



EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

Non-governmental Organisations and Volunteering in Latvia



AVAIL

Amplifying the Voices of
Asylum Seekers and Refugees
for Integration and Life Skills

Co-ordinated by



BritishRedCross

In partnership with



Croce Rossa Italiana



INTERNATIONAL



FEDERATION



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Non-governmental Organisations and Volunteering in Latvia

Educational material for refugees, asylum
seekers and third-country nationals

Preface

The educational material is issued by Latvian Red Cross within the framework of the international project “AVAIL – Amplifying the voices of asylum seekers and refugees for integration and lifeskills” (No. 776175).

Within the AVAIL project, various integration and advocacy initiatives are implemented in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy and Latvia. The project is funded by the European Union.

The educational material will be useful for refugees, asylum seekers and third-country nationals, who are currently residing in Latvia and require information about NGOs and volunteering in Latvia.

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1. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) act in the best interests of the public, and making profit is not the aim of their activities. In Latvia, we use the term “NGO” for associations and foundations, more often referred to simply as organisations. Usually NGOs are working to satisfy the needs of certain groups of society that are not properly addressed by a state, local government or businesses. NGOs provide people with opportunities to improve the quality of life for themselves and other members of society, to prove their capability and grow personally. For young people, NGOs are a great opportunity to gain their first work experience by engaging in volunteering. There are NGOs that can affect various events at a national scale. They often affect social, economic and political activities in communities and in the country as a whole.

NGOs achieve small changes by carrying out projects, while changes on a larger scale are achieved by indirectly affecting the political system via various campaigns and by taking part in decision-making at local and national levels.

In many countries, NGOs have fostered democratisation by promoting and enforcing human rights and by increasing the living standard of the people without being limited to solving issues such as women's rights, environmental problems, human rights, economic development, political rights, or health care only. NGOs are actively involved in political decision-making.

2. TYPES OF NGOs in LATVIA

There are two types of NGOs in Latvia – associations and foundations.

An association is a voluntary union of persons (members), that work to achieve the objective specified in the articles of association. This means that it is an organisation of members bringing together people based on freedom of association. An association is not of a profit-making nature.

A foundation, also a fund, is an aggregate of property that has been set aside for the achievement of a goal specified by the founder. There are no members in a foundation. A foundation can have one or multiple founders whose status as a founder is maintained for life. A foundation is not of a profit-making nature.

To achieve the goal specified in the articles of association of an NGO, the NGO is entitled to pursue economic activity and employ individuals in voluntary non-remunerated service.



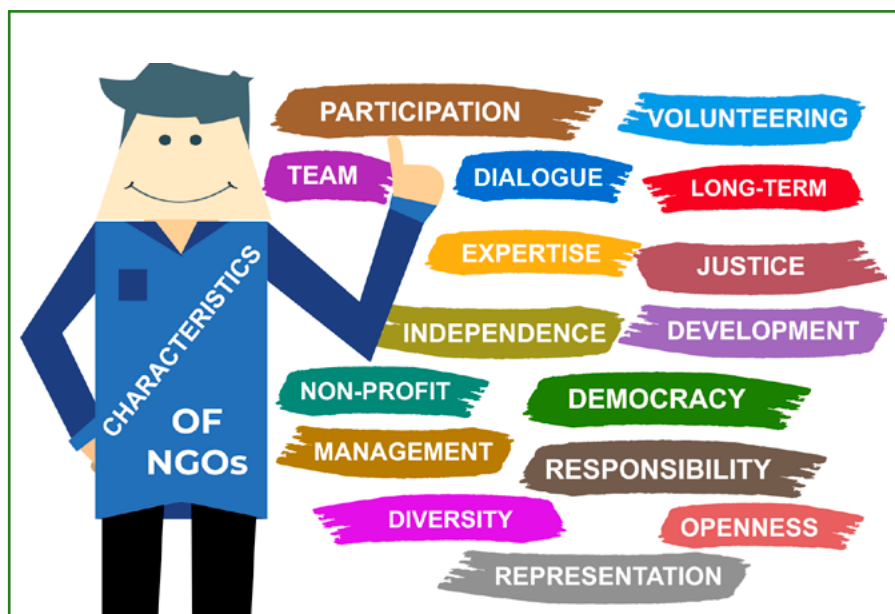
3. CHARACTERISTICS AND PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION OF NGOs

NGOs:

- ✓ act in accordance with democratic principles;
- ✓ are established and act on a voluntary basis to achieve certain objectives. Participation in NGOs is voluntary;
- ✓ are open and ensure the dissemination of information about their activities and freely express their opinions;
- ✓ are managed under a democratic management model that separates executive power from decision making power. The highest executive power is the Meeting of Members, followed by Council and/or Board. NGOs are collegially administered.
- ✓ act in line with Latvian and international laws and regulations, articles of association and other internal provisions;
- ✓ voice independent opinions. NGOs express their opinions which may not be in line with the opinions of the State, local public authorities and other NGOs. NGOs must be loyal to the Constitution of Latvia;
- ✓ act as a link between the public and state authority. They represent views and interests of the public in State institutions;
- ✓ establish a discussion between various groups of the society and/or institutions on societal issues related to the activities of the respective NGOs and on achievement of their objectives;
- ✓ are not aimed at making profit. The NGO use its financial and material resources for its development needs and for development needs of its members and for reaching of its objectives. The NGO may cover the costs of the persons involved in the activity of the

