Governance

There is no single ministry in charge of volunteering in Denmark. Instead, the responsibility for volunteering is split between different ministries according to their remit.

Main public bodies responsible for volunteering

As the responsible authority for social services, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Interior is also responsible for voluntary work in this area and supervises municipalities in administration of section 18 of the Act on Social Services (Lov om social service, LBK nr 798 af 07/08/2019 [1]).

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for culture and sport and for the non-formal general adult education (folkeoplysning [2]).

Other public bodies involved in volunteering

The other public bodies involved in volunteering are municipalities, the National Volunteer Centre, and the Volunteer Council.

Municipalities

Municipalities support the voluntary sector according to the prescriptions laid down in the Act on Social Services (Lov om social service, LBK nr 798 af 07/08/2019 [1]), and Act on Non-Formal General Adult Education (Folkeoplysningsloven, LBK nr 1115 af 31/08/2018 [3]).

In the case of social services, municipalities must collaborate with voluntary social organisations and
associations by annually setting aside an amount of funding to support voluntary social work. Each municipality must also define the framework for its collaboration with the local voluntary sector, which enables local authorities to be quite specific about their priorities and the requirements they impose on voluntary organisations and their work. Until October 2016, municipalities were obliged to report on the social service work undertaken with the funding, and therefore also on the work performed by the voluntary sector in this area.

In the case of support for non-formal general adult education, municipalities set up non-formal general adult education committees to distribute the funding available for non-formal general adult education. Committees are made up of seven members – the minority of which represent the municipality, with the majority representing a broad section of organisations working in the areas of popular education for children, young people, and adults. While the Act on Non-Formal General Adult Education (Folkeoplysningsloven, LBK nr 1115 af 31/08/2018) contains a general definition of non-formal general adult education, and thus what can be supported, there are no specific requirements or priority areas identified, and there is no opportunity provided for the municipalities to lay down its own. Hence, there is significant autonomy for the non-formal general adult education committees in the distribution of funds and for voluntary sector organisations in the way they spend the funds.

In addition to the funding role, some municipalities have decided to become more closely involved with the operational side of the voluntary sector. Some have employed consultants to provide various kinds of support for the local voluntary sector, while others have set up local volunteer centres themselves or in collaboration with local voluntary organisations. Even where the municipal council (kommunalbestyrelse) is not directly involved in the creation and running of volunteer centres, they often provide in-kind support such as assistance with web design and auditing the volunteer centres’ annual accounts. Another side of the engagement with the voluntary sector is the move by many municipalities towards formulating ‘volunteering policies’ in collaboration with local voluntary organisations. In 2016, 60% of the municipalities had an overall policy or strategy regarding cooperation with the voluntary sector.

The National Volunteer Centre (Center for frivillig socialt arbejde, CFSA)

CFSA Center for frivillig socialt arbejde, is a self-governing organisation, i.e. an independent unit with its own supervisory board, which was set up by the Ministry of Interior and Social Affairs in 1992 to service voluntary social service organisations. Even though it is a self-governing organisation, it is subject to legislation and is defined as a public agency. The core funding of the centre is government grants, with only a small percentage deriving from the services it provides. The centre supports voluntary work and organisations working in the area of welfare (health, social services, and humanitarian assistance) and more recently culture and sport throughout Denmark. Its main activities are:

- Consultancy
- Training and education
- Development of organisations and networks
- Conferences
- Knowledge of the voluntary sector – nationally and internationally

The Centre also provides a website, which includes a database with information about a range of voluntary social organisations in Denmark.
The Volunteer Council (Frivilligrådet)

In 2018, the Volunteer Council (Frivilligrådet [6]) was set up by the minister of children and social affairs to advise the ministry and parliament on the role that voluntary sector organisations can play in addressing social challenges. The council has status as a government agency and is financed by the Danish Finance Act (Finansloven [2], LTB nr 2 af 27/12/2018 [7]). The council focuses on the following areas of work:

- The funding of voluntary work, including the development of a new model for voluntary work funding that can ensure the sector's financial sustainability
- Capacity building of the voluntary social service sector
- Collaboration between the voluntary social service sector and other parts of the voluntary sector for the benefit of the sector overall and societal cohesion
- Participation and access to voluntary social work with the aim of developing a vibrant voluntary social service sector and promoting active citizenship and social inclusion

The Danish Institute for Non-Formal General Adult Education (Videnscenter for folkeoplysning, Vifo)

The Danish Institute for Non-Formal General Adult Education (Videnscenter for folkeoplysning [8]) is a part of the Danish Institute for Sports Studies – an independent research and knowledge centre set up by the Ministry of Culture.

