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Organisations' age management of older volunteers: pointing to the future

Joop Schippers and Andrea Principi

Introduction

In the two previous chapters we presented information on the current situation of voluntary organisations: their characteristics, their policies towards older volunteers and their perception of older volunteers. The social environment of voluntary organisations, however, is changing and will continue to change over the next few decades. This may pose new challenges as well as offer new opportunities for volunteering. Demographic change, for instance, may result in a lower supply of care by younger generations and a greater pressure on older people to care for frail members within their own family circle, which will presumably have a negative effect on the supply of older volunteers. Population ageing, however, is also associated with increasing longevity and better general health among older people. This, in turn, may increase the number of potential recruits for voluntary organisations. This potential growth in the number of volunteers, however, may be confined by a European-wide trend to increase the mandatory retirement age. Moreover, future generations of older people will be better educated and higher educated people are inclined to stay in the labour market longer. Thus, future prospects in the supply of older volunteers are highly uncertain.

In light of the trends described above, this chapter focuses on the way voluntary organisations look at and deal with uncertainty about future developments. No matter whether voluntary organisations have or do not have formal age management strategies or policies, they will have to cope in any case with these changes and uncertain developments. That is why the main aim of this chapter is to identify future-oriented ideas, plans or initiatives initiated by the voluntary organisations.

As will become clear in the course of this chapter, some organisations explicitly took this future perspective into account, while others were less focused on this. Most had no current organisational policies and practices regarding older volunteers in place, nor did they have any future policies in development. This does not necessarily imply, however, that the policies of these organisations did not offer a proper future perspective. Compared to Chapters Eleven and Twelve, however, in this chapter we try to connect the mentioned expected changes and developments to organisational policies, and to read their potential impact for the future. To this purpose, we include exemplary results from the organisations in the eight different countries, selecting them from the empirical data collected. The ‘line of our story’ does not include judgements in terms of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ practice, but rather tries to describe as accurately as possible – from the limited information we have on organisational policies – how the voluntary organisations looked at and were going to deal with the future. Given the nature of the methodology employed (case studies), information is treated qualitatively.

In the following, we first provide an overview of how the voluntary organisations defined and perceived future age management issues in their own organisations. Were they worried about the future supply and availability of older volunteers in light of the mentioned developments? And did they think they should and could manage the future role of older volunteers in their organisations? In the next section we examine the more prominent intentions that are developing in various organisations to cope with the changing environment. This also allows us to identify examples of age management that are dealing with potential future developments. The fourth section focuses on organisations’ suggestions and ideas concerning the desired future supportive government policies, while the final section concludes this chapter.

Organisations’ perceptions of future age management issues

The organisations showed a wide variation in terms of what they considered relevant issues from an age management perspective. On the whole, as already observed in Chapter Eleven, age management in strict terms did not seem to be regarded as a priority by many of the voluntary organisations, even though several of them believed that a balanced age structure might have positive effects, and some considered a balanced volunteers’ age mix as a desirable goal. Indeed, for some

voluntary organisations the overall lack of volunteers represented a major problem, while others were still primarily worried about how to best match supply and demand of (older) volunteers, or the continuity of their participation. As in many cases future perspectives are linked to the aims organisations have set and to initiatives they have undertaken in the past, in this section we analyse how this is likely to have an impact on future strategies, identifying to what extent the voluntary organisations foresaw future problems related to older volunteers, and whether they expected to develop or consider age management policies to cope with these problems.

Changes related to older individuals

For some organisations, the leading idea about why they should engage in some kind of age management for volunteers in the future was the increased longevity and ongoing ageing of the population. This process may imply the development of both positive and negative organisational views about volunteering in older age. What is important here is that organisations identified increased longevity as one of the main challenges for future development of the volunteer workforce. Seen in a positive way, increased longevity means that the average age and the share of older volunteers will grow, and so will their supply. This was clearly underlined by one German representative, who expected future cohorts to have a period of 30 years of volunteering after the end of their working life, compared to 6–10 years in the past (Seniorpartner). Population ageing was, in this sense, evaluated positively, especially by organisations that relied mostly on older volunteers. Most organisations, however, reported a rather 'neutral' feeling about this: they did not think this would have a negative or positive impact on their activities, while only a few organisations thought that population ageing might have a negative impact. This was the case for those that had made some efforts to increase the supply of younger volunteers but that had already had difficulties in recruiting them, and were now afraid of finding it increasingly hard to attract suitable young candidates. As some interviewees put it, if there is a tendency among older volunteers to stay active over a longer period of time, it becomes more important for organisations to pay attention to recruiting 'the right' person, since "if you get the wrong person, they stick with you for 10 years" (Waterways). This illustrates more a relevant attitude than an actual or future policy, but also illustrates how closely current and future policy perspectives are connected. Furthermore, even if older people