NGO and may pay for the goods and services that are related to achievement of the objectives;

- ✓ can be established for a definite term, while majority of them are established for an indefinite time;
- ✓ represent various groups of society according to their interests: human rights, youth, social assistance, charity, environment, education, business environment, art, media, development cooperation, climate change, etc. Single-sector NGOs often come together in joint co-operation networks;
- ✓ are as strong as their teams are; made of the people working for the respective NGO;
- ✓ provide an opportunity for all interested persons to participate in the daily work of NGOs, as well as in the activities and projects organised by NGOs for specific target groups;
- ✓ are oriented towards development of society and support solving various issues for situation improvement where all society could benefit;
- ✓ unites the best field experts as for various issues and gain certain expertise during their operation recognised by European, national and local authorities, other NGOs and entrepreneurs.



In order for an NGO to be able to function successfully, its members and management must focus on the development of the NGO. This is not an easy task, given that most people participate in NGOs on a voluntary basis along with their main duties at work or studies. Every NGO, regardless of its size, duration of operation, number of members, operating sector, etc., should take into consideration its development model and implement it according to its abilities.



4. DESCRIPTION OF THE NGO SECTOR IN LATVIA

NGOs in Latvia – Facts and Numbers

Currently there are just over 23 000 NGOs of various sectors registered in Latvia. Development trend in this field shows that the number of NGOs has increased in all local governments in Latvia, NGO activities have intensified and become more regular, and the expectations of state authorities regarding the professionalism of NGOs have increased as well. These are positive developments in the NGO sector, which means increased opportunities for different groups of society to receive more diverse assistance regarding problem solving, engagement in adoption

of relevant decisions, diversification the opportunities of spending free time, educating and spending time with like-minded people.

Information about NGOs can be conveniently obtained from the National Integration Centre, www.integration.lv, Civic Alliance – Latvia, www.nvo.lv, NGOs of various fields and regional associations of NGOs (see Chapter 7 for more info).

In accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 779 of 22 December 2015 “Regulations for the Classification of Associations and Foundations”, NGOs in Latvia are classified as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Employer’s organisations, trade unions, professional associations and foundations; | ✓ Justice and protection of interests; |
| ✓ Culture and recreation; | ✓ Philanthropy mediation and promotion of volunteering; |
| ✓ Media and communication; | ✓ Youth associations and foundations; |
| ✓ Research and education; | ✓ Voluntary fire service organisations; |
| ✓ Health; | ✓ Sports associations and foundations; |
| ✓ Social support measures for persons; | ✓ International activities; |
| ✓ Protection of environment and animals; | ✓ Associations and foundations not elsewhere classified; |
| | ✓ Development and housing. |

Unite associations of employers representing and defending economic, social and professional interests of their members	1. Employer’s organisations, trade unions, professional associations and foundations
Bring together companies of the same field or profession and field experts to promote the development of the respective economic sector or field of activity, to represent the interests of their members, to facilitate exchange of experience	
Represent and defend the work-related, economic, social and professional rights and interests of employees	

Organisations operating in the fields of drawing, painting, photography, ceramics, sculpture, crafts/folk applied and fine art, design, architecture and restoration, history, poetry and literature, war memorials, music, dance and theatre, minority, non-commercial museums. Organisations promoting and evaluating humanities, protecting historic and cultural heritage, commemorating historical events, ensuring sustainability of folk art and intangible cultural heritage and providing entertainment and recreational activities.	2. Culture and recreation
Ensure preparation, distribution and communication of information in non-commercial radio stations, TV channels, issue non-commercial books, magazines, newspapers and catalogues, make non-commercial films and ensure the functioning of libraries	3. Mass media and communication
Social sciences, sociological and political, medical research, science and technology and activities of formal, informal and life-long learning	4. Research and education
Ensure promotion of public health and raise awareness of health, as well as ensure ambulatory therapeutic care, physiotherapy and other medical services	5. Health
Providing non-commercial support for development of an inclusive employment and working environment, increase the opportunities for the integration and competitiveness of citizens (particularly those at risk of poverty and social exclusion and those further from the labour market) in the labour market, the social protection of certain groups or individuals, aimed to respect women's rights and achievement of gender equality, activities aimed at ensuring protection of children's rights, exercise of children's rights and development of environment and support measures that are friendly to children (being taken care of both inside and outside the families) and families, increasing the level of child and family welfare, supporting families in fulfillment of their responsibilities, including in taking care for children and adult family members, in crisis situations and similar cases	6. Social support measures for persons

Environmental protection, pollution reduction and control, protection and sustainable use of natural resources, nature protection, environmental awareness and clean-up activities, protection of animal rights and welfare, veterinary services	7. Protection of environment and animals
Community and neighbourhood development organisations, organisations implementing programmes and measures to improve economic infrastructure and capacity, including roads, financial measures, business programmes, provide technical and management advice, assistance programmes for rural development and housing management	8. Development and housing
Protection of civil rights and human rights, advocacy organisations, legal aid, consumer protection, crime prevention, support for crime victims, rehabilitation of offenders	9. Justice and protection of interests
Ensure the raising and distribution of funds to achieve objectives related to public benefits and promote development of volunteering, including recruitment and training of volunteers	10. Philanthropy mediation and promotion of volunteering
Promote youth initiatives and participation in decision-making and public life, work with youth	11. Youth associations and foundations
Organisations operating in the field of fire safety and fire-fighting	12. Voluntary fire service organisations
Coordinate joint interests in the sports sector, sports clubs and centres, organisation of sports events, support for sport organisations and for active and former athletes regarding of their legal, social, educational, career and other related issues, and provide training for sports workers, continuing education and informal education activities	13. Sports associations and foundations
Exchange of culture, development cooperation, international management of consequences of disasters and provision of assistance, international human rights and peace-keeping	14. International activities
The scope of activities does not correspond to any of the activities listed in the Classification of Associations and Foundations	15. Associations and foundations not elsewhere classified