Vifo focuses primarily on non-formal adult education and non-formal youth and children leisure activities such as the scout movement as well as political and religious youth organisations.

Vifo's tasks are to:

- Create an overview of and insight into the area of non-formal adult education (folkeoplysning [2])
- Analyse the area of non-formal general adult education
- Initiate public debate on central questions related to the area of non-formal general adult education

The Danish Institute for Sports Studies (Idrættens analyseinstitut)

The primary objective of the Danish Institute for Sports Studies (Idrættens analyseinstitut [9]) is to initiate and develop a broad range of social science research projects in the field of sports. Furthermore, its aim is to analyse political initiatives regarding the world of sports and stimulate public debate around central questions related to these initiatives.

Among other things, the institute’s objectives are:

- to establish a general overview of and insight into the fields of sports and non-formal education nationally as well as internationally.
- to analyse the implications and perspectives of policy initiatives within the fields of sports and non-formal education.
- to initiate public debate on key issues in non-formal general adult education and in Danish and international sports politics.
Main non-public actors

**FriSe** (volunteer centres and self-help in Denmark). FriSe is a national member organisation of 86 local voluntary centres and self-help organisations. FriSe represents the local centres and facilitates the best conditions for the voluntary sector in Denmark. Among other things, FriSe provides further training and consultancy support to employees and board members of the member organisations.

**The Danish Youth Council (DUF)**. DUF is an umbrella organisation with more than 70 children and youth organisations as members. The member organisations of DUF range from scouts to political youth organisations, voluntary social organisations, cultural organisations, environmental organisations, organisations for youth with disabilities, and many more. DUF administers a share of the profits from the national lottery and football pools and distributes approximately 140 million DKK annually to Danish children and youth organisations (see section 5.3).

**Danish Gymnastics & Sports Association (DGI)**. DGI is an umbrella organisation with more than 6 300 local associations and represents more than 100 000 volunteers. For 150 years, DGI has represented the interests of local sports associations and promoted gymnastics and sports among the Danish population. In 2017, DGI represents 1 586 378 Danes in local associations.

**The Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF)**. DIF is an umbrella organisation for both elite and non-elite sport in Denmark. DIF represents 62 sports unions.

**Danish Adult Education Association (Dansk folkeoplysnings samråd, DFS)**: DFS is an umbrella organisation for 36 general adult education organisations. DFS advocates the common interests of their 36 member organisations. DFS distributes a share of the profits from the national lottery and football pools.

**The Centre for Youth Research (Center for ungdomsforskning, CeFU)**. CeFU is a research centre established in 2000. The centre’s research focuses on various aspects of young people’s lives. The centre’s aim is to provide application-oriented research and the research centre discuss future research with the association CeFU, which has representatives from associations and public institutions engaged in youth issues.

**Cifri**: From 2012-2016, Cifri was a publicly funded research network. Since 2017, the research network has been informal between individual researchers and CFSA.

General distribution of responsibilities

Voluntary activities involve several ministries. Each ministry has its own separate remit. See above for a description of the relevant ministries.

The distribution of responsibility in the area of voluntary activities resembles the distribution of responsibility in other sector areas. The government establishes the overall framework with laws passed in parliament, but the municipalities have the freedom to decide how local measures are designed. The local government in Denmark means that municipalities have a lot of room to manoeuvre as long as they abide by the legislation and ministerial objectives.
Cross-sectoral cooperation

Different ministries are responsible for different parts of the voluntary sector. Therefore, cross-sectoral cooperation is essential and widely used.

An integral part of the Danish political decision-making process is to consult affected public and private partners when bills are formulated. In the consultation exercise, organisations must submit their comments on the bill in writing. This process ensures that vital perspectives are not overlooked by politicians.

Pressing societal problems often lead politicians to set up a committee. The committee is composed of a selection of affected organisations and public bodies. In accordance with the committee’s mandate, the commission must scrutinise the problem and deliver a joint conclusion and recommendations for further action. In case of disagreements, a minority statement is also included in the final report.