

# VERSO

VOLUNTEERS FOR EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT

# GOOD PRACTICE CATALOGUE



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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the good practice catalogue is to collect and disseminate “good examples” of how voluntary work functions in the framework of the VERSO project. The catalogue has been developed in cooperation with the eight Public Authorities and four Knowledge Partners of the project and aims to make visible some of the good practices. In addition, the catalogue will be a means of dissemination, transfer and implementation of the good practices from one region to the next.

The examples within the catalogue have a common thread in that they cover a number of fields within which voluntary work makes a difference. The list in the catalogue is by no means exhaustive with respect to relevant activities and practices in the field of voluntary work.

The structure of the catalogue is built up of the following parts: what good practice is; presentation of the good practices; clustering of the good practices and finally social innovation and implementation.





## 2. WHAT ARE GOOD PRACTICES?

In current times, where welfare states are under social and financial crisis with climbing unemployment rates, the search for good volunteering practices that emphasise social citizenship whilst promoting cohesion and employment, is a challenge.

Volunteerism is seen as an arena where marginalised groups, unemployed workforce and generally vulnerable people can maintain and develop job skills and enhance their network in an informal educational setting. In this sphere it is possible to acquire, re-acquire or re-orient job skills and develop familiarity with or tolerance of changing job demands.

VERSO has identified good practices of volunteering, which promote employment and welfare of European citizens. The VERSO project represents an ideal forum for sharing and disseminating good practices of voluntarism in order to promote European employment and to contribute to the upgrade of the Europeans' quality of life.

Good practices have been widely used in the fields of organisational and human resource development, in every field of engineering and human service, as they hold a great deal of meaning for professional programmes and their identification has been proven to be of great importance. However, good practices relevant for social and behavioural sciences require a scrutiny on the adjustments needed in order for a practice to be transferred into another context. The knowledge

acquired by experiences gained from good practices needs to be capitalised through a process of documentation which supports continuous learning. In the VERSO project a good practice will therefore seek to achieve employees being able to receive the same employment standards, at least minimum wages, maximum hour laws, health laws etc., regardless of what sector they belong to. The term “good practice” is used in preference to “best practice” to signify the possibility of more than one approach being suitable for the same task, process or activity. Thereby, we also recognise that a practice may have applications owing to the differences which exist in the local conditions such as legislation, cooperation between public and voluntary initiatives, etc.

The VERSO identified practices reflect the complex nature of the problems addressed through them and are usually characterised by being interdisciplinary. The ways different institutions implement good practice depends on various circumstances. The good practices should be regarded not as a successful packaged intervention that could be easily generalised and transferred, but rather as a process of planning and synthesising research from sources. VERSO's policy recommendations and good practices can be located on a continuum between re-enforcing pre-existing institutional structures and fundamental reforms aimed at adapting to new labour market structures, being characterised by an increased integration of and flexibility between education, training, and employment-related approaches.

# 3. CLUSTERING THE GOOD PRACTICES

An analysis of the good practices shows some patterns in relation to methodologies used by the volunteers. The most important methods identified are various versions of mentoring, rehabilitation, organization and corporate social responsibility. These four domains have been selected as basic experiences in the examples of good practices. For each of the four domains a case is selected which makes an example of how the method is used. The study of the good practices also seeks to explore and understand their subject matter in order to give voice to volunteers as well as beneficiaries or users. The study tries to interpret significant phenomena about social policy, labour market, discrimination and service provisions by volunteers. The examples are similarly seen as transferable principles or political tools.

## THE FOUR PRINCIPLES

Besides *social innovation* the VERSO good practices are categorized by these four principles :

- Mentoring
- Rehabilitation
- Organization
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The following should serve as shortened examples of these four domains as they appear in the good practices.

### Mentoring

MENTOR NETWORK MIDDELFART in the Municipality of Middelfart started as a co-operation

between Job Centre Middelfart and the Local Employment Council. The two parties decided to support an effort aimed at younger people from the ages 15-32 by training volunteer social mentors to be able to support young people with problems that lay beyond unemployment. The mentors go through a basic educational programme aimed at their level. The programme lasts five evenings, and the mentor coordinator trains the mentors. The mentors are ordinary people who are interested in other people and who want to use their resources to motivate and support other people with difficulties. The mentor is a role model for the citizen as well as a buffer and a motivator, supporting and advising the citizen on his progress. Vulnerable young people participating in the project complete an upper secondary education. Because the project encompasses everyone from the ages 15-32 it is also the mentor corps' task to find jobs for those who for some reason are educated, but without a job. The Mentor Network Middelfart is now independent of the municipality system and applies for funding as an association.

The analysis of mobilization is based on the information collected from the interviews of people engaged in the good practice. The results of the analysis indicates that Mentor Network Middelfart has developed mobilization actions pursuing mentoring as a main objective. The actions required to mobilize youngsters receive external private support to achieve its goals, and the ones accomplished are social cohesion, mentoring and improvement of health and quality of life. The main interest of Mentor Network Middelfart is to train volunteers as mentors. After the analy-





sis of mobilization we found that the results are closely related and coherent with the mentoring task. In one way or another, this practice improves quality of life and health; also it can stimulate the social cohesion by sharing experiences and caring for others.