Description of Human Resources of NGOs



In most cases, members of the NGOs are volunteering. People create NGOs and involve in their activity guided by various reasons. A strong reason is a desire to improve certain areas of public life, to help those groups of society that cannot take care of themselves, such as children, severely ill people, the disabled or elderly. NGOs offers society more diverse leisure-time-spending opportunities. Participation in an NGO provides an opportunity to address personal challenges that are faced also by others, such as improving environmental accessibility and quality of life, providing psychological support, increasing awareness on a specific issue. Working in an NGO provides opportunities of self-empowerment and improvement in a specific professional area, opportunities to implement ideas and gain interesting experience and new contacts.

Most often, volunteering is a part-time job. Volunteering can be a one-day job or done for several years at various times. A volunteer does not receive financial pay, but is bound to receive satisfaction and ex-post evaluation. Expenditure incurred by the volunteer during during volunteering, such as purchase of stationery goods, telephone calls, transport costs, are borne by the NGO for which the voluntary work is carried

out. It is good practice to conclude a voluntary agreement on the tasks and duties to be performed and to ensure that volunteers receive appropriate training and guidance, as well as adequate accident, health and civil insurance. The volunteer has a right to fair, safe and health-friendly working conditions. Different countries have differing national framework for civil liability of volunteers. In Latvia, it's possible to insure the volunteers who perform a voluntary service.



5. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN NGO AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITIES

5.1 Establishment of an NGO

Before establishing an NGO, it is crucial to understand what kind of NGO in terms of a legal form do you want to establish: an association or a foundation (see Paragraph 2 for definitions).

The NGO may be established by legal entities and individuals, as well as legal partnerships. The NGO may be founded for a specified or unlimited period of time. The minimum number of founders of an association is 2 (a foundation can be established by 1 person or it can be founded on the basis of a will). Before submitting an application for the registration with the Register of Associations and Foundations, the founders must take a decision on establishment of an association, approve the articles of association and agree on its administration institution (type).

All documents for registration of an NGO and a document certifying a payment of the State fee (~EUR 15.00) must be submitted to the Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia in Riga or one of its regional branches in Latvia (in Bauska, Daugavpils, Jēkabpils, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Saldus, Valmiera, Ventspils) (www.ur.gov.lv). Documents can also be sent via mail.

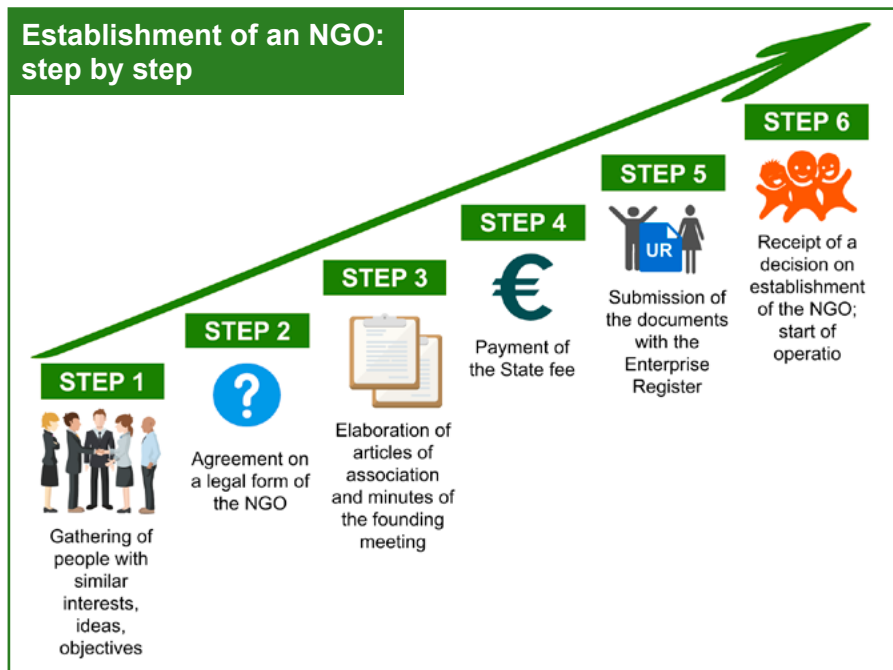
Free-of-charge advice on the registration of NGOs, as well as examples with explanations can be received from the Civic Alliance - Latvia (www.nvo.lv).

!!! All foreign-language documents to be submitted to the Enterprise Register must be accompanied by a translation in Latvian which has been certified in conformity with Cabinet Regulation No. 291 of 22 August 2000 "Procedures for the Certification of Document Translations in the Official Language". If the document issued abroad is public, the translation must be certified in a notarial procedure. All public documents to be submitted to the Enterprise Register must be legalised in accordance with the procedures specified in international treaties.

