



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).

The AVAIL project is running various integration and advocacy initiatives 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 NGO's 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 word NGO to designate associations and foundations, more often referred to simply as 'organisations'. Usually NGOs work to satisfy the needs of some groups of society that the state, local government or business fails to address. 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 first work experience by engaging in voluntary service. There are NGOs that have gained significant importance in various national events. 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 level.

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 tackling women's rights, environmental problems, human rights, economic development, political rights, or health care only. NGOs are actively involved in political decision-making.

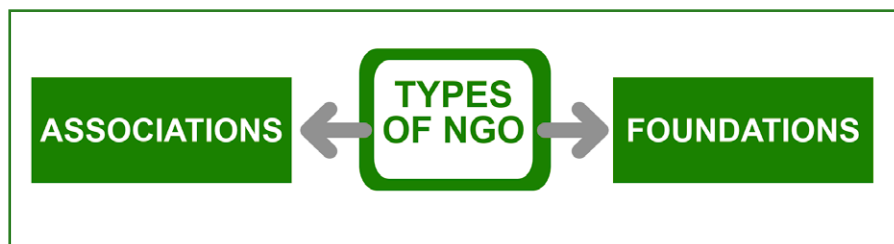
2. TYPES OF NGOs in LATVIA

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

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

A foundation (or fund) is a pool of assets that has been established to achieve 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. Foundations are not aimed at making profit.

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



3. CHARACTERISTICS AND OF PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION OF NGOS

NGOs:

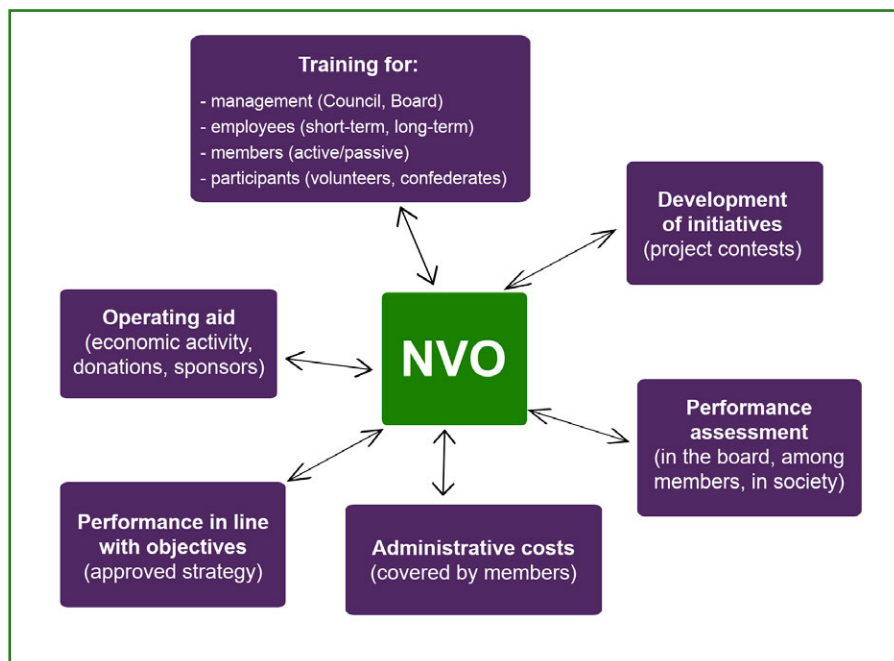
- ✓ act in accordance with democratic principles;
- ✓ are established and act on a voluntary basis to achieve certain objectives. Members engage in the activities of NGOs on a voluntary basis;
- ✓ are open and ensure the dissemination of information about their activities and freely express their opinions;
- ✓ 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 managed in good fellowship.
- ✓ act in line with the laws, regulations and other internal regulatory enactments of Latvia and international law;
- ✓ 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. Represent the 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 the achievement of their objectives;
- ✓ are not aimed at making profit. The financial or material resources generated by an NGO are used for the development of members' skills and the organisation per se, or for the achievement of

its goals. NGOs may cover the costs of their activities and may pay for goods or services related to the achievement of their objectives;