There are several tangible results from the Mentor Network: 22% of the mentees living on social welfare have returned to the educational system and 42% of the mentees have been maintained in the formal educational system. 10% have gone from long-term sick leave back into the educational system and 11% of the mentees have shown interest in participating in a work related internship. The dropout rate has been 4%.

The main cost in the Mentor Network programme is the administrative costs which include the employment of a mentor coordinator and a development consultant. The total costs for implementing and running the Mentor Network programme is €65,077 and the benefit registered so far is estimated to €87,262.

**Rehabilitation**

OPENING THE DOOR TO REHABILITATION – The Fundació ARED is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 as an association for the social integration of women. The selected good practice seeks to improve the employability of disadvantaged groups who have difficulties in accessing the standard labour market, primarily women from prisons. Improving employability involves the design, planning, production, delivery and assessment of individual and group actions targeting the beneficiaries of the activities. This innovative and pioneering initiative has grown to become a stable platform providing a link between exclusion and genuine integration. This has been made possible by the help and partnership of private and public organizations together with people who believe in integration and have made sustained effort to drive the foundational purpose.

The analysis of mobilization based on the interviews, indicates that Opening the door to rehabilitation develops three main mobilization actions, those are: (1) advice; (2) support and

empowerment of people; and (3), mentoring and different types of events for the citizens. From these actions, the objectives proposed are the understanding, awareness raising and education of people and also the improvement of health and quality of life.

To achieve its goals, ARED receives non-financial and financial, private and public support. The main strategies used to develop this project are the communication, diffusion and also the commitment and engagement of the volunteers. The results achieved from the mobilization actions are understanding, awareness raising and education of the volunteers engaged along with fundraising.

While all the actions developed by ARED are essential to achieve the main objective of the project, when rehabilitation is sought participation of the society is also needed. That is why the events, social communication, understanding, awareness raising and informing citizens are necessary.

The annual cost for Opening the door to Rehabilitation is €545,920. The main costs are wage costs of working hours and insurance which accounts for respectively €294,424 and €169,967 on an annual basis. The benefits in the project are net wages in the case of getting a job (€282,633), income of other means (€50,000), increase in tax payments (€163,160) and reduction in unemployment benefits (€21,670). The explicit benefits in the project are estimated to be €402,199 on an annual basis. Furthermore the project Opening the door to Rehabilitation creates implicit benefits like improved skills, ability to create new relationships and emotional wellbeing.

### Organization:

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - CAB:

Internal organization: Hull & East Riding Citizens Advice Bureau is one of the 382 bureaux across England and Wales. Each bureau exists to pro-

vide free, confidential, independent, impartial advice, information, and representation to members of the public on a range of issues including debt, welfare rights, employment, housing and all other issues. The Bureau has its own internal organization, which e.g. includes mentor recruitment, mentor education, supervision and follow up sessions.

External organization: each Bureau is an independent registered charity and affiliated to the national body "Citizens Advice". In order to be called a Citizens Advice Bureau the organisation must conform to the membership requirements of this national body. Each Bureau are audited every three years for the quality of advice and organizational robustness. The national body supports the local Bureau to operate effectively, provides guidelines and examples to follow and ensures consistency in recruitment, training and development, appraisal, competency and quality of advice.

The main mobilization actions developed by this good practice are those related to the advice, support and empowerment of people. These actions were developed with the aim to mentor, help and care for citizens. To achieve its goals they need financial public external support and also private external support.

The mobilization actions developed by CAB, require different strategies.

These strategies are related to (1) the commitment and the engagement to the action, (2) the internal support received from other areas or departments and (3) the monitored process referring to the organization of the clarification and implementation of the action developed.

So the mobilization actions are, in this case, mostly related to the organization.

The Bureau has a proven track record in training its volunteers in skills that enable them to get paid employment outside CAB. In 2011/12, 61 volunteers left the bureau to take up paid em-

ployment (30% of the CAB volunteers). A further 12 volunteers left to continue their formal education. Feedback from the volunteers indicates that their experience and training at the Bureau was instrumental in their success in obtaining paid employment.

## Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR

PARTNERS IN RESPONSIBILITY: “Verantwortungspartner für Lippe” is based on the programme “Unternehmen für die Region” (Enterprises for the Region), within which the entrepreneurs have joined forces in Germany for a network to learn with and from each other. The initiative makes good examples of successful projects and examples of best practice visible throughout Germany, specially promotes new partnerships and participates in the dialogue with the policy on Corporate Social Responsibility. Lippe has a high number of young people. The more the demographic develops the more the promotion of youth is an issue in the region. The subject of CSR in the district of Lippe is mainly addressed by this initiative and by the companies involved. The initiative is divided into four working groups. The activities are concerned with the professional orientation of young people, the better integration of migrants in business, with the increasingly aging workforce in enterprises and improvements in reconciliation of work and family. The initiative “Verantwortungspartner für Lippe” is made up of representatives of companies and organizations. The people involve themselves voluntarily in the fields of CSR. Often it is business managers, managing directors or employers with decision-making powers.