A public document issued in a foreign state under legalisation procedure acquires legal validity in the Republic of Latvia. Unclear questions related to the legalisation of a document may be addressed to the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

<http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/authentication-and-legalisation-of-documents>.

In Latvia, many services may be requested and received electronically on the website www.latvija.lv. It is possible to establish an NGO without leaving a house. To do this, it is necessary to receive a secure electronic signature issued in Latvia (identity card or eID or a secure electronic signature smart card issued by the Latvian State Radio and Television Centre, www.eparaksts.lv).



5.2. Sources of Funding of NGOs

Personal Resources

Funding for an NGO to achieve its goals and ensure its daily operation can be provided from internal resources, such as membership fees and member donations.

The amount of membership fee and the procedures for the payment thereof are determined by each association. The amount of the membership fee and the payment arrangements specified by the association do not prevent the members from donating individually-chosen sums.

Private, Local Government, Public and European Union Support

More information on fund-raising for NGOs can be found in Project Management Manuals issued by various NGOs, local governments or public administrations, and they are also published on the internet.

Private Support

NGOs can participate in project competitions organised by different private foundations, such as:

- ✓ Community Initiatives Fund, www.iniciativa.lv;
- ✓ Community fund project competitions, such as Valmiera Community Fund, www.vnf.lv;
- ✓ Rietumu Charity Fund, www.rblf.lv.

NGOs can raise private funding in the form of donations (see Paragraph 5.3).

Local Government Support

More and more local governments in Latvia develop and organise various project competitions for implementation of citizens' (NGO) initiatives in the territory of a specific local government, such as Riga City Council, Jūrmala City Council, Liepāja City Council, Sigulda City Council, Jelgava City Council and others. There are local governments having clearly defined procedures for receiving co-financing when participating in larger project competitions, such as the Tukums Municipality Council. Several local governments support their NGOs by delegating specific tasks, as is the case of Aizpute Municipality Council, or by awarding grants (funds from the local government budget) for performance of specific tasks.

In any case, any NGO is entitled to apply for aid to its local government or the local government in the territory of which it intends to implement an initiative. More information on local governments' support opportunities for NGOs may be obtained by addressing the specific local government.

State Funding

Since the restoration of the independence of Latvia, these are the biggest challenges and also priorities defined for Latvia in the context of civil society development:

- ✓ recognising minorities and respecting their rights;
- ✓ promoting public integration;
- ✓ promoting welfare and addressing labour issues.

Countless initiatives are being implemented in these areas and state support is provided.

The State itself organises a series of measures to achieve the above objectives. In some cases, State funding can be received in the form of a national delegated task and also in the form of donations from State capital companies (only to organisations that have received the status of a public benefit organisation – see Paragraph 5.3). The State supports the NGO sector in specific procurement competitions by awarding contracts to NGOs (see Paragraph 5.2.3). A number of NGOs in Latvia receive an indirect state aid in the form of a tax relief (such as real estate tax relief).

The most popular project competitions that might be interesting to third-country nationals can be found here:

- ✓ Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, <http://www.km.gov.lv/>;
- ✓ Society Integration Foundation, www.sif.lv;
- ✓ Agency for International Programs for Youth working under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, www.jaunatne.gov.lv;
- ✓ State Education Development Agency, www.viaa.gov.lv.

Funding of the European Union

Since Latvia joined the European Union in 2004, Latvian NGOs can access funding for a wide variety of programmes by both participating in project competitions administered by Latvia and by submitting project applications to institutions of the European Commission.

Information on various project competitions is available on websites of the responsible authorities (such as www.esfondi.lv) and in the NGO resource centres (see Paragraph 7 for contact information).

If an NGO has not previously participated in any project competitions, it may be worthwhile to attend free-of-charge informative seminars about conditions of the project competitions and elaboration of project applications. Such seminars are organised by both State administration institutions and NGO centres. Many opportunities are provided by the Riga NGO House (<http://www.iksd.riga.lv/public/56037.html>).

Funding from the Government of Another State

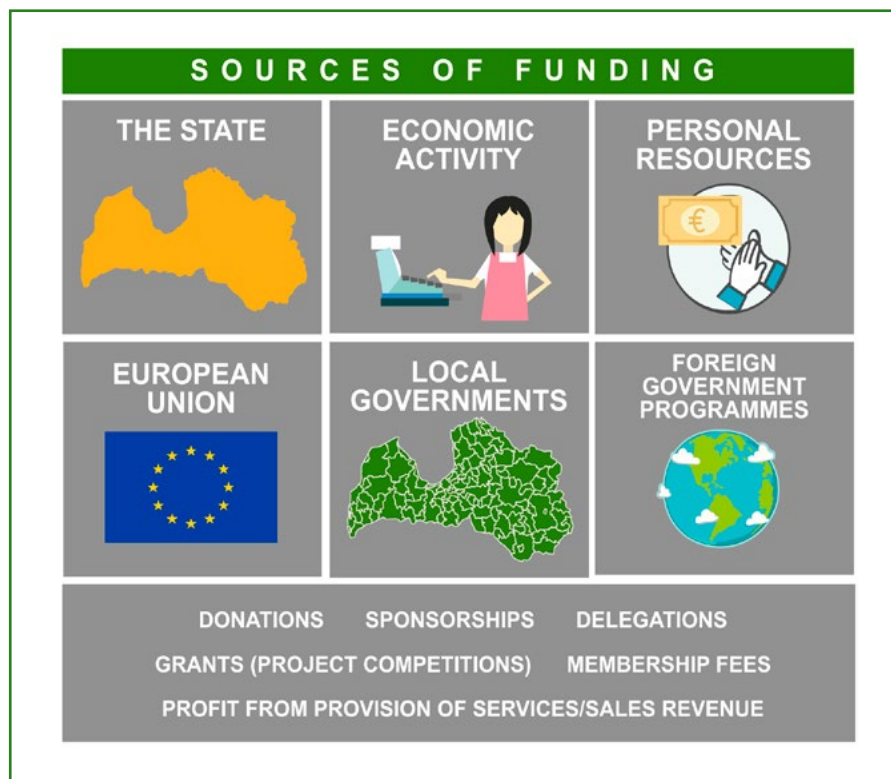
Governments of different countries are developing their own support programmes with an aim of promoting mutual cooperation. Some programmes of foreign state governments are administered in Latvia. The most

