



WORKSHOP 5: Public policies for the promotion of volunteering

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THE ANDALUSIAN EXPERIENCE IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC POLICIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF VOLUNTEERING

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Volunteering (volunteer organized actions) is the most genuine expression of public participation. Public organizations have the responsibility to lay the grounds for volunteering and to contribute to its development. Furthermore, they are mandated to attend the most vulnerable social groups and people at risk of social exclusion.

The participation in volunteering programs and organizations lays the grounds for the development of critical thinking and a culture of participation and responsibility. Volunteers have a certain capacity to influence public policies, even though it's rather limited.

This is one of the main challenges that the volunteering community faces. Volunteers work in very diverse environments: handicapped people, social exclusion, rights of the child, elderly people, drug addictions and immigrants, among others. In other words, volunteering takes place within the broad context of the Third Sector.

In Andalusia, volunteer organizations work together with public administrations and political parties. They adopt a coherent and social innovation-based approach. The aim of this joint effort is to respond to today's social challenges through innovative working methods, tools and methodologies that allow a greater social participation. The environment in which volunteer organizations operate is carefully taken into account: 8 provinces with significant cultural and social diversity, marked economic differences and a high percentage of rural population.

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The Andalusia government promotes volunteering through the III *Plan Andaluz del Voluntariado* 2011 – 2014. The Plan contributes to a better management of public resources for the promotion of public participation and to boosting the use of democratic control mechanisms of these resources by citizens.

The *Plataforma Andaluza del Voluntariado* is the representative of more than 350 organizations divided in 8 networks or provincial platforms. As such, the *Plataforma* works together with other organizations in the promotion of the Third Sector through the implementation of strategic lines for the consecution of its' social objectives. The *Plataforma* also has an active role in the assessment of the *Plan Andaluz del Voluntariado*.