of Intercultural Relations</i> 35: 452-464 (items from Intercultural competence scale).
	I can easily resolve misunderstandings with people from other cultures.	
	I understand the feelings of people from other cultures well.	

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	<p>Whatever the situation, I almost always look at it from many points of view. -&gt; reformulated: I look at situations from many points of view.</p> <p>I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.</p> <p>I am very willing to try new things.</p> <p>I am very flexible in my thinking and ideas.</p> <p>I work very effectively with people who are different from me. -&gt; reformulated: I work effectively with people who are different from me.</p> <p>I have a very strong appreciation of other nations, cultures and customs.</p>	
<b>Empowerment</b>	In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	Ryff, C. D. 1989. "Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being". <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> 57(6): 1069–1081.-> Used also in European Social Survey (Source Questionnaire, Round 6 2013/14) - Question Design Template Draft 1) Item Environmental Mastery, changed scale (5 categories, not 7 categories as in Ryff).
<b>Trust</b>	Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? -> reformulated: How much do you agree with the following statement: Most people can be trusted.	European Social Survey (Source Questionnaire, Round 6 2013/14): A8
<b>Well-being</b>	<p>I have close bonds with family and friends.</p> <p>I feel like an outsider.</p> <p>I feel isolated from the rest of the world.</p> <p>I feel connected with others.</p> <p>I feel as if people do not care about me.</p> <p>When I am with other people, I feel like a stranger.</p> <p>Because I do not belong, I feel distant during the holiday season.</p>	Malone, G., D. Pillow and A. Osman. 2012. "The General Belongingness Scale (GBS): Assessing achieved belongingness." <i>Personality and individual differences</i> 52(3): 311-316 (items of the General Belongingness Scale).

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	I feel accepted by others.	
	I have a sense of belonging.	
	When I am with other people, I feel included.	
<b>Discrimination</b>	Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against in Austria?	European Social Survey (Source Questionnaire, Round 7 2014/15): C16
<b>Discrimination grounds</b>	On what grounds is your group discriminated against?	European Social Survey (Source Questionnaire, Round 7 2014/15): C17

## Appendix 3b: Self-administered online questionnaire (first wave)

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English



Dear volunteer,

VOLPOWER explores the contribution of volunteering to youth interaction and processes of empowerment between EU and Non-EU-citizens.

As a participant to VOLPOWER activities, we will ask you a few questions about your personal history, your volunteering experience, your attitudes and your social contacts. We recognize that some questions concern sensitive matters regarding your personal feelings and perceptions. You may stop the survey at any time.

This survey will take 15 minutes approximately to complete.

Thank you for your time!

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

Enter your INTERVIEW ID:

Progress bar: 10 segments, 1st segment filled

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**PRIVACY STATEMENT**

Before starting we request your permission for the use of your data for the purpose of the project VOLPOWER.

**Data Privacy Statement**

All personal data is dealt with a manner that is in compliance with EU Regulation No. 2016/679 (GDPR). The legal basis for the processing of your personal data is based on your consent to the processing of personal data.

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☐ I DECLARE that I have read the Information about personal data handling pursuant to UE Reg. 679/2016 and give my CONSENT to the processing of my personal data.

Progress bar: 10 segments, 1st segment filled

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

1 Please answer the following questions:

Year of birth	...	▼
Country of birth	...	▼
Nationality (country)	...	▼
Double citizenship? Please specify:	<input type="text"/>	

Progress bar: 10 segments, 1st segment filled

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## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**2 Which gender do you identify with?**

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ I prefer not to say

☐ Other (please specify):

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

3 Where do you currently live?

☐ Croatia

☐ Glasgow

☐ Malta

☐ The Netherlands

☐ Slovenia

☐ South Tyrol

☐ Vienna

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**4 For how many years (approximately) have you lived in Vienna?**

☐ Since I was born  
☐ More than 20 years  
☐ 16 - 20 years  
☐ 11 - 15 years  
☐ 6 - 10 years  
☐ 3 - 5 years  
☐ 1 - 2 year(s)  
☐ Less than 1 year  
☐ Other (please specify):

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

5 ... and for how many years (approximately) have you lived in the country of your current residence?

☐ Since I was born  
☐ More than 20 years  
☐ 16 - 20 years  
☐ 11 - 15 years  
☐ 6 - 10 years  
☐ 3 - 5 years  
☐ 1 - 2 year(s)  
☐ Less than 1 year  
☐ Other (please specify):

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## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

6 Where were your parents born?

	In Vienna	In another town/province/region of this country	In another country (please specify)	Unknown
Parent 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	... <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	... <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

**7 What is your level of completed education?**  
*If currently enrolled, highest degree received.*

☐ (1) No schooling completed  
☐ (2) Primary school  
☐ (3) High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent  
☐ (4) Trade/technical/vocational training  
☐ (5) University degree or higher tertiary education  
☐ (6) Other (please specify):

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English ▼

**8 What is your employment status?**

*More than one answer is possible.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Employed, full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed, part-time
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/> Out of work and looking for work
<input type="checkbox"/> Out of work but currently not looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Military
<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to work	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <input type="text"/>

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

9 Do you currently take care of family members?

More than one answer is possible.