are in general increasingly healthier than previous cohorts of peers, according to some organisations a progressive ageing of volunteers would also increase the need to pay more attention to their health and physical abilities, as health inequalities among voluntary workers might increase (UISP, Retraite Sportive). As some volunteers might reach a very old age, the risk of higher absenteeism due to illness was also mentioned (Kunstverein), even though this was believed to have only a moderate impact on organisations.

This apparently supportive scenario of older people living longer and having more time to volunteer was undermined by their own changing attitudes and preferences concerning volunteering. Many older adults might not settle for simple voluntary tasks, but ask for more challenging and varied commitments (Senior Sport). Consequently, some organisations realised that something should be done to face potentially negative developments in this respect. Indeed, while most of the investigated organisations appreciated older people's large time availability, some reported a tendency among older volunteers to be available only to a limited extent (Ronald).

As today's older Europeans are on average healthier and wealthier than previous generations, their aspirations are higher, too, as they want to undertake and can afford long journeys or to buy a cottage somewhere in the country where they stay occasionally. This means that they are not always available on a regular basis. Related to this point was the organisations' observation that the coming generations are increasingly opting for 'loose ties' (Caritas): they want to participate in a project for a limited period of time and then commit themselves to something else. What they did not want was a permanent relation with one specific voluntary organisation. Taken together, these two tendencies resulted in some voluntary organisations being worried about the stability of their pool of older volunteers, and this may be supposed to affect mainly organisations with a high share of older volunteers. For example, some of them expected and complained that in the future they would have to work with a smaller group of permanent volunteers, supplemented with a larger circle of temporary volunteers for particular projects, whose recruitment may require a lot of time and effort (2 Studies). This is one of the reasons why comparing older volunteers to older workers is not appropriate in all respects. As one representative of an English organisation mainly composed of older volunteers said, volunteers can walk away at any time, saying that they no longer want to engage in what they are doing, so "it is all about making the volunteer want to stay and to be part of your organisation" (WEA). For several organisations older

volunteers' motivational issues were thus becoming the focal point for their age management strategies.

Changes related to organisational needs

In almost all organisations investigated it was increasingly evident that there was a growing need to provide highly professional services through volunteering. Even though voluntary organisations could not quantify this development in terms of different educational categories they might need, some of them did realise already that this might constitute a growing problem in the future. The older the volunteers become, the less likely it is that they would automatically have the (physical) capacities, skills and abilities required for this high performance. This put voluntary organisations in a similar position as 'ordinary' employers: did they want or could they afford to invest in improving older volunteers' capabilities and/or could/did they want to assign the less 'productive' older volunteers to easier tasks requiring lower qualifications? This observation may to some extent modify the image of voluntary organisations belonging to a kind of 'sheltered' sector of society and the economy, where there is a place for everyone, irrespective of one's competencies and capabilities and where, according to the Olympic ideal, participating prevails over gaining. Organisational needs may develop in such a way that in the future there will be not enough room for everyone, as some potential older volunteers may not pass the 'productivity hurdle'.

Changes related to the surrounding society

Recent societal developments may be seen by organisations as threats for future volunteering by older people. This applies, for example, to the role of paid work in the labour market and obligations related to informal family care, as well as to the economic downturn that Europe is currently experiencing. Since in the future both mothers and older workers are likely to remain more often in the labour market, even when they have respectively young children and grandchildren, some voluntary organisations felt that they would have to compete with older people's double role of being both grandparents and paid workers. Several organisations (Kunstverein and Waterways), operating in countries that have already increased the official retirement age, feared that the growth in the number of older volunteers resulting from increasing longevity would be pruned away by this increased retirement age, especially if this followed the trend of national life

expectancy. Other organisations (UNITRE) complained that, if an older person had to choose between spending time in caring for grandchildren or on voluntary work, usually the first is expected to take priority.