- ✓ may be founded for a limited time, but mostly NGOs are established for an indefinite period of 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 changes, etc. Single-sector NGOs often come together in joint co-operation networks;
- ✓ are as strong as their teams are – the people who work for the NGO in question;
- ✓ provide an opportunity for all interested persons to participate in the day-to-day work of NGOs, as well as activities and projects organised by NGOs for specific target groups;
- ✓ are oriented at the development of society, advocate solving various issues to improve situations where the society as a whole would benefit as a result;
- ✓ unite the best experts of a specific sector on many issues and accumulate specific expertise during its operations which is 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 be focused on the development of the NGO. This is not an easy task, given that most people participate in NGOs on a voluntary basis on the side of working in a main job or studying. Regardless of the size, duration, number of members, sector, etc., it is recommended that NGOs consider their NGO development model and implement it within the limits of their 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. A trend in the development of the NGO sector shows that the number of NGOs has increased in all local governments in Latvia, NGO activities have intensified and become more regular, while the expectations of state authorities regarding the professionalism of NGOs have increased as well. These are positive developments in the NGO sector. The development of the NGO sector in the state means increased opportunities for different groups of society to receive more

diverse assistance to solving their problems, to engage in the adoption of relevant decisions, diversify 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, NGO associations of various sectors and regions (for more see Chapter 7).

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ 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 association or foundation |
| ✓ Research and education | ✓ Voluntary fire service organisation |
| ✓ Health | ✓ Sports associations and foundations |
| ✓ Social support measures for persons | ✓ International activities |
| ✓ Protection of environment and animals | ✓ Association or foundation not elsewhere classified |
| | ✓ Development and housing |

United associations of employers representing and defending the economic, social and professional interests of their members	1. Employer’s organisations, trade unions, professional associations and foundations
Bringing together companies of one sector or profession, experts in a sector to promote the development of the respective economic sector or field of activity, to represent the interests of their members, to facilitate exchanges 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 ensuring the promotion and evaluation of humanities, the protection of historic and cultural heritage, the commemoration of historical events, the sustainability of popular art and intangible cultural heritage and the provision of entertainment and recreational activities.	2. Culture and recreation
Ensure the 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 in formal, non-formal and life-long learning	4. Research and education
Ensure the promotion of public health and education on health matters, ambulatory therapeutic care, physiotherapy and other medical services	5. Health
Providing non-commercial support for the development of an inclusive employment and inclusive 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, aim to respect women's rights and achievement of gender equality, activities aimed at ensuring the protection of children's rights and the exercise of children's rights, and promoting the development of environments and support measures friendly to children (both in the care of personal families or non-relatives) and families, increasing the level of child and family welfare, support the family in the performance of its responsibilities, including care for children and adult family members, in critical 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 victims of crime, rehabilitation of offenders	9. Justice and protection of interests
Ensure the raising and reallocation of funds to achieve objectives related to public benefits and promote the development of voluntary work, including the 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 association or foundation
Organisations operating in the field of fire safety and fire-fighting	12. Voluntary fire service organisation
Coordinate joint interests in the sports sector, sports clubs and centres, organisation of sports events, support for sport organisations, active and former athletes in the handling of their legal, social, educational, career and other related issues, and provide training for sports workers, continuing education and non-formal education activities	13. Sports associations and foundations
Cultural exchange, development cooperation, international disaster relief and 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. Association or foundation not elsewhere classified

Description of the human resources of NGOs



Most members participate in NGOs on a voluntary basis. People form NGOs and participate in their activity due to various motives. A strong motive is the 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 can also offer a different way to spend free time. Participation in an NGO provides an opportunity to address personal challenges that other people experience too, 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.

Mostly voluntary service is part-time work. Voluntary service can be done for a day or over many years at various times. The volunteer does not receive financial pay, but is bound to receive satisfaction and ex-post evaluation. Expenditure incurred by the volunteer during the performance of voluntary service, such as purchase of stationery goods, telephone calls, transport costs, are borne by the NGO under 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 at the beginning of the work relationship. The volunteer has a right to fair, safe and health-friendly working conditions. Different countries have differing national framework for the civil liability of volunteers. In Latvia, it's possible to insure the volunteers who perform voluntary service.



5. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN NGO AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITIES

5.1 Establishing an NGO

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

An NGO may be established by natural and legal persons, as well as legal partnerships. An 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 in the Register of Associations and Foundations, the founders must take a decision on the establishment of an association, approve the articles of association and agree on its administration (type).

All documents necessary to register an NGO and the 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 the Regional branches in Latvia (in Bauska, Daugavpils, Jēkabpils, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Saldus, Valmiera, Ventspils) www.ur.gov.lv. Documents can also be sent via mail.

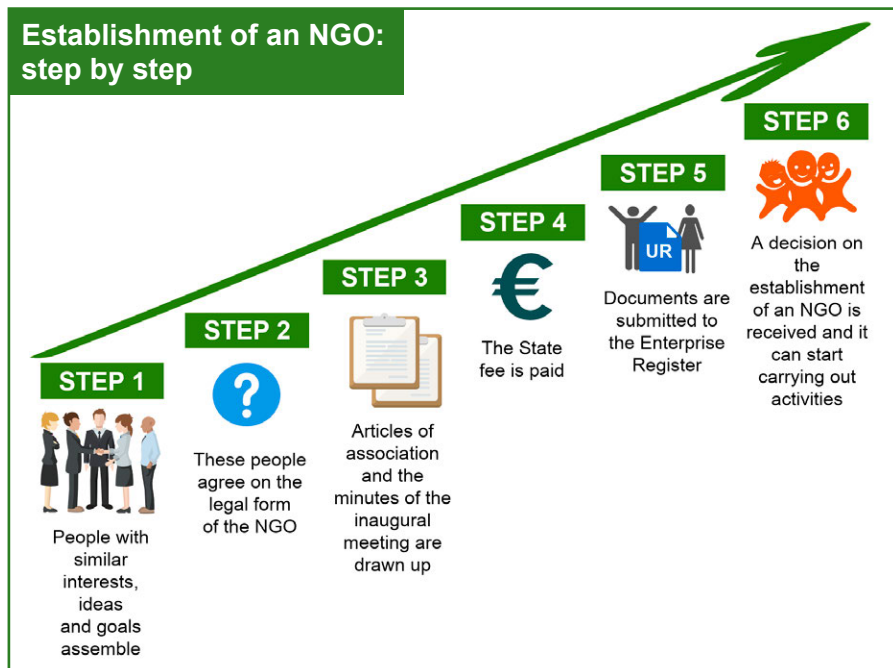
Free-of-charge advice on the registration of NGOs, as well as examples with explanations can be received from the Civic Alliance - Latvia www.nvo.lv.

!!! All documents to be submitted to the Enterprise Register in a foreign language 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 in the website www.latvija.lv. It is possible to establish an NGO without leaving the house. To do this, it is necessary to receive a secure electronic signature issued in Latvia (identity card (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

It is possible to provide funding for an NGO to achieve its goals and ensure its day-to-day operations from personal resources, such as membership fee and members' donations to their NGO.

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 the Project Management Manuals issued by various NGOs, local governments or public administrations, and these are also published on the internet.

Private support

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

- ✓ Community Initiatives Fund www.iniciativa.lv
- ✓ Community Fund project contests, such as Valmiera Municipality Fund www.vnf.lv
- ✓ Rietumu Bank 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 contests for the 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 which have clearly defined procedures for receiving co-financing when participating in larger project contests, 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 the 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 turning to the specific local government.

State funding

Since the restoration of the independence of Latvia, the biggest challenges and, at the same time, priorities for Latvia in the context of civil society development have been identified as follows:

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

Countless initiatives are being implemented in these areas and support from the state is abundant.

The State itself organises a series of measures to achieve said 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 contests by awarding contracts to NGOs (see Paragraph 5.2.3). A number of NGOs in Latvia receive indirect state aid – aid in the form of tax concessions (e.g. real estate tax).