The analysis of mobilization based on the interviews of two people from Partners in responsibility, indicates that the mobilization actions developed by this practice are focused on the job or employment dimension and have the aim to improve the quality of life of the citizens. To achieve its goals they need the external public or private support. Furthermore, not just the

support needs to be considered; also the strategies used are essential to achieve the results expected.

The main strategy of this practice is the communication and dissemination of the information. Combining the actions, the objectives, the strategies and the external support, Partners in responsibility achieve what they expected.

## Social Innovation

Social innovation refers to innovative activities and services motivated by the goal of meeting needs and improving people’s lives. Social innovation works with social goals. In brief the VERSO project combines new ideas, social value and unmet social needs.

One of the good practices illustrates very well what social innovation is about. Concluding the presentation the “Referent”-case emphasises: “Organisations that are and/or have volunteer projects in Catalonia conduct their activities in the free exercise of their civic commitment and decide to cater for specific needs in their surroundings that they perceive as unmet using their own tools (passion, time, and altruism). Volunteering thus adds to the work of professionals (both in public services and in the organizations themselves), focusing on the “human intangibles” that are the source that are real social transformation processes”.

The practices selected develop their actions based on their own experience and also are orientated towards social innovation.

Social innovation, then, occurs when a practice:

- (1) Identifies the needs of its territory: fighting unemployment, increasing motivation of young people, and identifying the volunteer activity as a key to achieve more and better occupation.
- (2) Maintains close links with other sectors: participation with other agents beyond NGO and third sector entities.
- (3) Establishes synergies with entities from the same sector: to increase





its expertise. (4) Measures the impact of its tasks: demonstrate the success of its interventions. (5) Function based on accurate methodologies to enable the transfer and the improvement of the processes: to enable the creation of new and tested methodologies. (6) Economical sustainability: will prove a better design and accuracy

of the projects in which the transferability and the impact will be considered as key elements to receive external support.

# 4. IMPLEMENTATION

Based on this catalogue the public authorities are going to develop implementation plans for the transfer of good practices. The initial plans was discussed in Sofia in February 2014, and examples of transfer of practices and policies will be presented at the final conference at 25 September, 2014 in Hungary.

However, some points on implementation might be useful at this early stage.

Research has pointed to some missing observation points regarding implementation. First of all, the assumptions of a smooth and effective way to implement policy have been unrealistic and to some extent wishful thinking. Secondly, the assumptions have been too rationalistic.

Based on recent research a focus has been developed emphasizing the “vetoes” or “barriers” that forms obstacles for the implementation process. The following points may suffer from being just a schematic outline, but this may, perhaps, offer a sound overview of the matter.

1. Political decisions are not always clear or unambiguous. In Parliament majority decisions preconditions participation of more political parties. They may support a given decision, but also represent further goals. This means that contradictions are built into decisions taken.
2. The municipalities or regions, responsible for carrying out the policy, may represent the opposite majority compared to a given Parliament. Therefore, a municipality council may interpret the decision and practically orient it in accordance with local policy. Here we find the second contradiction.

3. Then the municipality administration is taking over the task. Here one will again and again find other interpretations – the “new” initiative should fit into what “we are already doing”, etc. The administration seeks to convince some leaders of the public institutions to take responsibility, and these might also raise doubt or try to rearrange the new policy into known frameworks. They may even fight about the right to carry out the decisions or the opposite.
4. The leaders turn to their staff aiming at convincing the rank-and-file to deliver the services according to the new decision from the municipality. At this level there may be members of staff who do not agree (politically, methodologically, practically – you name it). They will act by establishing barriers or similar.
5. In the end the user/client should be heard. The street-level bureaucrat has to negotiate with the user on how to implement various parts of the decision.



## 5. SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES

The 16 good practices were selected out of 30 identified cases by the Knowledge Partners of the VERSO project. More detailed information and insight into the processes of selection, analyses of social mobilization and a cost-benefit-analysis are available at the homepage [www.versonet.eu](http://www.versonet.eu). To identify and select the good practices 5 indicators were in use, namely effectiveness, social impact, sustainability, social participation and transferability. In addition, the 16 selected good practices were analysed in a horizontal framework of Cost-Benefit, mobilization and comparative analysis. The analysis showed that

the good practices provided an added value to local employment development. The large scale good practices scored the highest in terms of value, due to a stronger effect on employment. However, the analysis also showed that small scale good practices did contribute to increase the conditions of the target groups. Ultimately, the analysis concluded that some effects are working faster than others, implying that direct benefits have to be balanced by indirect benefits and that good practices have to be assessed on a short-term basis as well as a long-term basis.