In addition to these issues highlighted by our study, recent literature shows an increasing risk of competing claims on older people's time due to a growing age gap between successive generations, resulting from the fact that more and more European women are postponing motherhood (Beets et al, 2011). While the age gap between generations had fallen to less than 25 years in the 1960s, today the age at which mothers give birth for the first time has increased to over 30 (and even later for highly educated women). Consequently, grandchildren may be born when their grandparents are well in their sixties (Geurts, 2012). Another important factor is represented by the economic crisis. On the one hand, this may be seen as fuelling the future voluntary sector, since governments may increasingly rely on voluntary activities given the overall climate characterised by budget cuts and by people feeling stimulated to commit in volunteering (Lohner, Scout); on the other hand, however, the crisis itself may prevent governments from adequately supporting even the volunteer sector (and thus older volunteers) in the future, and thus from guaranteeing suitable services (Waterways, Bücherhallen).

From what has been reported above, it is possible to conclude that, even if the need for future 'official age management' initiatives in a strict sense was not yet being perceived as urgent by organisational representatives, most of the future challenges related to an ageing volunteer workforce were not unknown to the organisations. In the light of this, some organisations were indeed going to cope with them through specific future strategies and actions, as illustrated in the following section.

Volunteer age management: insights on future attitudes, strategies and policies

Only a few of the voluntary organisations under study were engaged in future-oriented age management, primarily because they did not feel the need for special future policies or initiatives in this area. For example, the Danish organisations 9220 and Gistrup argued that they did not aim to implement age management because they wanted to recruit on a broader scale, since age as such was not an important issue for them. Some organisations, as for example, Tenants, thought that the lack of strategic planning about volunteers' age could be considered

a consequence of an 'old-fashioned' management approach in voluntary organisations, or might even result from the non-existence of management. Indeed, often the way voluntary organisations had come into existence, developed and grown over the years did not call for any form of age management, so there was simply no tradition in this field. In both cases, the result is the same: a passive attitude with respect to age management.

On the contrary, those organisations that currently have 'age management' strategies in place could pose questions on this in a future perspective. The old-profiled Italian organisation AVULSS, for example, pointed out two main alternative explanations in this respect, in the attempt to elucidate its failure to involve more younger volunteers. The first attributed this failure to the organisation, judging it as too passive; the second ascribed it to general external aspects, such as, for instance, a general tendency of lower commitment to voluntary organisations. The way to answer the crucial question to what extent age management strategies are future-proof can lead to two basically opposite conclusions and future behaviours, that is, a more active organisational attitude in the former case, and a more passive one in the latter. And indeed, our study shows that both examples of what we can call 'a passive attitude' and an 'active attitude' about future age management initiatives were found (as illustrated below), showing in particular that organisations with a higher degree of professionalisation generally tended to adopt an active rather than a passive attitude.

Passive attitude

The Italian organisation UISP is an example of a passive attitude. It saw itself as a passive actor, since the organisation was convinced that the main cause for the low interest of younger volunteers lay in external economic factors rather than with its organisational efforts. Organisational representatives argued that if young people have to deal with unemployment and are putting all their efforts into looking for a job, they will hardly find time to volunteer. In a similar vein, this organisation argued that, in case of a further worsening of the Italian pensions' levels and requirements, older volunteers might be lost as well, as they would have to start looking for paid activities to supplement their old-age pensions. In such a context, this organisation did not feel particularly encouraged to undertake age management strategies in the future.