The most popular project contests that could 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

European Union funding

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

Information on various project contests can be found on the 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 contests, it may be worthwhile to attend free-of-charge informational seminars on the conditions of the project contests and the preparation of project applications that 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 various countries aiming to promote mutual cooperation are developing their own support programmes. Some programmes of foreign state governments are administered in Latvia. The most popular foreign

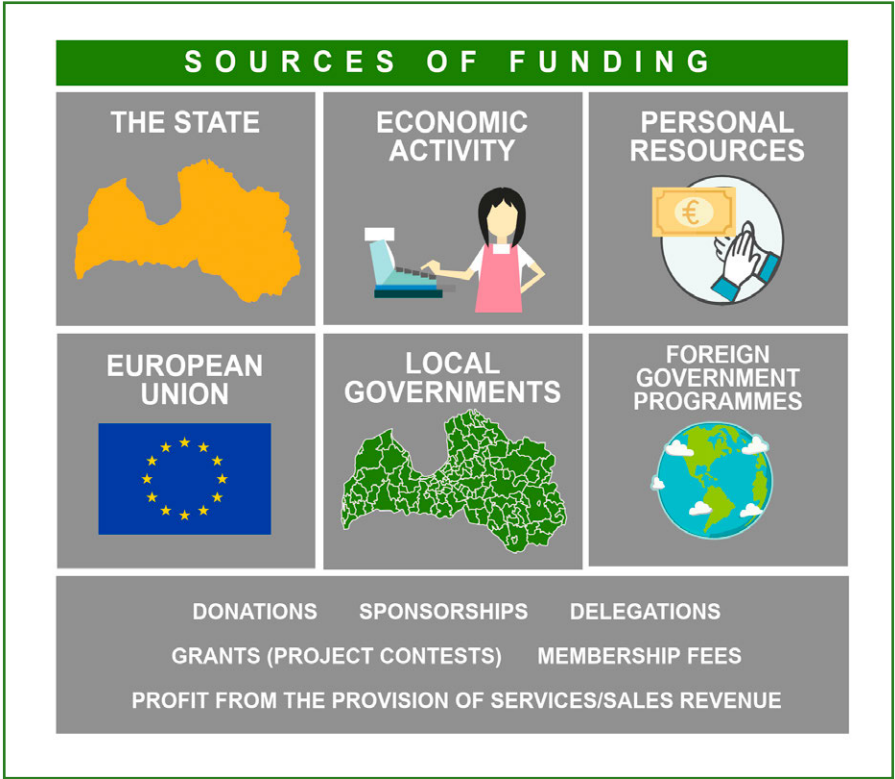
government programmes in Latvia are the Nordic Council of Ministers Programme (www.norden.lv), the Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway Grant Programme (www.eeagrants.org) and programmes of different governments, more information on these can be found by contacting the missions of these countries in Latvia,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

Economic activity

National legislation of Latvia provides for the 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 receiving the status thereof

A separate group is formed by NGOs with the status of a public benefit organisation (PBO) whose operational objectives relate to charity, the protection of human rights, the development of civil society, the promotion of education, science, culture and health, the promotion of sport, environmental protection, disaster relief and emergency assistance, and raising the social welfare of society, particularly 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 a PBO assures the 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 get 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 natural and legal persons 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 in any NGO working 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 in children's homes, child care centres, day centres, children's hospitals, etc.

The skills necessary to work with children successfully are creativity, flexibility, ability to communicate with children and teenagers, etc.

Voluntary work with teenagers and young people

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

The skills necessary to work with teenagers and young people successfully 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 in any NGO that works with people with reduced mobility or brings them together, in 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 specifically adapted schools/kindergartens. Often voluntary work with people with reduced mobility does not have to be organised specifically, it is sufficient to be tolerant and inclusive, and to help people with reduced mobility on day-to-day basis.

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 development disorders

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

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

Often voluntary work with people with mental developmental disorders does not have to be organised specifically, it is sufficient to be tolerant and inclusive, and to help people with mental development disorders on day-to-day basis.