## MENTORING:

### The Mentor Programme at Middelfart Job Centre

**Location: Municipality of Middelfart, Denmark**

Every second youth is unemployed in some European countries. In Middelfart, Denmark, the overall unemployment rate is only 5%. One of the keystones of improving the young generations' chances for employment is education. Middelfart Job Centre has set up a special mentor programme to support the young. Since January 2010, Middelfart Job Centre has educated 114 voluntary social mentors in the community with the purpose of supporting young people to begin – and most importantly - complete an education and enhance their chances of getting a job after school.

Preliminary project results: 42% of the youths have continued in their education, 22% have been motivated to go from social security to education, 11% have gone from long-term sickness to education and 11% have been motivated to follow a corporate internship programme.

### PONTE Mentors

**Location: Detmold Germany**

This case is a mentor network (Netzwerk Lippe) where volunteers are trained to mentor young people with an immigrant background. The guidance is related to career or general questions about integration. The project workers of the Netzwerk Lippe now prepare and perform the training of 63 mentors. In the project period (May 2009 - March 2012) different projects have been implemented e.g. micro assessment centres were held for youngsters with the objective to improve social skills and knowledge of their own strengths. The Netzwerk Lippe develops e.g. training for youth leaders, group leaders in youth centers and for homework helpers when needed. In addition some regular offers have developed: language cafés for refugees in Detmold and Blomberg. Once a week the mentors

prepare, organise and follow up meetings in the cafes. The mentors assist with problems such as administration or housing.

Link to additional information:

<http://www.netzwerk-lippe.de/arbeitsmarktintegration/erfolgreichabgeschlossene-projekte/ponte/>

### An die Arbeit. e. V To Work

**Location: Detmold, Germany**

“An die Arbeit. e.V.” is politically and administratively independent and works to support young people in vocational guidance and in looking for an internship. The members come e.g. from the political realm, economy and institutions of labour market programmes – companies cannot be members. The association was founded in 2005 as an initiative of committed citizens who wanted to contribute to the improvement of the conditions for young people in the Lippe district. The organization is financed through membership fees and at the end of 2012 the association reached more than 225 paying members. Some are associate members, others engaged as volunteers and regularly work in an advisory, mediating or coaching role. The initiated links between young people, schools, employment services, employers and other institutions provide a better starting point for the young people in their vocational guidance.

Link to additional information:

[www.an-die-arbeit.net](http://www.an-die-arbeit.net)

### Coach Project

**Location: Barcelona, Catalonia**

Coach Project is managed by Exit Foundation and started in Barcelona in 2009. The project is a guided job skills training programme, under which a group of volunteers from various companies mentor young people with a background of social failure and who are at risk of social exclusion. The initiative provides them

with their first contact to the labour market. The project was designed to bring a new approach and meaning to what CSR policies entail for businesses. The intention was to explore a new corporate relationship and volunteering model that would place the company, as the entity and social stakeholder it is, and its employees at the core of its own CSR policy. Thus the objective is to bring young people and businesses together at the initial stage of the young person's integration process and through this encourage them to continue studying to achieve their career goal.

Link to additional information:

[http://www.fundacioexit.org/eb/?pagina=empresa\\_feste\\_voluntari&lang=eng](http://www.fundacioexit.org/eb/?pagina=empresa_feste_voluntari&lang=eng)

### **Youth Entrepreneurship Market-place**

**Location: Sofia, Bulgaria**

This case is situated in Sofia and is conducted in the office of Consultancy Company Strategies and "Kauzi" Foundation. In 2009 the Foundation opened a Bureau for Social Services (in 2011 transformed into a Youth Entrepreneurship Marketplace) as a social and business incubator for motivation, psychological work, and group work. The target group consists of young people between 15 and 29 years with or without disabilities and armed with a spirit of entrepreneurship, business and/or social ideas. Most of them came from social institutions, special schools for children with disabilities, public schools and student organisations. They actively seek opportunities to obtain more practical knowledge and skills to shape their business ideas professionally. The volunteers in this case are business consultants as "Strategy" – experts in business development', financing of SMSs, project development and social integration.

Link to additional information:

[www.kauzi.org](http://www.kauzi.org)

### **Referent Programme**

**Location: Barcelona, Catalonia**

The Referent Programme offers volunteering support to young people who are wards (or former wards) or at risk of social exclusion. The referents are volunteers aged between 26 and 65 years and offer the young people multiple kinds of support (emotional, recreational, linguistic and social) and mentoring related to job seeking and to finding a place to live. The project is run by the Associació Punt de Referència, a non-profit organization, founded in 1997 and works to promote full social integration, equal opportunities and improving the quality of life of young former wards by mentoring them in their emancipating process. The programme emphasises the voluntary accompaniment along with the professionals in order to guarantee the needed autonomy for the youngsters. One of the objectives is making visible to society the need in supporting young former wards so that their condition of being at risk of social exclusion should not be a determining factor due to their past.