Active attitude

Other organisations, however, thought that it is more up to them to attract more older volunteers and to manage them in appropriate ways, planning therefore to apply some form of age management for the future. At the English WEA, for example, rather than pushing this issue to policy makers, it was argued that it was important 'to engage with people on their terms at a local level', and to develop their confidence so that they can engage in matters that interest them, pointing to older people's personal needs and motivation. This represents an organisational challenge to better understand people's driving forces and skills, in order to strengthen their abilities, for instance, in using information and communication technologies (ICT), thus enabling them to start deploying them and becoming more proficient. In sum, several organisations were striving to make the voluntary work more attractive to (older) volunteers, in order to recruit and retain them, by explaining to them that they could be useful in the organisation even in older age (AVIS). The following examples show which forms these efforts are concretely taking, and can be considered as organisations' 'future intentions' of age management of volunteers.

Organisational orientations in a future perspective

In the Swedish Mission Covenant's opinion, different strategies to meet the needs of the ageing population had to start from the actual needs of older people themselves. For example, one of the most relevant was that of breaking older citizens' isolation through social and cultural activities, an area in which this organisation believed it could play a major role.

Dutch organisations operating in the healthcare sector (mainly composed of older volunteers) are experiencing shortages of professional staff, and therefore plan to rely mostly on volunteers in the future (2 Studies). For this reason, they are exploring what the wishes of the 'new volunteering style' are (for example, of young seniors with a more hedonistic lifestyle, who do not want to commit themselves for continuous and long-term civic responsibilities). In the same way, the English WEA's coordinators are focusing on *responding more effectively to the demands for support coming from volunteers* and to the quality of their experience, in order to ensure that their deployment and retention will be (more) effective.

On the other hand, different Danish investigated organisations are planning or implementing actions linked to the age management

of volunteers. Dgi's future plans and objectives will be focusing on developing more arrangements for retired people. In order to retain and attract more seniors, Dgi plans to work on the organisation's culture, as seniors are sometimes perceived to be difficult to engage in a voluntary organisation, because it becomes too formal and somehow too 'posh'. Hence, Dgi plans to clarify the difference between paid and voluntary staff, the former being necessary to take care of the overall administrative work. Moreover, the organisation underlines that the paid staff are supposed to service and support volunteers – and not the other way around. This way, *volunteers should be able to focus more on the content and interesting aspects of work*, thus making volunteering more attractive for seniors.

DaneAge's future intentions are to *strengthen their voluntary leaders by organising management training*. This will be arranged in collaboration with the volunteers themselves and will focus on improving their abilities to motivate and qualify voluntary workers. DaneAge has also initiated a pilot project about recruitment of younger senior volunteers (50–65 years), through five local committees that have been working on ways to *improve the dialogue with potential members in this age group*. This process made it clear to the committees that, in order to recruit and attract this target group, it is necessary to rethink the role of volunteering, as people who are (still) active in the labour market had the energy and found it meaningful to use their competencies to volunteer. The organisation is now working on easier ways to inform new volunteers of the different tasks and dimensions of volunteering, indicating how much time they can expect to spend on each activity. Finally, it has considered how to retain volunteers through different kinds of development interviews.

DanChurchAid future plans are focused around the question of how to best retain volunteers. One aspect of their plan is to *focus on a good quality of voluntary work*, since this is seen as necessary to motivate seniors to spend their time as volunteers. This organisation found it important to broaden the perspective of volunteering, by informing older people about the flexible opportunities offered by this kind of engagement in terms of time and tasks that could be performed, for example, by showing that voluntary work could be everything from 4 to 400 hours annually. In addition, the organisation needed to accommodate the tendency that volunteers do not necessarily (want to) engage in the same activity year after year, so that volunteers may be facilitated in shifting between different forms of voluntary work over time.

Just as in the paid labour market, *flexible working opportunities* were also expected to mitigate the influence of external aspects in the voluntary sector. Among the investigated organisations, some English ones in particular seem to give high priority to this factor in the future, in order to offer people more opportunities to engage in voluntary work. One example is RNIB, which also aims to achieve a more intensive commitment from existing volunteers, whereas Scout, while using the same strategy, expects instead a less intensive commitment, due to a shortage of adult volunteers. To foster flexibility is also an aim of WRVS, whose representatives thought that the 'new' older volunteers are more likely to opt for flexible volunteering in roles where they could continue to use the professional skills they had acquired during their working lives. These 'new' older volunteers were not expected to give their time routinely forever, but rather wanted to volunteer for 'chunks' of their time to fit in with their current life stage.

