

The Catalan Federation for Social Volunteering (FCVS) and the volunteering

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From the very beginning, we tried to show to people in general –and particularly to the youngest ones– the values that **social volunteering** promotes: solidarity, sensitivity towards suffering, indignation, and the sense of justice regarding social inequality, among others. All those things that push people to devote part of their time and of their lives, to be next to those who may need it.

Personally, I think it is essential to insist in this course of action. A society that gets fully involved in projects run by associations dedicated at improving life conditions of the most needy fellow citizens, shows symptoms of maturity. What we need now –but it's never sufficiently implemented– is to spread what already exists and is being done in our country.

The **CAVC (Consell de l'Associacionisme i el Voluntariat de Catalunya)** has launched a “**National Plan on Associationism and Volunteering in Catalonia**”. This initiative makes visible all activities that the volunteering sector carries out, whether tending to rise public awareness or focused directly on action. I think it is important to collect all this information and to disseminate it, because it is definitely a good way to promote **voluntary action**. This will encourage and help people willing to get involved and to practice volunteering.

In the **FCVS** we still believe in the importance of our mission and the importance of making the youngest ones aware, because they are the future of our society. This is why we also started a programme called “**Mirades. Veure i viure el voluntariat**” (“Glances. To look at and to live volunteering”). We developed it with the complicity of social entities and of schools –their students taking part in it.

We have also organized exhibitions supported by the testimony given by volunteers. These exhibitions travel through the spheres of the educational community as well as among Public Libraries and other institutions.

We emphasize the importance of sensitization concerning retired people because we are sure they are an essential asset. They still have a lot to offer and the results show us that this improves their quality of life. In this sense, we also run a programme called “**Grans Actius**” (“Great Assets” or “Active Aged”) addressed to elderly who help others people who are left by themselves, accompanying them, for example, on their way to the doctor.

We feel satisfied about the results. The young ones discover a new reality, and they do this with the illusion and the drive required for getting involved wherever they are needed. And the older ones, in turn, find again an often long-forgotten illusion, they feel again alive and useful to society.

The increasing number of people getting started in volunteering shows us that this is the right way. We must follow this course, adapting ourselves to the new technologies and sensitivities among society so as to reach as much people as possible.

When somebody gets to know volunteering, the volunteer we often carry in ourselves - maybe hidden or just asleep - wakes up and starts walking. That's why we must go on, trying to help the awakening.

Francina Alsina, FCVS president.

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Resum:

The Catalan Federation for Social Volunteering (FCVS) was born 25 years ago and one of the most important missions that it develops is to promote volunteering and to raise awareness among society.



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