


Case study

“Corporate Volunteer Programme Valencia”

Overview

Driver	Fundar (Foundation for Solidarity and Voluntary Work of the Valencian Community)	
Country	Valencia, Spain	
Societal issue addressed	The Corporate Volunteer Programme Valencia is a project aimed at young men and women, which aims to prevent school drop-out and to give pupils professional orientation.	
Partners	Companies, High Schools, Education Department of the Valencia Government	
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running since 2008. Currently starting second edition 	
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 14 companies, 171 volunteers, 1329 students, in 27 High Schools 	
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To involve more companies in the program. ▪ To foster teamwork between companies. ▪ To improve the coordination of all the organizations involved 	
Endorsements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Important representation in and outside the Region (mass media). ▪ The impulse that has been given from the Valencian Regional Government to a new Law of Corporate Citizenship, which tries to stimulate this type of initiative and has followed Valencia's development very closely. This new Law came in at the end of 2009. 	

Executive Summary

The Corporate Volunteer Programme Valencia is a project aimed at young men and women with different problems in the Valencian Community which aims to prevent school drop-out. It is framed inside the experimental programs of the Education Department of the Valencian Regional Government. Valencia has connected companies (through their volunteers) with High Schools by developing different activities that seek to reach the aims of some experimental programs of the Education Department of the Valencia Regional Government. The pilot year of the program started on December, 2008 and was completed in June, 2009. The activities that company volunteers developed consist of:

“The programme is framed inside the experimental programs of the Education Department of the Valencian Regional Government.”

1. Development of social skills: This activity takes place entirely inside the classroom and allows students to develop certain fundamental social and moral skills for their development as a person. Company volunteers received special training from the Education Department of the Valencian Regional Government before starting with this activity.

2. Company visits with the volunteers: There are two different types - visits of the whole group of students and individual visits for those students who have showed a special interest in the activity of this company.
3. Skills for employability: In this case, volunteers teach students how to handle a job interview or how to improve their CV.

1. Situation and societal issue

The Spanish Educational system is characterized by high rates of failure from the ages of 14 to 16 years (around 30%) and by high school drop-out rates. Different departments are now working together to improve the pupils' professional orientation and reduce the High School drop-out rate – a contributor to social marginalisation.

Fundar is working together with the Department of Education of the Valencian Regional Government and a corporate group to work on this. Many of these companies are worried by a situation that concerns the educational system where children of its employees study. Fundar is to build a relationship between companies and their local communities based on corporate volunteering. In 2008 Fundar organized an International Congress on Corporate Volunteering in order to showcase these initiatives to Valencian companies, and they are working together with the Valencian government to develop the first law of corporate citizenship, which promotes furthermore this kind of relationship between companies and community.

2. Partners

The partners in the pilot year were:

- 14 Companies: Bancaja (Savings Bank of Valencia), BP, KPMG, Tempe (Zara Group), BBVA, Ferro Spain, Valencian Train Public Company (FGV), Port of Valencia, Leopoldo Pons, SOS Group, Área Consultores, Asociación de Empresarios Solidarios Valencianos (AESOV) and Seniors Españoles para la Cooperación Técnica (SECOT).
- Fundar: Program coordinator
- 27 High Schools from different areas of the Valencian Community (Castellón, Valencia and Alicante)
- Education Department of the Valencia Government: Support to choose High Schools and design activities

a. Driver

Fundar has played two main roles:

- An intermediary role between companies and the Department of Education at the moment of defining possible activities and designing the whole project, as well as at the moment of coordinating all activities (date, place, materials, contact person, etc.).
- A facilitator of the voluntary work inside companies. The majority of the companies that have taken part in the Corporate Volunteer Programme Valencia had never done voluntary work before. Therefore Fundar has highlighted the fact that many companies have been added to the project and the fact that in each of these companies there were new volunteers arising who were taking part in the designed

activities. This was all done in addition to training the above mentioned volunteers, resolving any issues and coordinating all the activities.

b. Businesses

14 companies have participated in the project. Some of them are big multinationals, others are local small and medium companies and there have been two public companies. This demonstrates that it is possible to imply local small enterprises in this type of project together with multinationals, with their CSR departments. In addition to this, Fundar has had an important geographical dispersion, since the companies were situated among the three cities that exist in the Region (Alicante, Castellón and Valencia).

c. Broker/ intermediary organisations

Fundar has played the role of coordinator and organizer of the project, to design all the activities, as well as to imply to the companies and later its workers. Fundar has relied very much on the international department of the programme (www.engageyouremployees.org), which has facilitated a lot of information about projects developed in other cities, information that has been a great help at the moment of focusing the project.

d. Public administration and government

- Fundar is a Foundation of the Valencian Government which deals with different policies in order to support NGO's and to promote volunteering.
- The Education Department of the Valencian Region explained the problems they had with certain pupils of High Schools and helped Fundar to design activities and to locate those High Schools where volunteers have worked at.