Beyond flexible working practices, the same organisation has planned to introduce in the near future a structured dialogue between volunteers and the manager about the contribution of each volunteer. Held on an annual basis, these conversations will also *pay attention to the individual's changing capabilities and needs*, for example, related to changing health conditions or changes in the family situation (the birth of a grandchild or the death of a partner). The need for a conversation with volunteers about their future role was also felt by WEA, in particular when health or disability-related issues set in, which affected the work the volunteers were able to do. The role played by the changing physical conditions of older volunteers was also considered by Werder in Germany, which is considering offering older volunteers in the sports clothing sector, who are no longer able to carry out activities where they have to stand, to move to activities that could be performed sitting (such as, for instance, sewing).

An *increasing acceptance of the 'fixed-term project' idea* can be noticed in most of the German voluntary organisations included in the study, which seemed to have a similar approach or strategy with respect to age management. Indeed, their older volunteers became more involved in the development and coordination of new projects and received training for new tasks, thus showing the importance of volunteering for these non-profit organisations. In this context, positive individual effects for older volunteers were likely to be experienced, such as more appreciation and acceptance as well as increased qualifications. Project work, according to the examples given, was not necessarily temporary, but established new ways for civic commitment. As older volunteers did not seem to leave the studied organisations once the projects were

over, project work might therefore be seen as a promising way to improve future recruitment and retention of older volunteers.

As far as the 'end of the volunteer career' is concerned, to prevent possible problems related to this aspect at organisational level, and so to help align service provision with volunteer supply, the English WRVS is going to develop a new task force with local service managers and middle management, to *facilitate succession planning*, taking into account the likelihood of people retiring from volunteering. Thanks to this, in the future managers will be able to look in a much more focused way at services, for example, by providing projections such as that according to which 'the age range in service is X and we anticipate that over the next 5 years a Y percentage of older volunteers might retire, so that we are looking how we might replace them'.

Organisational desires with respect to supportive government policies

The future of volunteering in older age is of course not only linked to individual and organisational attitudes and behaviours, but also to external aspects, including institutional policies. The investigated organisations, even in different countries, appeared to be hardly aware of the existence of supportive institutional policies (such as, for instance, national or local programmes to promote volunteering in older age). Yet several suggestions for the future were advanced at this governmental/macro level by organisations, sometimes broadening the issue beyond the scope of age management, as summarised in the following.

Several voluntary organisations pointed to the fact that governments and public authorities could help to increase the *visibility* of the voluntary work of older people, for example, with an annual prize for volunteers (ANPAS, Ronald). A good example in this respect is the Dutch tradition, according to which a substantial share of the royal honours that are awarded annually on the occasion of the queen's birthday go to people who have been active in voluntary work.

Next to visibility, several organisations pointed out the necessity of institutional intervention for granting a stronger *recognition* of voluntary work in the future. If the value of volunteering in older age is recognised whole-heartedly, for example, through social credits such as free-of-charge transport cards (AUSER), or by acknowledging the skills gained through volunteering by means of a widely accepted award (Scout), this might represent a positive incentive for people to join voluntary organisations. It is still now the case that older

volunteers have to pay for the materials they use themselves, no matter how low their income level.

Many organisations also favoured broadening the *political perception* of voluntary work. In the eyes of many politicians, voluntary work is indeed still too often viewed as primarily or only a form of social work, in some countries more than in others. As a consequence, little priority is given to investment in voluntary work, for example, in terms of human capital (such as competency development). Too little investment may have negative drawbacks on the quality of voluntary work (DanChurchAid). An Italian organisation underlined that politicians' main interest in voluntary organisations was not to enhance the human capital of volunteers, but to make sure the organisation provided a socially needed service (UNIVOC). Some German organisations noticed that this argument seemed especially important in fields and domains where the state had withdrawn, whereas it had been hitherto responsible (Werder, Caritas).