☐ No
 ☐ Yes, child/children
 ☐ Yes, parent/parents
 ☐ Yes, others (please specify):

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## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

[illegible]

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**11 In which sector have you volunteered?**

*More than one answer is possible.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare	<input type="checkbox"/> Education or training
<input type="checkbox"/> Religious associations/churches	<input type="checkbox"/> Human rights and development
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental work/animal welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Community work and social services
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports and recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Arts and cultural services
<input type="checkbox"/> Unions and work-organizations	<input type="checkbox"/> Political organizations
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth service	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <input type="text"/>

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[illegible][illegible]



## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English ▼

14 Over the last 12 months, how often have you volunteered?

☐ (1) At least once a week

☐ (2) Less than once a week but at least once a month

☐ (3) Less often than once a month

☐ (4) It was a one-off occasion

15 Now just thinking about the last 4 weeks. Approximately how many hours have you spent volunteering?

■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■

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[illegible]

VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

17 How many people, if any, are there with whom you can discuss intimate\* and personal matters\*\*?

\*\*\*"intimate" implies things like sex or family matters.

\*\*\*\*"personal" could include work or occupational issues as well.

...

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**18 Compared with other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities\*?**

\*The expression "social activities" indicates **events/encounters** with other people, by choice and for enjoyment rather than for reasons of work or duty.

☐ (1) Much less than most

☐ (2) Less than most

☐ (3) About the same

☐ (4) More than most

☐ (5) Much more than most

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

Now we would like to know something more about your relationship with other cultures and your experiences encountering difference. Please answer the following questions.

**19 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Strongly agree
I work effectively with people who are different from me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I easily adapt my plans or ways of doing things in response to changing circumstances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I look at situations from many points of view	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very willing to try new things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very flexible in my thinking and ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can easily resolve misunderstandings with people from other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand the feelings of people from other cultures well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a very strong appreciation of other nations, culture and customs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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[illegible]

[illegible]

VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

SELF PERCEPTION

22 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about yourself: I am ...

	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Strongly agree
Insecure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reserved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Able to assert my ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A good listener	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal oriented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

23 In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.

☐

(1) Strongly disagree

☐

(2) Disagree

☐

(3) Undecided/neutral

☐

(4) Agree

☐

(5) Strongly agree

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

24 How much do you agree with the following statement: Most people can be trusted.

☐ (1) Strongly disagree
 ☐ (2) Disagree
 ☐ (3) Undecided/neutral
 ☐ (4) Agree
 ☐ (5) Strongly agree

## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English ▼

25 How would you assess the quality of relations between people with migrant backgrounds and people without migrant backgrounds in Vienna?

1    2    3    4    5                  I don't know

Very bad ○    ○    ○    ○    ○    Very good    ○

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■

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## VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

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### WELL-BEING

Please assess your well-being in the place you are living now.

**26 How much do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Strongly agree
I feel like an outsider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel as if people do not care about me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I am with other people, I feel like a stranger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have close bonds with family and friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I am with other people, I feel included	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I do not belong, I feel distant during the holiday season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel accepted by others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel isolated from the rest of the world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel connected with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English ▼

**27 How much do you agree with the following statement: I feel valued in Vienna?**

- ☐ (1) Strongly disagree
- ☐ (2) Disagree
- ☐ (3) Undecided/neutral
- ☐ (4) Agree
- ☐ (5) Strongly agree

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■

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[illegible]

## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**29 On what grounds is your group discriminated against?**

*More than one answer is possible.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Colour or race	<input type="checkbox"/> Language
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender
<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Nationality
<input type="checkbox"/> Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Age
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <input type="text"/>

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

30 If you want to tell us something more about the issue raised or give your feedback on the content in the survey, please feel free to use the space here to express yourself.


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The end

## Appendix 3c: Self-administered online questionnaire (second wave)

VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English ▼



**Dear volunteer,**

We conclude your interview with this questionnaire. We will ask you to provide a short review of your volunteering experience. There will also be some questions that you've already answered at the beginning of your VOLPOWER experience. We ask you to answer these questions again.

Although some parts of this questionnaire may revisit discussions from your interview, **we kindly ask your collaboration in this final task.** Take your time in formulating your answers in a complete manner. The questionnaire will take **around 15 minutes** and we are available if you have any questions.

*Thank you!*

Start

Powered by Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English ▼

**PRIVACY STATEMENT**

Before starting we request your permission for the use of your data for the purpose of the project VOLPOWER.

**Data Privacy Statement**

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☐ I DECLARE that I have read the Information about personal data handling pursuant to UE Reg. 679/2016 and give my CONSENT to the processing of my personal data.

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## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

Enter your INTERVIEW ID:

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

1 Where do you currently live?

If you have changed residence in the past months, please indicate where you participated in the VOLPOWER volunteering experience.

☐ Croatia

☐ Glasgow

☐ Malta

☐ The Netherlands

☐ Slovenia

☐ South Tyrol

☐ Vienna

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

2 During your volunteering activity for this project, have you been involved in other volunteering activities not connected to VOLPOWER?