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3. Programme Description

a. Initiation

The project began through collaboration between Fundar and the Department of Education of the Valencian Regional Government. Fundar approached them with a group of companies who were willing to collaborate in their community through their volunteers. Working meetings took place in June 2008 between Fundar and the Department of Education to look for the best activities that these workers could develop with students. Members of the Department of Education explained what kind of needs they believe some of their students have and Fundar designed a series of activities in order that volunteers can develop them with certain pupils.

Representatives of the companies took part in some of these working meetings and thus activities to develop during the year arose.

b. Process

The project was introduced in September 2008. During October, November, December and January the groups of volunteers were created and trained and the activities were coordinated with the institutes. In February, 2009, activities with volunteers and pupils started, ending in June 2009.

c. Resources

Thanks to the fees companies paid, Fundar has had a budget of 26,400 Euro to cover the expenses of the program:

- Designing and printing of the materials used.
- Costs in running the program (transport, coordination meetings etc).
- Evaluation of the program (external company).
- Dissemination of the program: Video, leaflets, recognitions to companies and volunteers.

Fundar has also dedicated 850 hours to the project, distributed in:

- Time spent by Fundar meeting companies interested in the project: presenting the project to those companies and convincing them to join.
- Creation of educational materials.
- Time given by company volunteers.
- Volunteer training.
- Time taken by Fundar to co-ordinate and to evaluate the project.

d. Activities

Pupils ages were between 14 and 16 years old, and groups were formed by 15 to 25 pupils. Volunteers created groups of 3-4 persons who worked as a team and developed the activity always with the same pupils. In this way a close collaboration and confidence was achieved.

They act to prevent school drop-out to and to give pupils a professional orientation. The work was focused in two ways:

- On the one hand giving professional orientation (so students knew the different professions that work inside a company in order to have more information for the orientation of their studies). This aim was developed with a series of talks that workers gave in High Schools, and with visits of the pupils to the companies. In addition to this, games were developed in the classroom to show pupils how companies are created, what kind of departments exist inside a company, what is the meaning of team working, etc.
- On the other hand trying to transmit the values of effort and the importance that studying has in the working world. This aspect was covered in all the activities.

This activity, counting on the talks at High Schools, the visits to the companies and the games of entrepreneurship in the classroom, have been developed during approximately 15 hours of the volunteers work with the pupils.

To prevent **school absenteeism**, the work has mainly had three strands. The activities that company volunteers develop consist of:

1. Development of social skills: This activity takes place entirely inside the classroom and allows students to develop certain fundamental social and moral skills for their development as a person. Company volunteers received special training from the Education Department of the Valencian Regional Government before starting with this activity. This activity lasted for 5 sessions of one hour each.
2. Company visits with the volunteers: There are two different types - visits of the whole group of students and individual visits for those students who have showed a special interest in the activity of this company. This activity lasted for 5 hours.
3. Skills for employability: In this case, volunteers teach students how to handle a job interview or how to improve their CV. This activity lasted for 5 sessions of one hour each.

Project timeline:

- June 2008: the meetings between Fundar, companies and the Department of Education began.
- September 2008: the project was introduced to the public and mass media, with the designed activities and the group of companies that were going to work at the project finalised.
- October 2008: the meetings began with the workers of every company (Fundar advised companies at the moment of communicating the project to its workers – a key aspect when it came to get workers involved in the project). The goal of these meetings was to explain the project, the activities, the profile of the pupils, etc. From these meetings volunteers from every company were willing to participate.
- End of November 2008: Once the groups of volunteers at every company were finalised, Fundar met different High Schools in the Valencian Region as suggested by the Department of Education to speak with them about the project, about the companies involved, about volunteers' profiles Fundar had and about what kind of activities they had designed in collaboration with the Department of Education. From these meetings, Fundar selected the High School volunteers.
- During November and December Fundar gave training to volunteers. This involved:
 - Training on voluntary work and social responsibility.
 - Training on activities that pupils were going to develop, on the profiles of a teenager, on what type of problems do they have and on how to focus the messages.
- During December and January: Fundar coordinated the agenda of every company and High School. This agenda remained scheduled on a document for every company and High School.
- From February 2009 to June 2009: activities began.
- Volunteers have needed an average of 15-20 hours with the pupils, time developed in 3-4 months, which is approximately an activity of one hour a week.
- The evaluation of the project was done in July 2009, results that were introduced to the companies during September 2009.