Link to additional information:

<http://www.puntdereferencia.org/>

## **REHABILITATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE:**

### **Opening the door to rehabilitation – ARED**

**Location: Barcelona, Catalonia**

The Fundació Ared is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 as an association for the social integration of women; mainly for women who do not have sufficient resources to access the ordinary mechanisms of social integration and employment. The selected good practice seeks to improve the employability of disadvantaged groups who have difficulties in accessing the standard labour market, primary women from prison. Improving employability involves the design, planning, production, delivery and assessment of individual and group actions targeting

the beneficiaries of the activities. This innovative and pioneering initiative has grown to become a stable platform providing a link between exclusion and genuine integration. This has been made possible by the help and partnership of private and public organizations together with people who believe in integration and have made sustained effort to drive the foundational purpose.

### **Business Incubator for Vulnerable Groups**

**Location: Sofia, Bulgaria**

One of the strategic objectives of the Bulgarian Red Cross organisation is to give opportunities for qualifications and prequalification for vulnerable people so they can reach their potential for active social inclusion. This support aims to help people to become financially independent. The business incubator within the Bulgarian Red Cross organization will be accessible to marginal groups, mainly people from Roma minorities, migrants and refugees and low-income women. The general objective is: Development of an innovative approach targeting synchronization of own businesses and social inclusion through introduction of a system of supporting economic activities. The volunteers are 30 students from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year in Business administration from the Economic faculty of Sofia University ST. Kliment Ohridski.

Link to additional information:

[www.redcross.bg](http://www.redcross.bg)

### **Chasing Youth Autonomy**

**Location: Barcelona, Catalonia**

This project is managed by Casal dels Infants als Barris and offers young people access to a social and normalised network and socio-economic autonomy, while fostering personal and social capacities. The organisation is deeply rooted in the region, specifically in one of Barcelona's poorest districts. The work to build the project is based on teams of paid staff and volunteers and works in partnership with other community,

cultural and neighbourhood organisations; especially ones with the same profiles that promote entrepreneurship in the field of recycling, based on the skills they have for recycling waste materials. The core focus is of improving relationships, social inclusion capacities and thereby promoting an increase in youngsters' involvement in other groups (cultural or social activities, working camps abroad etc.). A coordinated work team of volunteers and professionals allows personalized attention to each of the attended users.

Link to additional information:

[www.casaldelsinfants.org/](http://www.casaldelsinfants.org/)

### **Immigrant Entrepreneurs**

**Location: Barcelona, Catalonia**

Volunteers in Entrepreneurial Advising (VAE) were created in 2005 and have attended about 500 projects of immigrants to Catalonia (about 40 % of its advising activity). Most of them till 2010 corresponding to new business projects, with a heavy increase of good practices from 2011 of unemployed people who seek to establish themselves as freelancers. Individual advice is provided for the people that want to install a small business or consolidate the one they had already. VAE volunteers are entrepreneurs and managers, retired (mostly) or active, who have the will, capability and time available to selflessly advise people who want to start or consolidate a (small) business.

Link to additional information:

[www.vaeassessoriaempresarial.org/](http://www.vaeassessoriaempresarial.org/)

### **The Laundry Project - Coevorden takes its social responsibility**

**Location: Coevorden, Netherland**

The Laundry Project is an example of the projects that the Department of Social Affairs in Coevorden undertakes to create opportunities for jobseekers. The practice is a perfect example of corporate social responsibility of both the local authority and a large industrial laundry in the area. It is a small industrial laundry in a shel-





tered environment, where jobseekers can work voluntarily (i.e. without receiving full wages, but of course indemnified for example travel costs and other necessary expenses). Jobseekers are evaluated on their competences (both professional and life skills such as working in a team, how to deal with authority and being on time) and if necessary assistance in other fields is given, for example in budget management or substance

abuse. Jobseekers are also assisted in finding jobs or (paid) placements in other companies in the area. The idea of setting up such training companies came about when it was discovered that many local companies are quite willing to help jobseekers gain work experience. However, they also want the local authority to recognise its responsibility and at the same time jobseekers want to be taken seriously. For this, it is impor-

tant that work with real economic value is done. The Laundry Project is just one example of such activity; there are many more examples of such training activities around the area, for example a project to help the elderly, to liven up small villages in population decline and even a canoe rental company.

Link to additional information:

[www.coevorden.nl/werk-en-inkomen/](http://www.coevorden.nl/werk-en-inkomen/)

## COORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - CSR

### Verantwortungspartner für Lippe (Partners in Responsibility for Lippe)

**Location:** Detmold Germany

This case is an association of medium-sized companies with the objective of strengthening the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The initiative started in 2009 via the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development within the CSR. The parties are supported by the Bertelsmann Foundation (e.g. follow-up and coaching activities). The initiative is divided into four working groups and is concerned with the professional orientation of young people, the better integration of migrants in business, with the increasingly aging workforce involvement in enterprises and improvements in reconciliation of work and family. All activities are based on the performance of the companies involved. The initiative contributes to the improvements of opportunities and a better integration of Lippe and consists of more than 70 voluntary member companies.