The skills necessary to successfully work with people with mental development disorders: 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 in any NGO whose target group is young parents, including children, or that brings them together, or an NGO that collaborated 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 young parents, the advocating for the interests of young parents or helping young parents take care of their day-to-day childcare issues.

The skills necessary to successfully work with young parents: 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 NGO activity area, 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 in NGOs working with adults.

Information about the different opportunities for volunteering 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 one of the following two ways:

- ✓ by establishing and developing NGOs that are relevant to their interests (for details, see Paragraph 5)
- ✓ 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

The objectives of the association are to promote the 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 the realisation thereof; to raise awareness of a multicultural society in the world. The organisation is active 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 young people learn to be socially active and responsible. The organisation engages its friends, peers and celebrities.

Shelter "Safe House"

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

The 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 nations live in our country, making up 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 harmonious inter-ethnic relations
- ✓ consolidation of people living in the country
- ✓ implementation of the ideas of dialogue, integration, tolerance and cooperation between different nationalities, implementation of the 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 the member organisations of the LNKBA, also Africans, Arabs, Bulgarians, Czechs and other popular cultures have associations for their cultures, and various multi-ethnic NGOs, where membership is determined by the local government the person resides in (Jelgava, Krāslava, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Daugavpils, Smiltene, etc.), operate throughout Latvia as well. <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 targets society as a whole, with a special focus on people with disabilities, including young people. The main directions the association pursues 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, other activities to help improve the lives of people with disabilities in Latvia and to promote understanding and tolerance.

Latvian Liaison 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 the decision-making processes of national and local authorities; affecting the development, adoption and enforcement of legislation favourable to this target;
- ✓ developing international cooperation with other organisations working in 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

The purpose of the activities of LatRC is to provide 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, 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 are focused on providing social care to the population, promoting health, providing first aid training and ensuring thereof, social inclusion, as well as on the implementation of the various 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 and voluntary and charitable activities, providing assistance to families with children. It operates in three main directions:

1. the provision of primary aid in domestic matters (food, farm affairs, 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 the functioning of the association by representing the interests of university students.

MEDIA

FEJS Latvia

www.fejs.lv

FEJS aims to improve the 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 the 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, set up by the association Avantis. It is a place to 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 in different locations in Riga as well. The activities are organised by the young adults themselves, 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/lsk.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, where youngsters are volunteering in LatRC youth. LatRC youth divisions, 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 reducing violence.

Papardes zieds

www.papardeszieds.lv

Papardes zieds is the 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, opportunities for volunteering and opportunities for participation in international projects in Latvia and outside Latvia, such as creative lessons, language clubs, multimedia lessons, discussion club “Youth talk”, meetings with inspiring people, 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 to live, grow and be happy.

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

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

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Organisation Piedzīvojuma gars

www.piedzivojumagars.lv

An organisation aimed at developing the field of experience and adventure education in Latvia, open to all young adults aged 17 to 28. Perfect for people who enjoy adventure, camps and active lifestyle; have endless reserves of energy to share; want to participate in organising and providing adventure tours to schools, child camps, expeditions and training of various kinds.

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.ghettogamaes.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 the opportunity to participate in sports activities and spend time in a positive and health-promoting environment. If you're interested in arm-wrestling, BMX freestyle, 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 (LSFAA)

www.sportsvisiem.lv

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

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

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

At national level, NGO associations participate in decision-making: cooperate 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 level – 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 Liaison 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.sieviesusadarbiba.lv.
- ✓ Professional associations – Employers' Confederation of Latvia www.lddk.lv,
- ✓ and others.

At local government level, local governments have various advisory councils involving NGOs working 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/pub-lic/lat/pasvaldiba/dome/jaunatnes-lietu-konsultativa-padome/>, Jūrmala Social Council <http://www.jurmala.lv/page/1162>, Liepāja City Council Tripartite Advisory Council www.liepajniekiem.lv, Daugavpils City Council Social Advisory 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 – Latvia Federation of Pensioners – 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.iddk.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.annaslindesfonds.lv

References

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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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