Another desire expressed by some organisations for the future was to extend the right to *training at all ages*. Some interviewed people considered it inappropriate that the target set by the European Council of Lisbon in 2000, which intended to guarantee lifelong learning to adults, was defined only up to the age of 64 (the target set for 2010 was the participation of 12.5 per cent of people aged between 25 and 64), thus discriminating against all people over 64. In contrast to this decision, in Italy AUSER promoted a petition to introduce a law to recognise the right to lifelong learning at all ages. Also related to the training issue is the claim from some organisations that the government should support their training infrastructure. After all, argued some German organisations, the government benefited from all the voluntary work that was done, so these public benefits justified some public investments too (Caritas, Ausbildungspaten).

Many organisations working with volunteers shared the opinion that the *information* on volunteer opportunities in older age also needs to improve in the future. In some countries, such as the Netherlands, voluntary organisations had organised a website where volunteers could look for vacancies in the domain they would like to volunteer in and where they could also register, so that organisations might find them. However, hosting and mastering such a website requires investment in both time and money, especially if the website is to be kept up to date. Moreover, older people may be reluctant to use the internet, so mediation by institutions may be useful in this respect. Furthermore, public services are sometimes not aware of the opportunities to volunteer, or even provide incorrect information.

A problem evidenced by some English voluntary organisations, for example, was that potential unemployed volunteers were informed at the job centre that they could not volunteer while receiving unemployment benefit, despite the contrary being the case (Scout, WRVS).

In several countries, voluntary organisations worried and complained about the short-term focus of public policies. Even though in some countries the government now and then made financial means available for projects to support voluntary work, these projects usually lacked *sustainability*. For example, in the two editions of the Polish Seniors in Action programme, almost 70 projects activating people 50+ were awarded to increase the extremely low social engagement of (older) people in this country but, by the time the projects got into their stride, government support had already finished. In Germany, the cancellation of funds after the expiration of the state-supported project run by Caritas resulted in the loss of the infrastructure that had been created for the project, because there was no funding available for its maintenance. And Ausbildungsstellen also criticised the lack of sustainability beyond usual project funding schemes.

Moreover, several organisations argued that in the future governments could do more to promote an *intergenerational culture* (AVULSS). In many countries the policy focus and also the media's attention are much more concentrated on the younger than on the older generations – following the motto 'young is in, old is out' – thus providing a very contradictory message with respect to current active ageing policies.

Beyond this, some organisations recommended the creation of *specific volunteer programmes for older volunteers*, such as the Italian Voluntary Service (see Chapter Three). In this case, given the little token involved to remunerate this activity, a further extension of this initiative could also be useful to face the problem of the expulsion of 'young-older people' from the labour market (AVIS), even though this may raise concerns as to whether this kind of (paid) social engagement can really be considered a form of volunteering or not.

A broadly shared desire for the future among voluntary organisations was the commitment by institutions to *help more in reinforcing the positive link between work in the labour market and volunteering*. Several suggestions were advanced to this aim, since the working period and especially the last part of the working career were deemed important for older people's engagement in volunteering. Someone voiced measures to allow a gradual transition from work to volunteer activities, for instance, by paying some additional imputed retirement contribution

(Tenda), or allowing the companies to ‘move’ managers to voluntary organisations, thus allowing them to receive their salary while they were volunteering (AUSER), or envisaging time off or a given number of working hours they could spend in voluntary activities (Scout, Gilde). Other suggestions in this context were to provide training courses (where not already available) in the final stage of the working career (for instance, 30 hours per year), to be attended during working hours without any loss of earnings. The aim of such courses should be to inform people on voluntary work – including aspects such as its meaning and its implementation at local level – and to clarify that, through volunteering, people after retirement were less likely to be left alone (UISP). Another suggestion by an Italian organisation was to send newly retired people a letter when they received their first pension wage, with a message such as: ‘Think about your future, place yourself at others’ disposal: be a volunteer’ (ANPAS).

Conclusions

This chapter concludes the part of our study devoted to the investigation of volunteering in older age through case studies carried out in European voluntary organisations (that is, the meso level). While Chapters Eleven and Twelve dealt with the current situation, this chapter has focused on the future perspectives of formal volunteering by older people.