Link to additional information:

[www.verantwortungspartner-fuer-lippe.de](http://www.verantwortungspartner-fuer-lippe.de)

### Young Banker Programme

**Location:** Sofia, Bulgaria

Young Banker Programme of ProCredit Bank Bulgaria is an initiative which started early 2011. The

programme applies to persons and young people who have just completed their university education with a minimum degree of “Bachelor”, regardless of specialty or university, or if they have work experience or not. It aims to support these graduates with minor or lacking experience who would like to prequalify to acquire new aspects of banking activities and work processes. For a period of six months the trainees can benefit from comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge. ProCredit bank is a modern and socially responsible institution and since employees are the basis of the success of the bank, the bank itself invests significant resources in training and development through “Young Bankers” programme. The employees are the volunteers who coach young people in various activities of the bank such as: banking services, payments, loans, law marketing accountancy and risk management.

Link to additional information:

[www.procreditbank.bg](http://www.procreditbank.bg)

## ORGANISATION:

### Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

**Location:** Hull & East Riding, UK

Internal organization: Hull & East Riding Citizens Advice Bureau is one of the 382 bureaus across England and Wales. Each bureau exists to provide free, confidential, independent, impartial advice, information, and representation to members of the public on a range of issues including debt, welfare rights, employment, housing and all other issues. The Bureau has its own internal organization which e.g. includes mentor recruitment, mentor training, supervision and follow up sessions.

External organization: each Bureau is an independent registered charity and affiliated to the national body Citizens Advice. In order to be called a Citizens Advice Bureau all must conform to the membership requirements of this national body and are audited every three years for the quality of advice and organizational robustness. The na-



tional body supports the local Bureau to operate effectively, provides guidelines and examples to follow and ensures consistency in recruitment, training and development, appraisal, competency and quality of advice.

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/bureau\\_detail.htm?serialnumber=100578](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/bureau_detail.htm?serialnumber=100578)

### **National citizens Service (NCS)**

**Location:** Yorkshire, UK

The programme aims to be a rite of passage for all 16 year olds and help to promote a more cohesive, responsible and active society. It is a Summer programme involving residential and at-home components in which young people

come together as a team to design and carry out a social action project in their local area. NCS is a national programme and is delivered across the country by 12 NCS providers and the pilot programme was launched in 2011. The programme has three main objectives: improving teamwork, improving social mixing and encouraging community involvement. The young people involved in NCS expect the programme to help them to secure education, training or employment opportunities by enabling them to demonstrate their skills and experiences to employers, training providers and universities.

Link to additional information:

[www.eastriding.gov.uk](http://www.eastriding.gov.uk)



### Protection of Lake Pamvotis

**Location: Epirus, Greece**

The Lake Pamvotis Management Authority is funded by the Operational Programs “ENVIRONMENT and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT of the National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013). The aims of the Management Authority are the protection of the natural ecosystem, the restoration and preservation of the ecological balance of the lake. People who volunteer on the Management Authority are mostly scientists, such as biologists, chemists, agriculturists, students and graduates, who intend to acquire professional experience and specified knowledge of the lake, through their involvement with Management Authority. The experience they gain is very valuable for their professional profile. During their participation at the operation of the Environmental Museum, the Ecological Park and the social awareness events the Management Authority organizes, the volunteers come in contact with other concerned citizens and organizations. Through this network, potential employers become aware of the volunteer’s knowledge, experience, environmental consciousness and professional qualifications.

Link to additional information:

[www.php.gov.gr](http://www.php.gov.gr)

### Hellenic Red Cross

**Location: Epirus, Greece**

Hellenic Red Cross, established in 1877, is the largest and the most well-known volunteer Organization in Greece, with a mission targeted at stimulating voluntary action and direct response to citizens. The Social Welfare Division of the H.R.C. is exercising policies on volunteerism through the development of a management system and expansion policies by creating the Regional/Branch Offices Training Service, the Staff and Volunteer Training Service and the Volunteer Supervision, Support and Mobilization Dept. All Services remain in contact with the volunteers, offering further training on regular basis.

The participation in public awareness raising

campaigns and festivals is a significant opportunity for the promotion of volunteering in the Red Cross Movement, whereas recruitment of potential volunteers is met. Especially in the Regional Social Welfare Service of Ioannina-Epirus, approximately 25 volunteers are recruited every year and selected through indirect (posters, brochures, media appeals, public speaking etc.), direct (personal contacts) and delegated means, schools, universities etc. They are trained at a two-month basic program.

Social welfare volunteers work closely with the public and focus on supporting vulnerable target groups; their job involves skill enhancement, job assessment, team working and gaining of experiences through a learning encouraging environment. Formal and informal procedures exist in which unemployed people who volunteer in the HRC improve their employability.

Link to additional information:

[www.redcross.gr](http://www.redcross.gr)

# 6. APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY FOR GOOD PRACTICE IDENTIFICATION

The following short appendix will provide the background information for the identification of good practices within the scope of the VERSO project as well as the short definitions of relevant concepts which have been applied through the identification and validation of good practices. For further details, a number of more specific documents for the internal use have been developed and may be downloaded from the VERSO homepage [www.versonet.eu](http://www.versonet.eu).