	June	July/Agust	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Febr	March	April	May	June
Desing of the programe												
Public Presentation												
Companies meetings (volunteers groups)												
High School coordinatios meetings												
Volunteers training												
Activities coordination (agenda)												
Volunteers Activities												

4. Programme Evaluation

An external and independent company carried out the evaluation of the program. They developed a questionnaire for the different participants of the program. In addition to this the work done was celebrated on July the 1st 2009, with the participation of companies and their volunteers, together with Fundar, the Department of Education and the tutors at the High Schools.

The evaluation focuses on the interpretation of the contents of the initiative, the resources and means that the different agents could have used for the development of the program and the vision and valuation of the program on the part of the 4 participants agents:

- The tutors who have taken part in the program
- The companies that have yielded their resources to the program of corporate voluntary work
- The persons who have yielded their time and resources for the development of the work on a voluntary way
- The pupils' participants in the program

Methodology

To analyze the development of the program, a questionnaire has been designed with four versions: one directed to volunteers workers, one to the teachers at the educational centres, another one to the companies, and a fourth one to the pupils.

In the evaluation a whole of 13 tutors, 12 companies and 52 volunteers, and 44 students have taken part.

The questionnaires gather information with regard to:

- Principal expectations that the project generates
- Experience in actions of solidarity, voluntary work and integration

In addition, information has been compiled on the collective participants

In the case of the **voluntary workers**:

- Questions about the incidence of the program in their labour relations with their colleagues and with the company

- Questions about the management of the program and possibilities of improvement or modification for future editions

About **teachers**:

- Principal expectations that the project generated
- Degree of participation of the students
- Degree of implication and usefulness
- Valuation of the activities.
- Suggestions

About the **companies** that collaborated:

- Questions about the incidence of the program in the internal area (environment of work, employee - company relations, etc)
- Questions about the incidence of the program in the image and the perception of the company in the external area

Regarding **students**:

- Information received
- Enjoyment vs Utility of the programme
- General Perception

5. Impact

a. Benefits to the local/ regional community

According to the **tutors**, the program has been very positive for several reasons:

- Support for teenagers in preparation for daily adult life
- Giving young people knowledge of the working world, showing them the diversity of the companies, real professionals, functions and professional orientations
- Movement of values: effort, initial training, permanent training, use of opportunities, teamwork, positive attitudes, the importance of interpersonal relations, etc.
- Raising awareness of the importance of training: "it is necessary to study and to prepare oneself to get a good job and to improve in a working environment"
- Opportunity to reflect: support for the pupils to think before taking a decision, to think before acting and thinking about life's possibilities and their professional future
- Motivation from the example set by the company volunteers attitude towards study and training
- Reinforcement of the continuity of the programme
- Practices have turned out to be very close to the daily reality of the participant companies

In addition, tutors have valued the collaboration given by volunteers and the maximum flexibility to be able to adapt themselves to the needs of the programmes.

Students:

- 31% of the students said that it has allowed them to know the activity of the company better. 28% said that it has helped them to know the world of the company better,

21% say that it has helped them to have a more clear view about what they want to do in the future, and 20% said that it has help them to get to know new professions

- 66% considered activities to more useful than entertaining, whereas 34% considered them to be more entertaining
- On average the pupils rated the value of the programme at 8.7 out 10
- On average the pupils rated their satisfaction with the programme at 8.4 out of 10.
- On average the parents of the pupils rated their satisfaction with the programme at 8.3 out of 10
- 85% of the pupils who valued the work developed by the volunteers as “very positive” or “positive”
- 71% think that the activities have been useful
- 77% would repeat the next year
- 89% think that the programme was entertaining

Quotes:

“Thank you very much for giving us the chance to know about this topic.”

“We have liked it a lot and we have enjoyed ourselves a lot.”

“Thank you for your kindness.”

“If somebody would have suggested it to me again, for sure that I would do it again.”

“Thank you for the treatment you have given us”

b. Benefits to the companies

According to **companies**, the stand-out aspects of the program have been:

- Collaboration among the agents who have participated: Fundar, companies, High Schools, teachers and pupils
- Involvement of the company workers
- Creativity of pupils
- Their own experience that is valued as wealth-producing and of special interest
- The way in which the program has been led by Fundar, its implication and collaboration
- Motivation to continue doing voluntary work by participants in the programme
- Satisfaction with the programme prior to the participation of all the agents
- Jointly experiencing the programme with other companies’ participants
- Development of personal skills
- Social and media recognition of the good practices

According to **volunteers**, the main aspects to stand out about the program have been:

- Working environment: very good relations were created by the companions and by the pupils
- Knowledge of other social realities and participation in their improvement
- Learning attitudes of teenagers towards the working world, the exchange of ideas with pupils, the interest that some pupils have taken as a personal challenge

- Personal feeling of accomplishment having faced unfamiliar situations in their own life and personal satisfaction having helped young people discover a bit more of the world outside of school and out their family situations
- To extend the knowledge of the students about the reality or work
- The involvement of pupils, teachers and volunteers in the project
- The excellent teamwork and collaboration between all the participants: Foundation, centers of training, volunteers, pupils, teachers, professionals, other companies. The motivation of all the companions for a common purpose which is something new for them
- Achievement of the proposed aims
- Interrelationship with the working companions
- Wealth-producing experience: Improvement of the personal esteem, perception of usefulness, personal satisfaction

The percentage of workers present at the informative initial meetings is very high, half-close to 75%, which shows the great acceptance of those workers who know the programme.

c. Further Impact

Besides the valuation the program has had from different participants (companies, volunteers, pupils, and tutors), the Corporate Volunteer Programme Valencia has had outstanding social recognition in various media in the Region (38 appearances in TV, broadcasts and press from the beginning of the project), and the recognition and support achieved by the representatives of the businessmen in the Valencian Region is key to implying and extending these practices to more companies.

“The recognition and support achieved by the representatives of the businessmen in the Valencian Region is key to implying and extending these practices to more companies.”

6. Challenges

- One of the principal challenges is achieving a major coordination between companies, since in this project there have been very few activities that were developed between volunteers of different companies
- Both volunteers and tutors asked for longer activities, to achieve closer relations between workers and pupils
- On the training of the volunteers, they have asked Fundar to dedicate more time to guiding volunteers in how to direct the groups of pupils, and to speaking to them in ,their own language‘
- Another important challenge is to encourage more companies to reach more pupils, as the problems are extensive enough

Future plans:

- As an innovation for the second year, Fundar is going to improve training to volunteers. They are going to provide training in how to speak in public, how to spur groups into action, and how to improve their assertiveness, giving always as an example their own experience of volunteering. IN this way, not only will Fundar improve their own voluntary work, but will also provide the tools to volunteers for their daily work

- Fundar is going to encourage companies to help promote the project to other local companies
- Fundar is going to establish a specific program in which volunteers from different companies take part to help build teamwork

7. Endorsements

The programme has had significant recognition in the Valencian Region. This includes the calls Fundar has received to take part in forums and Congresses of other Spanish Regions to speak about the program and its results.

Another significant element out has been the impulse that has been given from the Valencian Regional Government to a new Law of Corporate Citizenship, which tries to stimulate this type of initiatives and that has followed Valencia's development very closely. This new Law came in at the end of 2009.

8. Contact & Further Information

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INCLUDE – Pathways to Community Investment

The European project INCLUDE provides local intermediaries like civil society organisations, economic development agencies, chambers of commerce and public authorities with support that will help them to engage businesses in innovative cross-sectoral partnerships. INCLUDE identifies on a worldwide scale good examples of collaborative business initiatives as well as business engagement in cross-sectoral partnerships, which contribute towards skills development and employability of disadvantaged groups, towards social inclusion and innovation in addressing societal challenges and communicates them.

INCLUDE builds upon the results of the CSR-Laboratory “Skills for Employability enhanced through Employee Engagement” which was carried out as part of the European Alliance for CSR and is run jointly by UPJ and the ENGAGE initiative coordinated by Business in the Community (BITC). Partners of the project are the German Federal Department of Labour and Social Affairs, Citi-Group, Asociata pentru Relatii Comunitare (Romania), Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány (Hungary), SMartKolektiv (Serbia), Pontis Foundation (Slovakia) and Özel Sektör Gönüllüler Derneği (Turkey).

The project is supported by the European Commission (Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities).

Further information about the project is available at www.bitc.org.uk/global/include.html (in English) www.upj.de/include (in German)

UPJ

UPJ is the German national network of engaged businesses and local non-profit intermediary organizations. Its projects and programmes create new connections between businesses, civil society organizations and public authorities thus contributing to solve societal challenges and to shape sustainable communities. UPJ, a registered charity under German law, provides organizations from the business, community and public sectors with information and consultancy to improve their Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Social Responsibility activities. www.upj.de



ENGAGE

ENGAGE is an international programme that brings together businesses and community organisations around the globe to increase the quality and amount of employee community engagement in their local communities. Its mission is twofold: To inspire, mobilise and support companies to develop sustainable community investment programmes, and to provide community organisations with a network, tools and support that will help them work more effectively with business partners. www.engageyouremployees.org



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