The logic of this chapter has been that the social environment of voluntary organisations and of older people is rapidly changing, and this will have a heavy impact on the future volunteering of older people. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, population ageing, better health conditions of older people, increased longevity and better education in older age may all be linked to an expected increase in older people’s participation in a series of different activities. These activities may include, for example, informal family care to older people, work in the labour market or other leisure activities. This causes uncertainty about future features of volunteering by older people. Voluntary organisations can play a key role in reducing this uncertainty. Therefore, we have explored the meso level, and relevant to the conceptual framework employed in Chapter Two, is, for example, a question such as: are voluntary organisations adjusting work tasks to meet the preferences and dispositions of older volunteers? From an active ageing perspective, it may be expected that voluntary organisations will offer new participatory opportunities for older adults, since active ageing holds the promise that older adults are

allowed to participate in voluntary organisations for as long as they are able to and wish to do so. However, as has been argued in Chapter One, sometimes expectations may be highly unrealistic, at it may be unsure whether a greater potential supply of older volunteers will be met by a greater potential demand.

Thus, in this chapter, the first step was to understand whether the interviewed voluntary organisations' representatives could make a link between the expected and mentioned changes, and volunteering by older people in their organisations. Were they worried about the future supply of older volunteers, and, if so, did they think they should deal with volunteers' age management? The result is that in general, future age management of volunteers did not seem to be a priority for most of the voluntary organisations. Yet earlier in this chapter we observed that across Europe some voluntary organisations were aware of the main societal changes and of at least some of the possible consequences for volunteering by older people. On the one hand, they were aware that in the future there might be a higher supply of and a longer commitment by older volunteers, and in particular organisations mainly composed of older volunteers might benefit from this. On the other hand, they were also aware that older volunteers would be healthier than in the past and better educated. Consequently, this might bring about a change of preferences in terms of tasks and commitment (to the benefit of other activities), and a less stable volunteer workforce. All this, in a climate of economic crisis with a policy call for more volunteering, but with less funds to accommodate this, leaving it mainly to voluntary organisations to decide whether or not to invest in older volunteers.

Consequently, the second step has been to understand if voluntary organisations intend to invest substantially in older volunteers in the future, through age management policies. That is, whether they intend to reduce the negative effects of the expected changes, and to enjoy the positive ones. By exploring their (formal and informal) future plans, we have shown that this decision is not represented by digital 'yes/no' variables telling whether a voluntary organisation is busy thinking about its future and the role of future older volunteers, but rather reflected in (part of) the opinions they expressed and (some of) the age management strategies they had already implemented or were considering to implement. Results, however, have been rather encouraging from an active ageing perspective, since some organisations intended to actively respond to future societal changes by capitalising on the interests of older volunteers by engaging with them on their terms, by assigning them activities of interest to them,

by fulfilling the wishes of older volunteers in the 'new style' (for example by specifying how much time they could expect to spend in which activities), or by focusing on the more interesting aspects of the work. More concretely, this would also mean paying much more attention to training and flexibility in terms of tasks, hours spent volunteering and duration of the volunteer experience (for example, considering intervals of time to spend in other activities such as leisure or family care duties, and between different volunteering experiences). Some respondents admitted that this would imply an organisational change of mentality or 'culture'. In this perspective, older volunteers would be central actors in the future for voluntary organisations, to the benefit of the (good) quality of organisational activities.

Most interestingly, some organisations underlined that, given the evolving nature of current and future challenges, all this should be continuously managed over time, considering the changing capabilities and needs of older volunteers, and planning succession and knowledge transfer in the volunteer roles.

While recognising themselves as the main actors in this play, at the same time voluntary organisations wanted to be much more supported at the institutional level in this task, as observed earlier. This support should involve in particular visibility, recognition, training, information and the integration of policies concerning voluntary work with labour market and welfare policies. The current economic crisis threatens, however, to leave this wish largely unmet for a long time to come, at least in the most financially affected countries.

Generally speaking, in this chapter we have learned that for voluntary organisations, older volunteers' motivational issues are becoming the central point of their age management strategies. In general, age management in voluntary organisations is likely to become more important in the future, in order to match the supply of older volunteers with the demand from organisations, both in a quantitative and in a qualitative way, given that the increasing complexity of this match may require (further) professionalisation of the age management, and so of volunteering.

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