The methodological development for the identification of good practices has been aiming at supporting the transition and implementation of identified good practices within policy. Furthermore, the aim was to provide the needed methodologies for the identification, description and further analysis of good cases. The approach has been oriented at the work of local authorities in the field of the VERSO project.

For this reason a methodology that consisted of two approaches has been developed. The first approach sought to identify and describe a first range of presumably good practices. The second approach aimed to support reflections on the identified good practices and further validate the identification of a good practice as well as narrowing down the set of 30 cases to 16 good practices.

An important intention behind these two approaches was to support a bottom-up process, where decision-makers, local administrations and practitioners of the specific good practice were involved in the identification.

Within this framework of the European Project VERSO, knowledge Partners and Public Authorities, have developed a “good practice” referent. This referent was constructed around the following dimensions:

- A) Volunteering
- B) Employment policies
- C) Employability or ability to earn a decent living
- D) Quality of life (well being, social capital)
- E) Non-formal learning

The intersection of these themes defines the specific area where the good practices have in the first selection been identified.

The methodology designed for constructing the “good practice” referent was based on three key principles:

- 1) The importance of involving existing knowledge in the scientific literature and in the community and national legal regulations.
- 2) The implementation of the VERSO project should draw on individuals, groups, organizations or entities, whose policy framework lies at the intersection of the dimensions in focus, know about what is or may be considered “good practice”. These people are politicians, technicians, managers or leaders of organizations or business entities, people from the Third Sector and persons or groups at risk or vulnerable in relation to the dynamics of the labour market.
- 3) The “good practice” referent should be constructed in a participatory and collaborative way. The intention was not to create a referent deductively from indicators or objective categories, but through the inter-subjective contrast of these indicators among the different partners in the project; i.e. the Political Authorities or Knowledge Partners. This approach was decided upon for at least two clearly interrelated reasons:

- a) The European Union is the framework of the project, and the Union is made out of diversity that can only be constructed through participation, collaboration and dialogue between the countries and communities that shape it.
- b) The VERSO project involves 12 partners from 8 different countries with each of their own particularities.

In order to reach the above mentioned goals and principles, an elaborated online questionnaire was developed as a data collecting tool to produce a reliable identification of good practices and give dense qualitative descriptions as well as collecting a number of quantitative data on each case. To identify and discriminate what a good practice is, we in advance defined two types of indicators: main indicators and complementary indicators.

The main indicators show the characteristics a practice must accomplish to be defined as a “good practice”. The complementary indicators provide other criteria that can improve a concrete practice. The purpose of this definition of indicators, and their respective concretions, was to provide the Public Authorities with guidelines that can help them in the identification of good practices among the different practices that are developing in their specific geographical area.

The three main indicators were:

**MAIN INDICATOR N° 1**  
**EFFECTIVENESS**

- Creating new job opportunities
- Improving the employability of participants
- Results in line with the objectives
- Reducing the participants’ level of social vulnerability regarding employment

A practice is considered a good practice in the VERSO project if it is effective. In relation to the participants it means the practice creates new job opportunities, it also improves their employability and reduces the level of social vulnerability in relation to employment. Moreover, in relation to practice, it also means that it achieves planned objectives.

## **MAIN INDICATOR N° 2**

### **SOCIAL IMPACT**

- Number of participating volunteers
- Number of involved agencies, organizations and institutions
- Reducing social vulnerability
- Reduction of unemployment rates
- Increased levels of employability of the population
- Increase the cultural and the instructional level of the population
- Mobilising the community
- Level of coordination with employment policies

A practice is considered a good practice in the VERSO project if it has a social impact on the community. We proposed a number of sub-indicators. One indication of social impact may be when the practice involves a significant number of agencies, organizations and institutions or, in general, participating volunteers. Another indication of social impact is if the practice reduces the social vulnerability of the people in a given community and lowers the unemployment rates. To be considered a good practice it must somehow increase the cultural and instructional level of the population.

## **MAIN INDICATOR N° 3**

### **SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PRACTICE**

- Use of appropriate resources to the objectives
- No discrimination based on culture, religion or gender
- Create new job opportunities
- Improve the employability of participants
- Reduce the participants' level of social vulnerability regarding employment
- Elevated level of satisfaction among individuals and entities.
- Consistency with employment policies

A practice is considered a good practice in the VERSO project if it is sustainable. This entails appropriate use of available resources to reach the set goals. It must not generate discrimination based on the culture, religion or gender of the participants. It creates new job opportunities and improves the employability of the participants. A practice in our field is sustainable if it improves the employability of the participants and reduces the participants' level of social vulnerability regarding employment.

To be selected as a good practice, an activity, an experience, a project or a practice must accomplish, at least, the three main indicators. When in addition it accomplishes the two complementary indicators, a concrete practice is considered a "good practice" in our field.

The two complementary indicators are defined below:



## **COMPLEMENTARY INDICATOR N° 1**

### **SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**

- Number of participants persons and characteristics
- Number of participating entities and characteristics
- Identification of participating sectors
- Networks that support practice
- Institutions and sectors participating in networks
- Cultural diversity of participation

A good practice in VERSO requires social participation. The number of actors (i.e. persons and/or entities) taking part as well as their respective characteristics are significant. Furthermore, it is important to recognise the respective sectors (administration and/or third sector) and the networks that bear the practice. A good practice encourages cultural diversity among the participative actors.