☐ No
 ☐ Yes

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

VOLPOWER VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

3 Intensity and frequency

Please calculate your time spent as part of the Volpower volunteering experience. Choose both options if your volunteering has changed over time in intensity or frequency.

*Note: Please refer only to your volunteering activity. Do not include Volpower Group Meetings, Volpower Hubs or Volpower Training(s).*

How were your volunteering activities structured over time?

<input type="checkbox"/>	I volunteered on a weekly or monthly basis.	How many months?	...	How many months per month?	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	I volunteered occasionally.	How many times?	...	Over how many months?	...

## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

4 Now, with regard to the overview of your Volpower volunteer activities, please sum up your engagement: approximately how many hours have you spent volunteering?

Please refer only to your volunteering activity. Do not include Volpower Group Meetings, Volpower Hubs or Volpower Training(s).

Total hours: ...



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### VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

5 What is your employment status at the moment?

More than one answer is possible.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed, full-time                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Employed, part-time                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Out of work and looking for work             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Out of work but currently not looking for work | <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student  | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to work                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <input type="text"/> |



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### VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

#### INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

We would like to learn something more about your interpersonal relations . Please answer the following questions.

6 How often do you meet socially\* with friends, relatives or work colleagues?

\*The expression "meet socially" implies meet by choice rather than for reasons of either work or pure duty.

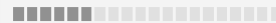
- ☐ (1) Never  
☐ (2) Less than once a month  
☐ (3) Once a month  
☐ (4) Several times a month  
☐ (5) Once a week  
☐ (6) Several times a week  
☐ (7) Every day

7 With how many people you got to know through the VOLPOWER Project do you meet outside the project?

...

8 Do you think that one or more longer lasting friendships developed through your involvement in the VOLPOWER project?

- ☐ No, not really  
☐ Yes, I think so  
☐ Yes, I am sure  
☐ I don't know



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## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**9 Compared with other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities\*\*?**

\*The expression "social activities" indicates **events/encounters** with other people, by choice and for enjoyment rather than for reasons of work or duty.

☐ (1) Much less than most  
☐ (2) Less than most  
☐ (3) About the same  
☐ (4) More than most  
☐ (5) Much more than most

**10 How many people, if any, are there with whom you can discuss intimate\* and personal matters\*\*?**

\*\*\*"intimate" implies things like sex or family matters.

\*\*\*"personal" could include work or occupational issues as well.

...

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## VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

Now we would like to know something more about your relationship with other cultures and your experiences encountering difference. Please answer the following questions.

**11 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Strongly agree
I work effectively with people who are different from me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I easily adapt my plans or ways of doing things in response to changing circumstances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I look at situations from many points of view	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very flexible in my thinking and ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can easily resolve misunderstandings with people from other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very willing to try new things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand the feelings of people from other cultures well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a very strong appreciation of other nations, culture and customs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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[illegible][illegible]

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

14 How much do you feel "at home" ... ?

	(1) Not at all	(2) A little bit	(3) Some	(4) A lot	(5) Completely
... in Croatia?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... in Europe?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

15 Do you feel that taking part in the VOLPOWER Project has changed your sense of belonging to Croatia?

☐ No, not really  
☐ Yes, in a positive way  
☐ Yes, in a negative way  
☐ Other (please specify):

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**SELF PERCEPTION**

16 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about yourself: I am ...

	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Strongly agree
Confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reserved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A good listener	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Able to assert my ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insecure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal oriented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

17 In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.

☐ (1) Strongly disagree  
☐ (2) Disagree  
☐ (3) Undecided/neutral  
☐ (4) Agree  
☐ (5) Strongly agree

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## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**18 How much do you agree with the following statement: Most people can be trusted.**

☐ (1) Strongly disagree

☐ (2) Disagree

☐ (3) Undecided/neutral

☐ (4) Agree

☐ (5) Strongly agree

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English ▾

**19 How would you assess the quality of relations between people with migrant backgrounds and people without migrant backgrounds in Croatia?**

1	2	3	4	5	I don't know
Very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Very good

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

WELL-BEING

Please assess your well-being in the place you are living now.

20 How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Strongly agree
Because I do not belong, I feel distant during the holiday season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I am with other people, I feel included	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel as if people do not care about me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like an outsider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel isolated from the rest of the world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I am with other people, I feel like a stranger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have close bonds with family and friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel accepted by others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel connected with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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English

21 How much do you agree with the following statement: I feel valued in Croatia?

☐ (1) Strongly disagree
 ☐ (2) Disagree
 ☐ (3) Undecided/neutral
 ☐ (4) Agree
 ☐ (5) Strongly agree

## VOLPOWER – WP2 Final Report

**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English ▼

**22 Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against in Croatia?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

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**VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower**

English

**23 On what grounds is your group discriminated against?**

*More than one answer is possible.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Language
<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Colour or race
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender
<input type="checkbox"/> Nationality	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality
<input type="checkbox"/> Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <input type="text"/>

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VOLPOWER - Volunteer and Empower

English

▼

If you want to tell us something more about the issue raised or give your feedback on the content in the survey, please feel free to use the space here to express yourself.

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The end