popular foreign government programmes in Latvia are the Nordic Council of Ministers Programme (www.norden.lv), the Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway Grant Programme (www.eeagrants.org) and programmes of different governments that can be reviewed in more detail by contacting by contacting the missions of these countries in Latvia, e.g. the US Embassy, the British Council's representation in Latvia, the Embassy of Germany, etc.

Economic Activity

Latvian laws provides for a possibility for any NGO to carry out economic activities – to provide services and/or to produce and sell products. The most popular types of economic activity among NGOs are:

- ✓ provision of services to public and local government authorities (including participation in procurements);
- ✓ social entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship with the aim to channel the profits towards the objectives of the NGO),
www.socialauznamejdarbiba.lv.



5.3. Activities of Public Benefit Organisations and Receipt of Status thereof

A separate group of the organisations is formed by those with the status of a public benefit organisation (PBO) whose operational objectives relate to charity, protection of human rights, development of civil society, promotion of education, science, culture and health, promotion of sport, environmental protection, disaster relief and emergency assistance, and raising the social welfare of society, particularly of the poor and socially vulnerable groups.

The status of a PBO offers the NGO a wider range of opportunities for fund-raising from the private sector: the status of the PBO assures a potential donor that the NGO acts in the public interest and within the framework of the law, that the activities of the NGO are controlled and that the donor will also have tax concessions.

It should be noted that the PBO status poses an administrative burden: the provisions of the PBO Law must be strictly observed, reports on the progress must be submitted annually, no more than 25% of the total donations used in a calendar year may be used to cover the administrative expenses of the NGO with the status of a PBO, strict conditions for the use of financial resources and assets must be observed – a PBO may transfer the donated property or financial resources free of charge only on the basis of a written contract and only in line with the activity areas awarded to the PBO.

On the other hand, donors are motivated to donate to PBOs due to the opportunity to receive tax concessions provided for in the law On Taxes and Duties for both legal entities and individuals who donate property or funds to a PBO.

If you have decided to acquire the status of a PBO for your NGO, please refer in detail to the information published on the website of the State Revenue Service:

<https://www.vid.gov.lv/default.aspx?tabid=11&id=4527&hl=1>.

6. VOLUNTARY WORK WITH VARIOUS TARGET GROUPS

Voluntary Work with Children

A volunteer can carry out voluntary work with children for any NGO, which works with children or institutions working with children and the internal regulations of which provide for the presence of voluntary assistants. Most commonly, voluntary work with children can be carried out at children's homes, child care centres, day centres, children's hospitals, etc.

The skills for successful work with children are: creativity, flexibility, ability to communicate with children and teenagers, etc.

Voluntary Work with Teenagers and Youth

A volunteer can carry out voluntary work with teenagers and youth for any NGO, which works with teenagers and youth or institutions working with teenagers and youth and the internal regulations of which provide for the presence of voluntary assistants. Most commonly, voluntary work with teenagers and youth can be carried out at children's homes, child care centres, day centres, children's hospitals, youth initiative centres, youth homes, schools, NGOs, etc.

The skills for successful work with teenagers and youth are: creativity, flexibility, communication skills, empathy, openness, ability to solve conflicts, etc.

Voluntary Work with People with Reduced Mobility

A volunteer can carry out voluntary work with people with reduced mobility for any NGO that works with people with reduced mobility or brings them together, for an NGO cooperating with institutions that work with people with reduced mobility or that help people with reduced mobility individually.

Most commonly, voluntary work with people with reduced mobility can be carried out in care facilities and day care centres, hospitals, retirement homes or specially adapted schools/kindergartens. Not always voluntary work with people with reduced mobility needs to be specially organised, as it is sufficient to be tolerant and inclusive, and to help people with reduced mobility in their daily life.

The skills necessary to successfully work with people with reduced mobility: Compassion, desire to help, patience, creativity, flexibility and communication skills, openness, ability to accept different people, etc.

Voluntary Work with People with Mental Disabilities

A volunteer can carry out voluntary work with people with mental disabilities for any NGO that works with people with mental disabilities or brings them together, for an NGO cooperating with institutions that work with people with mental disabilities or that help people with mental disabilities individually.

Most commonly, voluntary work with people with mental disabilities can be carried out in care facilities and day care centres, hospitals, retirement homes or individually.

Not always voluntary work with people with mental disabilities needs to be specially organised as it is sufficient to be tolerant and inclusive, and to help people with mental disabilities in their daily life.

The skills for successful work with the people with mental disabilities are: compassion, desire to help, patience, creativity, flexibility and communication skills, openness, ability to accept different people, etc.

Voluntary Work with Young Parents

A volunteer can carry out voluntary work with young parents for any NGO whose target group comprises young parents, including children, or that brings them together, or an NGO that collaborates with institutions working with young parents, including children.

Most commonly, voluntary work with young parents can be carried out by taking care of their children while they study or work, organising and/or conducting various educational activities for them, advocating for the interests of young parents or helping young parents take care of their day-to-day childcare issues.

The skills for successful work with the young parents are: compassion, desire to help, patience, creativity, flexibility and communication skills, openness, ability to accept different people, etc.

Professional knowledge in medicine or pedagogy are seen as an advantage in working with young parents.

Voluntary Work with Adults

A volunteer can carry out voluntary work with adults in any field of operation of an NGO, depending on the interests of the volunteer. It can be environment, sport, youth leisure, health, art, culture or anything else. Educational and leisure activities are the most popular directions for the NGOs working with adults.

Information about different volunteering opportunities can be found on www.brivpratigie.lv, and this website can be used to offer interested people an opportunity to volunteer in your organisation.

7. WHAT NGOs CAN I PARTICIPATE IN?

Anyone can participate in an NGO in volunteering opportunities two ways:

- ✓ by establishing and developing NGOs that are relevant to their interests (see Paragraph 5 for details);
- ✓ by engaging in the activities of an active NGO in accordance with one's own interests.

INTEGRATION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUPPORT OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS

Creative association for youth TREPES

www.vairoprieku.lv

Objectives of the association are promoting integration of young people in social and cultural life by involving them in social assistance and self-help services, promoting volunteering, encouraging the initiative of young people to educate their peers, spend their free time in a creative way, organise events, camps, projects that they find interesting and attract funds for implementation thereof; to raise awareness of a multicultural society in the world. The organisation is working in Riga and regions, and it has different target groups. The organisation operates in all fields important to the development of young people's personalities. It focuses on teaching young people self-help skills for their own development, education and awareness. It is very important for members of the association to volunteer in the field of social inclusion, so that the youth learn to be socially active and responsible. The organisation invites its friends, peers and celebrities to take part in its activities.

Shelter "Safe House"

<http://www.patverums-dm.lv/>

Objectives of the organisation are to develop support services for victims of human trafficking, legal immigrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and persons who have received subsidiary protection status by ensuring the individual's right to receive adequate assistance and protection, changing the attitude of the society towards victims of

human trafficking, legal immigrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and persons who have received subsidiary protection status; by encouraging the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of human trafficking into the society; by providing support services for legal immigrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and persons who have received subsidiary protection status; by developing interactive forms of training; developing cooperation with state and local government institutions, public and Christian organisations in Latvia and the world; to promote respect for human rights and to provide support to organisations promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Latvia – a safe home for different people!

MINORITY ASSOCIATIONS IN LATVIA

Alongside Latvians, the main nation, representatives of 154 different nationalities are living in our country, constituting about 40% of all the residents of Latvia. Many ethnic groups develop their own cultural associations:

http://www.sif.gov.lv/nodevumi/nodevumi/5321/Petijums_mazakumtautibu_interesu_aizstaviba.pdf

Ita Kozakeviča's Society of the National Cultures Association of Latvia (LNKBA)

<https://lnkba.wordpress.com/>

Operational directions of LNKBA:

- ✓ conservation and development of ancestral cultural heritage;
- ✓ development of good ethnic relations;
- ✓ consolidation of people living in the country;
- ✓ implementation of ideas for, integration, tolerance and cooperation among different nationalities, implementation of European principles;
- ✓ propaganda of multilingualism and, in particular, strengthening the role of Latvian language;
- ✓ promoting conditions where citizens of Latvia with low-income can also be closer to culture.

LNKBA helps people be more aware of their ethnic ties, to explore their culture, language and religious traditions.

In addition to member organisations of the LNKBA, also Africans, Arabs, Bulgarians, Czechs and other popular cultures have associations for their cultures. There are also various multi-ethnic NGOs

depending on the local government that is a place of residence for a person (in Jelgava, Krāslava, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Daugavpils, Smiltene, etc.). See more: <http://www.liic.lv/uploads/filedir/File/Mazakumtautibu%20NVOs%20Latvija.pdf>.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Organisation Apeirons

www.apeirons.lv

The aim of the association is to integrate people with disabilities into society. The association is oriented towards society as a whole, with a special focus on people with disabilities, including young people.

The main directions of activities for the associations are: defending common interests, employment, environmental accessibility, human rights, participation in the National and International Network for Disabled Persons, inclusive education, e-accessibility, youth movement, volunteering, Apeirons video studio and other activities that helps improving the lives of people with disabilities in Latvia and promoting understanding and tolerance.

Umbrella Body For Disability Organisations SUSTENTO

www.sustento.lv

The objectives of Sustento are:

- ✓ promoting respect for the rights of people with disabilities and chronic diseases in national and local decision-making process; affecting development, adoption and enforcement of laws that contribute to this target;
- ✓ developing international cooperation with other organisations of similar fields;
- ✓ supporting the activities of organisations in our country aimed at promoting integration and protecting the rights of people with disabilities and chronic diseases;
- ✓ developing a positive understanding of people with disabilities and chronic diseases in continuous cooperation with national and local media.

HUMANITARIAN LAW AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Latvian Red Cross

www.redcross.lv

LatRC is aimed at providing assistance to people who need assistance, regardless of their nationality, race, religion, status or political views. For a century now, LatRC has been one of the largest membership and volunteer organisations, providing assistance to people in need. LatRC operates throughout the country, thus providing assistance as close to people as possible. LatRC has 25 regional branches, with young people actively participating in 10 of them, and 227 local divisions. The fundamental tasks established by the LatRC are to promote international humanitarian law and the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement. LatRC operates more than 10 social centres throughout Latvia. The main functions of LatRC: providing social care to the population, promoting health, providing first aid training and ensuring thereof, social inclusion, as well as on implementing various projects projects of national, local government and European Commission social programmes.

Association “Palīdzēsim.lv”

www.palidzesim.lv

The activities of the Association “Palīdzēsim” are based on voluntary and charitable activities, providing assistance to families with children. It operates in three main directions:

1. provision of primary aid in domestic matters (food, housekeeping, furniture, etc.);
2. support for addressing health-related problems;
3. organisation of social inclusion measures.

The association is active since 2009 and has acquired diverse experience in working with various target groups.

STUDENT UNIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

Student Union of Latvia

www.lsa.lv

LSA is an association whose members are the self-governments of Latvian institutions of higher education. The self-governments of students ensure functioning of the association by representing the interests of university students.

MEDIA

FEJS Latvia

www.fejs.lv

FEJS objectives are as follows: to improve professional skills of Latvian journalism students and young journalists; to create a contact between journalism students and the professional environment of journalists; to promote public discussion on current issues and trends in journalism; to create an international network of journalists and journalism organisations and to promote the exchange of knowledge and experience of Latvian journalism students and young journalists at international level; to provide journalism students and young journalists with the opportunity to carry out journalism projects at local, national and international levels; to encourage journalism students and young journalists to participate in development of civil society by promoting independent and ethical journalism.

FEJS is a member of the Forum for European Journalism Students.

Young Media House

www.youngmediahouse.com

Young Media House is a centre for youth interested in the media, established by the association Avantis. It is a place where the youth can meet professionals of the media industry, listen to lectures and seminars, and get inspired. It is a place that brings together the smartest and most creative minds. The Media House is based in Riga, but is mobile and offers various activities in regions and different locations in Riga as well. The activities are organised by the youth, who develop and realise their ideas under the guidance of mentors.

Associations of Media Professionals

- ✓ Latvian Association of Journalists, www.latvijaszurnalisti.lv;
- ✓ Latvian Public Relations Association, www.lasap.lv.

YOUTH HEALTH AND PEER EDUCATION

Latvian Red Cross Youth (LatRC Youth)

www.facebook.com/lisk.jaunatne

LatRC youth is a unit of the Latvian Red Cross (LatRC), which has been acting as a youth organisation for 88 years. There are currently 10 regions with active volunteering in LatRC youth. LatRC youth divisions are working directly with the younger audiences. The operational

directions of LatRC are organisation of seminars and training, organisation of camps and donation campaigns, as well as joint planning of their own free time. LatRC youth activities are based on programmes that enable each young person to choose the most appropriate and interesting programme under which he/she engages in activities and pursues his/her ideas, such as training and providing first aid at various events, festivals; social inclusion; promotion of health; discrimination and violence reduction.

Papardes zieds

www.papardeszieds.lv

Papardes zieds is a Latvian association for family planning and sexual health which has been active for over 15 years. The aim of the organisation is to make people understand that sexual and reproductive health issues are as important as education and health in general, to achieve that the sexual and reproductive rights of each individual are observed, to achieve that high-quality services would be accessible to everyone and that people would make informed choices. At present, the work of Papardes zieds Youth Health and Education Centre, which provides health prevention and education services to young people, is being developed. The Centre offers peer-to-peer educational programmes, counselling (hot mail) and informational publications for young adults. Operational directions: young adults, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, accessibility, abortion and interest advocacy.

CREATIVITY AND EDUCATION

Youth Studio BaMbuss

www.facebook.com/jsbambuss

The youth studio is an initiative created by the Baltic Regional Fund, www.brf.lv, which operates in Riga and offers young people a variety of educational and leisure opportunities and options for volunteering and participating in international projects in Latvia and abroad, such as creative lessons, language clubs, multimedia lessons, discussion club “Youth talk”, meetings with inspirational speakers, participation campaigns and other activities.

RED – Creative Effects Workshop (RED)

www.redngo.lv

RED is open to every active, creative, helpful, development-oriented young person who is prepared to face challenges and make Latvia

more knowledgeable, skilled, more cheerful, more helpful and just a great place for living in, growing and being happy.

RED provides the youth with an opportunity to express themselves; promotes inter-cultural dialogue, both among representatives of different cultures and between individuals.

RED works at the Riga Youth Centre “Kaņieris”, www.kopnica.lv, which is an environment of creative expression for all young people and youth organisations in Riga.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Organisation Piedzīvojuma gars

www.piedzivojumagars.lv

An organisation aimed at mastering experience and adventure education in Latvia, open to all young adults aged 17 to 28. It is a perfect place for people who enjoy adventure, camps and active life-style, have endless reserves of energy to share, want to participate in organising and providing adventure tours to schools, child camps, various expeditions and training.

Lūzumpunkts

www.luzumpunkts.lv

The adventure organisation Lūzumpunkts combines active recreation experts and team building coaches. So far, Lūzumpunkts have implemented many adventure education projects and activities in Latvia, Europe and elsewhere in the world. Lūzumpunkts specialises in adventure, active recreational events, team-building and development training, creating, leading and implementing photo orienteering competitions and active tourism adventure trips.

STREET AND AMATEUR SPORT

Ghetto Games

www.ghettogames.lv

Currently Ghetto is the largest street culture and youth movement in the country. Nearly 70 events per season are organised under the Ghetto flag. Thousands of young people have an opportunity to participate in sports activities and spend time in a positive and health-promoting environment. If you're interested in arm-wrestling, BMX free-style, extreme skating, table top football, street basketball, street dance,

street floor ball, street football, skateboard, urban gymnastics, MTB dual slalom, fixed bicycles, fingerboarding, street motorcycle freestyle, MTB freestyle dirt rallies, skimboarding, snowboarding, wake boarding, cycle polo, bike trials and other sports, Ghetto Games is the place for you.

Latvian Sports for All Association (LTSA)

www.sportsvisiem.lv

LTSA is a modern, community-based organisation for grassroots sport and public health.

LTSA organises grassroots sports events aimed at disease prevention and promotion of health for people living in Latvia who do not practice professional sport. LTSA organises various mass sports festivals throughout Latvia on a regular basis.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

At national level, NGO associations participate in decision-making through cooperation with with national regulatory authorities and other NGOs in achieving common objectives by developing and implementing national policies in different sectors.

There are various NGO associations in Latvia:

- ✓ NGO umbrella organisation in Latvia – Civic Alliance – Latvia, www.nvo.lv;
- ✓ Development cooperation at national and international levels – Latvian Platform for Development Co-operation, www.lapas.lv;
- ✓ Youth policy – National Youth Council of Latvia, www.ljp.lv;
- ✓ Protection of the interests of people with special needs – Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organisations SUSTENTO, www.sustento.lv, and Organisation Apeirons, www.apeirons.lv;
- ✓ Women's rights – Resource Centre for Women Marta, www.marta.lv; and Women's NGOs Cooperation Network of Latvia, www.facebook.com/www.sieviesusadarbibiba.lv;
- ✓ Professional associations – Employers' Confederation of Latvia, www.iddk.lv;
- ✓ and others.

At local level, local governments have various advisory councils involving the NGOs that work in the local government. Advisory councils are thematic and act under the supervision of a specific local government department or unit. The quality of the work of advisory councils depends both on the activity and interest of NGOs, and on the interest

and motivation of local governments to involve NGOs in decision-making processes.

For example, Sigulda Youth Council, https://www.sigulda.lv/public/lat/pasvaldiba/dome/jaunatnes_lietu_konsultativa_padome/, Jūrmala Social Council, <http://www.jurmala.lv/page/1162>, Tripartite Advisory Board of Liepāja City Council, www.liepajniekiem.lv, Social Advisory Board of Daugavpils City Council, www.daugavpils.lv, and others.

Find other NGOs:

- ✓ Latvian NGO data base, www.ngolatvia.lv/lv/nvo-datu-baze;
- ✓ Information portal for young people, www.jaunatneslietas.lv;
- ✓ Latvian platform for development cooperation, www.lapas.lv;
- ✓ Regional NGO centres:
 - In Kurzeme, www.kurzemesnvo.lv;
 - In South Latgale, www.nvoc.lv;
 - in Zemgale, www.zemgalei.lv;
 - in Vidzeme, www.vnf.lv;
 - in Riga Region, www.nvo.lv;
 - Vidusdaugava NGO Centre, www.jekabpilsnvo.lv;
 - NGO centre of Preiļi and the surrounding regional communities, www.preilunvo.lv;
 - NGO house in Riga, www.integracija.riga.lv.
- ✓ Senior Organisations throughout Latvia – Latvian Pensioners' Federation – www.pensionari.lv;
- ✓ Latvian Medical Association – www.arstubiedriba.lv;
- ✓ Culture and art organisations in Latvia, www.kulturaskarte.lv/lv/nevalstiska-organizacija;
- ✓ Enterprise and professional organisations in Latvia – Employers' Confederation in Latvia, www.lddk.lv, and the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, www.lbas.lv;
- ✓ Environment protection organisations in Latvia, <http://biodiv.lvgma.gov.lv/information/fo1426040>;
- ✓ Consumer protection – Consumer Rights Protection Centre, www.pateretajs.lv;
- ✓ Representation of interest in rural local governments – Latvian Rural Forum, www.lif.partneribas.lv;
- ✓ Intercultural Dialogue – Latvian Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation, www.annaslindsfonds.lv.

References

1. Civic Alliance – Latvia http://nvo.lv/site/attachments/03/11/2014/Petijums_Parskats_par_NVO_sektoru_LV_2013.pdf
2. National Integration Centre www.integration.lv
3. Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia www.ur.gov.lv
4. State Revenue Service
<https://www.vid.gov.lv/default.aspx?tabid=11&id=4527&hl=1>
5. Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia http://www.km.gov.lv/lv/starpnozares/lidzdaliba/pazMK_biedrnodklasif.html
6. Society Integration Foundation www.sif.lv
7. National portal of Latvia www.likumi.lv

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