## **COMPLEMENTARY INDICATOR N° 2**

### **TRANSFERABILITY**

- Applicability in culturally diverse contexts
- Ability to transfer to other EU countries
- Flexibility to adapt to legal regulations in different countries or nationally/globally

A good practice should be able to be transferred and implemented in similar or diverse cultural contexts, especially in other European member states. Its flexibility to adapt to legal regulations and become an international practice must be considerable.

In order to identify good practices, a number of concepts and their constructions have been developed through the project. The following glossary presents some of the main concepts that have been guiding the empirical case distinctions.

Term/Concept	Definition/conceptualization
Volunteering/ Voluntary Work	<p>Volunteering is considered to be an expression of active citizenship and can be characterized as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer</li> <li>• is unpaid</li> <li>• is always a matter of choice; is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowance</li> <li>• is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community</li> <li>• is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs</li> <li>• is an activity performed not only in the non-profit sector</li> <li>• is not a substitute for paid work; volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers</li> <li>• volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others and promotes human rights and equality</li> </ul>
Local Employment Development	<p>The concept refers to the changes in the objective structures of the labour market and the subjective perspectives of unemployed men and women. Today, this transition is being increasingly replaced by a more indirect relation between the end points of transition into labour market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and good practices can be located on a continuum between employment and re-enforcing pre-existing institutional structures and fundamental reforms aimed at adapting to new labour market structures, characterized by an increased integration of and flexibility between education, training, and employment-related approaches.</li> </ul>
SWOT Analysis	<p>is a <u>strategic planning</u> method used to evaluate the <b>S</b>trengths, <b>W</b>eaknesses/Limitations, <b>O</b>pportunities and <b>T</b>hreats involved in a <u>project</u> or in a <u>business</u> venture. It involves specifying the objective of the</p>

	<p>business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable for achieving that objective. When dealing with particularly good practices, it is advised to have a SWOT analysis of the specific good practice. On each level of a SWOT analysis in VERSO, the investigation must primarily focus on volunteering, employment and civic resources. VERSO suggests creating a SWOT analysis on the basis of a bottom-up approach that ensures each participant (stakeholder) - both internally and externally - such as politicians, technicians, volunteers, etc. are involved in the research.</p>
<p>Resource Typologies</p>	<p>The aim of this <b>typology of resources</b> is to contribute to render the categorization of these important resources possible in relation to the cases. To do this, we will take a classical methodological strategy called “<i>the technique of the nine questions</i>” as our starting point. This technique allows us to describe, characterize or plan any phenomenon. This technique has also guided the questions in the online questionnaire. In the VERSO case, it is applied to the categorization of resources for employment, well-being and quality of life. The technique consists in applying the following questions to the phenomenon under study: (1) <i>What?</i> (2) <i>Why?</i> (3) <i>For what?</i> (4) <i>Who?</i> (5) <i>To whom?</i> (6) <i>How?</i> (7) <i>When?</i> (8) <i>How much?</i> and (9) <i>Where?</i></p> <p>We have found five categories that are seen as relevant. These categories are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TYPES OF RESOURCES</li> <li>2. PURPOSE OF THE RESOURCES</li> <li>3. SECTORS THAT ARE OFFERING RESOURCES</li> <li>4. RESOURCES FOR WHOM</li> <li>5. INFORMATIONAL BASIS OF SOCIAL RESOURCES</li> </ol>
<p>Good Practice (within the scope of VERSO)</p>	<p>An activity, a set of activities or a sequence of activities that manifest advantages in terms of effectiveness or efficiency over other similar activities in the specific area where it is located.</p>



# WHAT IS VERSO?

VERSO (Volunteers for European Employment) is a pan-European development and knowledge-sharing project funded by the European Regional Development Fund, INTERREG IVC, which helps regions of Europe to share knowledge and experience to improve regional policy. VERSO seeks to improve the quality of life of people across Europe by means of learning and sharing good practice experiences with voluntary work to improve European employment. The VERSO partnership consists of eight public authorities and four knowledge partners working together in order to produce a best practice catalogue and policy recommendations for all European regional or local authorities interested in developing strategies to encourage the inclusion of civic society resources in the development of local employment strategies and initiatives.

## Partners in VERSO

Aarhus University, Department of Education (Denmark)

University of Ioannina (Greece)

Budapest Business School (Hungary)

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)

Municipality of Middelfart (Denmark)

Region of Epirus (Greece)

Netzwerk Lippe (Germany)

East Riding of Yorkshire Council (UK)

Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain)

Municipality of Zalaegerszeg (Hungary)

Municipality of Coevorden (The Netherlands)

Municipality of Sofia (Bulgaria)

Read more about VERSO at the project website:  
[www.versonet.eu](http://www.versonet.eu)

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# VERSO IN EUROPE

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● KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS

