21st Annual Volunteurope Conference:
“Active Citizens Connecting Europe”

18-20 October 2012
Florence, Italy

CONFERENCE MASTER CLASSES AND NGO VISITS
Master Class 1A (Friday 19 October 2012; 12:00-13:30)

Advocating for volunteer rights and valorising youth participation in volunteering

Presenters:

Prof Andrea Salvini
CESVOT/University of Pisa
Italy

Prof Andrea Salvini will discuss research undertaken by CESVOT, in cooperation with the University of Pisa and several centres for social research, on youth participation in volunteering. He will discuss the findings from a number of recent surveys on the relationship between young people and volunteering, and on the pathways that help young people take part in volunteering in particular. This research has shed light on young people's language, their use of new technologies, their relationship with civil society organisations, and their expectations in a changing world and in the global economic crisis, as well as on new models of social engagement and youth active citizenship. CESVOT is part of a national study group, promoted by CsvNet, which gives young people the opportunity to discuss issues relating to volunteering and social engagement. In 2011, a national event “Dammispace” (Give me space!) was held, where 500 young people and associations presented good practices of youth active involvement in volunteering.

With David Garrahy, participants will examine the legal and policy frameworks for volunteers’ rights in their home countries and develop strategies for policymaker and decision-maker advocacy, using case-studies and examples from across Europe. The Charter for the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers will be used as a tool for such advocacy, and an EU-wide coalition of volunteering organisations will be founded to lobby for the implementation of the rights and responsibilities enshrined in the Charter. As part of the preparations for the drafting of the Charter, the Youth Forum and its member organisations prepared a Report on the Rights of Volunteers in Europe. This Report surveyed the frameworks for volunteers’ rights across Europe and provided the analytical basis for the Charter. The Report stressed that the multiplicity of legal and policy frameworks in Europe significantly impeded cross-border volunteering.

David Garrahy
European Youth Forum
Belgium
By the end of the Master Class participants will:

- Know paths to involving youth in volunteering. Starting with a summary of research on youth and volunteering, participants will examine youth volunteering in Europe and draw on their experiences to identify good practices. In particular, the aim is to give participants the knowledge needed to understand youth volunteering’s current situation and future prospects as well as knowledge of paths to involving youth in volunteering, channelling their energy and creativity.

- Have taken an in-depth look at volunteers’ rights and responsibilities and thought about ways of building a common European framework that will foster youth participation and volunteering across borders. Participants will examine the Charter for the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers as well as European case studies. The aim is then to form an alliance of European organisations that will push for the adoption of a European framework that will foster youth participation and volunteering across borders and promote young volunteers’ rights.
**Master Class 1B (Friday 19 October 2012; 12:00-13:30)**

Volunteers live longer and NGOs work better in Europe

**Presenters:**

**Clémentine Laforêt**

Itinéraire International

*France*

This will be a joint Master Class between Clémentine Laforêt and Jakub Kalinowski on NGOs working better in Europe and volunteers living longer.

In 2011, a number of reports on volunteering were produced, especially within the context of the EYV2011 Alliance and the production of the Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe.

These reports confirmed some statements:

- Volunteering represents an effective instrument for strengthening communities.
- Volunteering is a very important activity in the EU. Its economic power is greater than that of some business activities.
- Within the EU, there are many approaches to volunteering. These approaches are strongly influenced by culture and policy.
- In order to achieve social cohesion, the voluntary world sector needs to acquire adequate and innovative instruments as well as improve its initiatives and strategies.

These statements were foreseen by members of the Volonteurope network, who started working on a Grundtvig learning partnership project in 2009. This partnership would allow them to share their expertise and practices as well as build a new European project around volunteering. This project will work with learners belonging to voluntary organisations, centres for volunteering services and third sector organisations.

Clémentine Laforêt will present the project to the participants and invite them to discuss the reality of volunteering in their country and sector. The participants will be also be invited to follow the project during the next two years of its running.

**Jakub Kalinowski**

Volunteers 4 Sport

*Poland*

Jakub Kalinowski will explore the immense power of human motivations. Participants will understand that volunteers get involved not because they like *what* an organization does, but *why* it does it. This argument can be directly linked to research pointing to a strong relationship between volunteering and longevity. It is crucial that third sector organisations understand this relationship if they are to be successful.
**Master Class 1C (Friday 19 October 2012; 12:00-13:30)**

**Maximising impact! Together we can do more**

**Presenter:**

In this Master Class, participants will be introduced to Guide Dogs’ pilot projects ‘My Guide’, a collaborative programme where Guide Dogs gives training and resources to others to deliver successful outcomes for blind and partially sighted people. Clare Burgess will discuss a step approach to upskilling volunteers as well as new methods of providing short-term, regular volunteering opportunities.

**Clare Burgess**

Guide Dogs for the Blind

*UK*

Participants will also be introduced to the standard training programme developed for volunteers that helps them transfer skills to different charities and projects.

A key challenge in sharing volunteers or resources is keeping records and keeping in touch to maximise the investment made in people as well as the opportunities for long-term benefits to communities. Do we really ‘own’ our volunteers, and do we need to?

Tackling the challenges and opportunities of collaborating with external organisations, from Guide Dogs’ experience with ‘My Guide’, this Master Class will also facilitate discussions on how the work can be replicated or adapted by others.

By the end of the Master Class participants will:

- Have a good overview of the My Guide project, its objectives and intended outcomes
- Understand how Guide Dogs has developed methods to respond to the motivations and interests of volunteers to support its vision for blind and partially sighted people
- Have reflected on the challenges of and opportunities for working with other organisations
- Come away with ideas on the multiple benefits of quality assurance
- Be able to consider how the pilot framework might be applied to support other organisations’ activities
**Surfing the 'Silver Wave’ – Exploring Models of Volunteering for the 21st Century Older People**

**Presenters:**

- **Christine Irvine**
  Volunteer Now
  *UK (Northern Ireland)*

Using four fictitious character case studies, participants will explore what volunteering might mean for a person in their 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. What will soon become clear is that the 50+ age group is not a homogenous group and that the ways in which people wish to engage with volunteering often vary with age.

Participants will then be asked to look at other factors that determine if and in what way older people participate in volunteering. These include: perceived/actual health, levels of family contact, social-economic grouping, previous educational attainment, self efficacy/confidence, access to transport, caring responsibilities, and employed / retired. Participants will then discuss how these factors can act as barriers or enablers to volunteering for older people.

Looking at traditional and modern models of volunteering, participants will be asked to determine which model(s) they think would be most attractive and appropriate to the case studies.

By the end of the Master Class participants will:

- Be acquainted with the common and divergent characteristics of a 21st century older Volunteer
- Have knowledge of the barriers and enabling factors that determine if and in what way older people volunteer
- Be aware of models of volunteering suitable for 21st century older volunteer
- Have ideas about how learning from the session can be applied to their own area of work
Generations volunteering together: the contribution of volunteering to promoting active ageing and intergenerational solidarity

This is a joint Master Class between Tiziano Vecchiato and Gail Cassidy on intergenerational volunteering and active ageing.

CESVOT, in cooperation with Fondazione Zancan, has undertaken research on active ageing, and on the contribution of volunteering organisations to active ageing in particular. This research, entitled "The Contribution of Volunteering to Promoting Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity", was realised with the active involvement of volunteering organisations and identifies cases where older volunteers spearheaded initiatives in their local community. In addition, Tiziano Vecchiato will discuss the Charter of the Tuscan Volunteering for Active Ageing, drafted and published by CESVOT, that brings together a set of ideas and principles that must be considered when implementing policies and projects related to active ageing.

Gail Cassidy will highlight some of the work of intergenerational volunteering projects which have been taking place in East Ayrshire, Scotland over the past four years. The volunteers (aged 10 to 92) are recruited from schools, youth centres and older people's services such as sheltered housing. Participants will learn about the history of the project Well Connected and how it came about. They will also examine what intergenerational volunteering is and the importance of setting up a project using a staged process. In addition, Gail Cassidy will discuss effective ways of building active communities, promoting citizenship, regenerating neighbourhoods and addressing inequality, among others.

By the end of the Master Class participants will have:

- Shared experiences and good practices at the European level regarding active ageing and intergenerational solidarity
- Compared different ways of increasing the quality and the added value of volunteering
- Understood how to overcome the barriers between generations, thereby promoting intergenerational solidarity and active ageing
- Understood the importance of encouraging volunteers of all ages to work together
- Seen volunteers of all ages can work together promote active citizenship, neighbourhood redevelopment and equality
Master Class 2B (Friday 19 October 2012; 14:30-16:00)

Success through youth: recruitment and incorporation of young people into volunteer organisations

**Presenters:**

**Mehmet Mulla**
CSV Youth Board
*UK*

Mehmet Mulla and Faye Smith will discuss the best means of attracting/recruiting young people to an organisation, as well as the benefits that young people can bring to an organisation, including increased chances of funding and sponsors (a visible volunteer in the community is a funded volunteer). The presenters will also explain why incorporating young volunteers is important and draw a distinction between a young volunteer and a young active citizen.

The learning will be through an interactive media-based exercise facilitated by SAM project participants and youth board members. This will reinforce the key points of the 'tool kit' and produce media outputs which will then be edited and sent out to all participants the week following the Conference.

By the end of the Master Class participants will:

- Have practical knowledge of recruiting young people into an organisation
- Be aware of the benefits that young people can bring to the organisation
- Have an idea of where young people fit into an organisation's inner workings
- Have an appreciation for the importance of incorporating young people into an organisation's workings
- Be able to draw a distinction between a young volunteer and a young active citizen

**Faye Smith**
SAM Project
*UK*
More and more, NGOs are partnering with organisations. However, it is often challenging to identify which organisations an NGO should approach.

Using the paper Skills Based Employee Volunteering, Roisin Murphy will present how corporate social responsibility (CSR) in organisations is evolving.

Then, there will be a presentation and discussion about the value of public-private partnerships and examples of partnerships that have worked well and why they have worked well.

Following this, participants can brainstorm about the types of companies that each NGO in the Master Class could approach.

In this Master Class, Roisin Murphy will also discuss the Recommendations on which she worked as part of the Working Group on Employee Volunteering, which are collected in the “Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe”.

By the end of the Master Class participants will:

- Understand how CSR is evolving in companies
- Know about skills-based employee volunteering
- Know how to building effective public-private partnerships
- Be equipped to produce a win-win outcome
- Have brainstorm which types of companies might be best to approach
- Have explored effective approaches to engage the private sector
Master Class 2D (Friday 19 October 2012; 14:30-16:00)

Volunteers for families

**Presenter:** Perdita Wingerter and Stephanie Schrage

Gemeinsam Leben & Lernen in Europa

**Germany**

This Master Class will introduce participants to the Grundtvig learning partnership "Volunteers for families", whose partners in Turkey, Portugal, Italy and Germany work in the field of providing services to families.

The aim of the Grundtvig learning partnership is to get acquainted with the national situations of volunteer work in providing services for families, and raise awareness of the situation of the volunteers. After mapping the status of volunteer work in each of the participating countries, good practices from these countries are exchanged.

These national good practices will be presented to participants with the help of input by volunteers who work in the field. The volunteers are given the chance to present their work and share their experiences. By exchanging best practices, participants will gain valuable knowledge of what a good practice can look like and how it can be adapted to and implemented in another country.

By the end of the Master Class participants will:
- Have a profound knowledge of best practices of volunteer work in the field of families
- Be aware of the situation and status of volunteer practices in at least four European countries
- Get acquainted with the possibilities of transnational exchange
- Get new ideas and inspirations on how to improve the situation of volunteer work
- Have new ideas on the topic of promoting contents and innovative ways to stimulate non-formal lifelong learning
Master Class 3A (Friday 19 October 2012; 16:30-18:00)

The value of volunteering in building social cohesion

Presenter:

Andrea Volterrani

CESVOT/University of Tor Vergata Rome

Italy

This Master Class reports on research undertaken by CESVOT in cooperation with the University of Tor Vergata to identify the role of volunteering in promoting and building social cohesion within local communities. The value of volunteering is measured not so much in economic terms but rather in social terms, and volunteering is linked to some key aspects of building a cohesive society: relationships, intergenerational exchange, social inclusion, valorisation of diversity, intercultural dialogue, interest, preservation, and protection of common goods. In particular, the study sought to identify indicators that could be used by volunteering organisations to measure the contribution of volunteering to social cohesion.

By the end of the Master Class participants will:

- Have identified a set of indicators that could be used by volunteering organisations to measure the contribution of volunteering to social cohesion at the European level
- Have defined some constitutive aspects of volunteering in its European dimension, while respecting the diversity of experiences, and social and cultural contexts
- Be able to help their organisations assign a value to the contribution of volunteering to social cohesion
- Have compared methods to increase quality of volunteering and thereby the social impact of volunteering
- Be better equipped to influence policy and decision-making
After divorce, parents have to plan how they will raise and care for their children (together, if possible). This is prescribed by law. Every child has the right to stay in contact with both parents. Because of tension, some parents find it very difficult to develop such a plan and to make it work in practice.

Humanitas supports these parents and their children in a narrow cooperation with Child Protection, Child Care and the Child & Youth Court.

Volunteers, who are trained and supported by a professional coordinator, help divorced parents develop a plan and carry it out. The volunteers pick up the children and accompany them to the other parent’s home, thus enabling the children to stay in contact with both parents.

By the end of the Master Class participants will:

- Have learned about the impact of divorce on children’s development
- Have learned about the impacts of a bad relationship between parents on children’s development
- Be acquainted with ways in which volunteers can help to ensure that children maintain a relationship with both of their parents after divorce
- Know how volunteers can contribute to the reduction of tension between parents
Master Class 3C (Friday 19 October 2012; 16:30-18:00)

In life we are together and life goes on with us

**Presenter:**

This Master Class is an exposé on the 'Young Volunteers in Action' programme, which was developed in 1990 by Anastasia Ionnadis for her students with the help of local educators, parents and retired citizens.

Each year, new volunteers join the group, while others leave as they grow up, and former members often return to teach the Young Volunteers. In September, the Young Volunteers hold a planning meeting in order to set the goals for the year, where they decide which projects they wish to support and the local organizations and charities with which they will work. All activities are supported by parents as well as local schools and authorities. Actions include: environmental stewardship, animal welfare protection, community outreach, and participation in a wide range of courses and seminars.

By the end of this master class participants will:

- Understand how to launch a programme like 'Young Volunteers in Action' elsewhere
- Have all generations working together
- Understand how important it is for volunteer work to be part of all levels of education
- See how every aspect of life can be appreciated when taught through volunteer work and experiences
- Understand the importance of having headquarters where people of all ages can interact

**Anastasia Ionnadis**

Saronikos Young Volunteers

**Greece**
Master Class 3D (Friday 19 October 2012; 14:30-16:00)

Harnessing the potential of volunteers across borders

Presenters:

Thelma Bowlay-Williams
International Diaspora Development Initiative
UK

Daniel Fashe
Educational Alliance Africa
UK

The Master class will harness the potential of volunteers and explore the shared values of citizenship, community involvement and bridging the gaps between different groups of people.

It will also look at how skills-based volunteers can contribute to building the capacity of non-profit organisations, thus helping them meet community and organisational development needs.

The Master Class leaders, together with participants, will consider the value that people from diverse backgrounds, with different skills, attitudes and experiences, bring to organisations. They will also discuss the value that such differences brings to making organisations’ services more relevant and approachable, thus ensuring the participation of those who are most marginalised in communities.

The Master Class will look at the effects of virtual and high-tech volunteering, using various social media networks, tapping into new and innovative forms of voluntary action through ICT, in order to create partnerships which connect citizens in Europe and beyond.

Due to their personal experience, the presenters will also scrutinise international versus Diaspora volunteering, exploring various concepts of volunteering without borders and examining different methods and tools to sustain diverse volunteering environments. They will also explore the management of volunteering in the changing economic and social landscapes, focusing on the fact that volunteering makes a real difference to the well-being of volunteers and their communities in the current economic climate.

Last but not least, the presenters will look at good practices for creating an enabling environment for volunteering in marginalised communities, equipping Master Class participants with tips on how to respect and support people’s own identities, thus creating an inclusive volunteering environment.

By the end of the Master Class participants will:

- Have learnt about harnessing the potential of volunteers to add value to their communities and develop a culture of engagement
- Be able to identify the difference made by volunteers, their potential and the benefits of engaging marginalised people in the community
- Have improved capacity to empower volunteers and the ability to recognise and articulate the impact of volunteering
- Understand how to value the social and economic impact of volunteering in fostering the growth of active citizenship
- Share methods of sustaining volunteering programmes and the impact of different social media and networks
Visits to local NGOs in Florence

Five visits to choose from

Friday 19 October 2012

9:30-11:30
NGO Visit 1 (Friday 19 October 2012; 9:30-11:00)


The blood donors association A.V.I.S. Toscana, established in 1972, has been for forty years at the service of those who need blood at hospitals in the region.

For planning an efficient and reliable operation of the transfusion system in Tuscany region, A.V.I.S. actively cooperates with public and private institutions (Department of Health, Regional Blood Center, Regional Health Agency, etc.) all over the region; to safeguard the health of the receiver the Transfusion Plant needs to be able to trace the donor and to be sure of his identity, in total guarantee of his privacy.

The A.V.I.S. Regionale Toscana is engaged in policy addressing, membership coordination service and consulting with the association’s headquarters in the area of Tuscany, of which currently are 184: 1 regional headquarter; 5 provincial headquarters; 17 zone headquarters; 2 inter-municipal headquarters; 159 municipal headquarters; and 1 base headquarter.

Volunteering themes: health promotion addresses all people; health promotion to enhance active participation; community involvement.
NGO Visit 2 (Friday 19 October 2012; 9:30-11:00)

Public Assistance – Fratellanza Militare di Firenze

Established in 1876 by veterans of the wars for United Italy, the NGO’s original purpose was mutual aid among members. This focus decreased and shifted towards articulating the original solidarity more broadly.

Currently, the Public Assistance - Fratellanza Militare di Firenze, is supported by 780 volunteers and 11,000 members, and delivers several services in social welfare and health care (emergency relief, medical transportation, emergency medical service, funeral honours, etc.). It is engaged in different intervention fields ranging from civil protection, culture, international cooperation, environmental protection, tackling social exclusion.

Volunteering themes: services in social welfare and health care; civil protection; culture; international cooperation; environmental protection; tackling social exclusion.
NGO Visit 3 (Friday 19 October 2012; 9:30-11:00)

Venerabile Arciconfraternita della Misericordia di Firenze

The Misericordia of Florence is the oldest Florentine and also Italian volunteering association, as foundation dates back to 1244.

Since its inception, the Misericordia of Florence has been characterised by its tendency to respond in a practical and flexible way to the needs of vulnerable people.

In addition to traditional interventions in social welfare, charitable and social health, the association today delivers the following important services:

- transportation of ill people, operating within the national health system (ambulance service in Italy and abroad, medical emergency ambulance – "118 Florence Rescue");
- socio-health home care for older people who live alone or have disabilities;
- emergency call service for people with limited self-sufficiency;
- food service for people living in poverty (done at home or through the two points of distribution – "The 12 Baskets");
- outpatients treatment service;
- civil protection;
- listening centre concerning money lenders (micro-credit service);
- free loan of medical equipment (crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, hospital beds, etc.);
- older and disabled people rehabilitation;
- blood pick-up service;
- sporting and cultural activities, religious services and cemeteries.

Volunteering themes: social welfare and health care; medical emergency; civil protection; culture & sports; tackling social exclusion, poverty and money lenders; older and disabled people rehabilitation.
NGO Visit 4 (Friday 19 October 2012; 9:30-11:00)

**Legambiente Toscana**

**Legambiente Onlus** was founded in 1980 by Italian ecologists and members of the anti-nuclear movement that developed in Italy and throughout the Western countries in the 1970s.

Legambiente focuses both on environmental actions and citizens’ training and education. This has resulted in Legambiente becoming the most widespread environmental organisation in Italy. There are more than almost 120,000 members and supporters, 600 local groups, many classrooms participating in environmental education programs, many young people participating each year in volunteering camps and 5 natural areas managed directly by, or in collaboration with, other local authorities.

**Legambiente Toscana** is the regional branch of Legambiente Onlus. Its purpose is to organize and coordinate the actions of the 38 Local Groups of Legambiente located in Tuscany. **Legambiente Toscana and Legambiente Onlus** are the most important environmental organisations for the protection of nature and the environment. Their hallmark has always been “scientific environmentalism.” All environmental initiatives are based on solid scientific data and accompanied by concrete, realistic, and economically feasible suggested alternatives.

Legambiente Toscana is managed by a board composed of a president, a director, a press office, campaign staff and an accountant. Legambiente Toscana is supported by about 50 volunteers working on projects and campaigns (such as educational projects in schools, promotion of social mobilization and organisation of events). Working in conjunction with the operator, important discussion groups orient actions to different environmental themes such as “energy”, “water”, “protected areas”, “environmental education”, “waste”, “mobility and transportation” and “cultural heritage”. The projects undertaken by Legambiente Toscana are centred around environmental preservation and social development through sustainable actions.

At the regional and local level, Legambiente Toscana works with social associations and public institutions (Municipality, Mountain Community, Province, Region). Having direct contact with citizens, it promotes citizens’ education about their community as well as their participation in democracy. To help achieve active participation in democracy, Legambiente Toscana runs a film club about the environment and people. The film club represents a free and open space for dialogue, where the main purpose is the exchange of views on current issues by citizens. Legambiente Toscana has maintained a constant interest in the education and training of citizens through projects such as “Energicamente”, “CO2, Cambiare orizzonti: risorse e energia”, “Arno da vivere e da narrare”, “Riciclabilandia”, “Scuole in rete e istituti sostenibili”, and “Io amo la Val di Pesa” which are developed in primary, secondary and high school.

The campaigns of Legambiente are “Puliamo il mondo” (Clean up the Word), “Piccola Grande Italia”, “Mal’Aria”, “Goletta Verde” and “Treno Verde”. These events aim to involve all citizens, Italians and foreigners, promoting a sense of responsibility towards the environment. The campaigns’ goals are to protect the environment and the quality of life of citizens and to promote
social mobilisation and the spread of information related to global pollution.

The visit\(^1\) will take place in the **Circolo of Legambiente** located in **Sesto Fiorentino** (FI). Legambiente Toscana manages, through its Circolo of Sesto Fiorentino, the Natural Protected Area of Local Interest (ANPI) of **Podere La Querciola**, inside the big PARCO DELLA PIANA, that surrounds Florence and spreads all over to Prato and Pistoia.

Legambiente is able to do this because of its cooperative relationship with the Municipality of Sesto Fiorentino. The contract that Legambiente Toscana currently has with the Municipality of Sesto Fiorentino ensures a relationship for a longer period of time than any other contract ensured in the past. The Natural Protected Area is important for the association because of its role in environmental education. The target groups to which the education is directed are children, youth and adults living in the surrounding area, but also in the Region because of the high presence of several species of birds. The conservation and improvement of the area is a great asset for the territory.

This protected area covers about fifty acres, five of which are publicly owned, and includes several places of natural interest. It includes four wetlands: Padule Lake, the overflow basin of Case Nuove, the Cavalieri Lake and a picnic area. In 2008, thanks to the Consorzio della Bonifica of the Florentine Area, a little pond of 300 square meters was made for the observation of amphibians. During the migration period, this area is the main point for nesting of numerous species of water birds such as herons, black-winged stilt, various ducks and kingfishers.

Volunteering themes: environmental preservation and social development through sustainable actions; children’s and young people’s education; skills development; community involvement.

\(^1\) In case of bad weather conditions, the visit will move to the regional headquarter of Legambiente in the center of Florence.
CESVOT – Centro Servizi Volontariato Toscana

CESVOT is a regional association made up of 27 voluntary associations, members with a regional relevance that are part of the Assembly, a sovereign body of CESVOT. CESVOT has 3,267 local member voluntary associations that make up the bodies of 11 territorial delegations, whose statutory bodies are the members of general assembly, the steering committee and the working commissions.

As a non-profit organisation, CESVOT is a regional centre that delivers services to the voluntary organisations all around Tuscany. CESVOT focuses on training volunteers, helping to elaborate projects, supporting communication, raising awareness of their role, offering services (legal professional advice, documentation, training courses, social research and evaluation of volunteer projects, etc.) and supporting and developing innovative projects and funding them. Like its peers in other regions, CESVOT formally originates from the national law which outlines the rules governing the institutional structure, the types of relationship with local governments and the management of voluntary organizations (Law 266/1991). CESVOT is a founding member of the national league of Italian service centres for voluntary organizations.

CESVOT is mainly present in urban environments. Over recent years CESVOT has made some efforts to reach the most isolated areas of the region, such as the mountain communities. Since voluntary associations are widely spread in Tuscany, our member organisations are present in any type of territorial context, both from a geographic viewpoint (large, medium and small cities, mountain communities) and a social-economic viewpoint (deprived neighbourhood and suburbs and geographically disadvantaged areas, inner city areas, etc).

CESVOT organises events (training courses, focus groups, residential workshops, conferences, etc.) at the national, local and international level, with the aim of raising the awareness of the voluntary sector on emerging social and cultural issues, promoting active participation of citizens through voluntary activities (also at European level) and encouraging the creation of networks of
local voluntary organisations and the exchange of good practices.

*Volunteering themes:* promotion and support of volunteering; development of volunteers’ skills; intergenerational dialogue; tackling social exclusion; youth and older people volunteering; peer education; engaging excluded communities; volunteers networking.