

In order to reach the aims of the survey and to get reliable information for the final report completion, the respondents were given the opportunity to specify what the most important thing they learned during the project is.

The most important thing that the participants learned is that people are different, but we have to treat them equally and must show solidarity and tolerance. Dignity, respect and common sense are very important. The respondents share the view that they shouldn't be selfish and think only about themselves, they have to be responsible people. They learned that all of us can be more polite and kind with people and do good things like helping people with a disability or people who just need help from someone. In a nutshell, they learned more about solidarity, respect and tolerance, increased their English skills and boosted their interpersonal communicative abilities.

At the question "*What did you enjoy the most and what did you enjoy the least?*" some of the respondents said that they loved every activity, every moment and every feeling that they had during the project. The only sad thing is that this daring project was over. They enjoyed the most the activities which made other people happy and the meetings with new people and creating new contacts. The majority of respondents enjoyed the volunteering experience offered by the project, the feelings they got while expressing solidarity towards disadvantaged people.

The students enjoyed the least the lack of free time they had due to their involvement in other activities. They don't like the time pressure. Some of the respondents wrote that they are disappointed that they did not have the opportunity to visit the partner country.

The majority of respondents consider that activities implemented under the project were interesting.

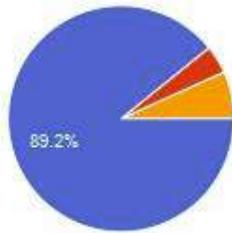
About 90% of the surveyed were convinced that the project's aims have been reached and they are also satisfied with the organization of project activities.

Were the activities interesting for you?



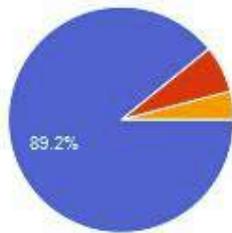
Yes	72	97.3%
No	2	2.7%
I have no definite opinion	0	0%

Are you satisfied with the organization of project activities?



Yes	66	89.2%
No	3	4.1%
I have no definite opinion	5	6.8%

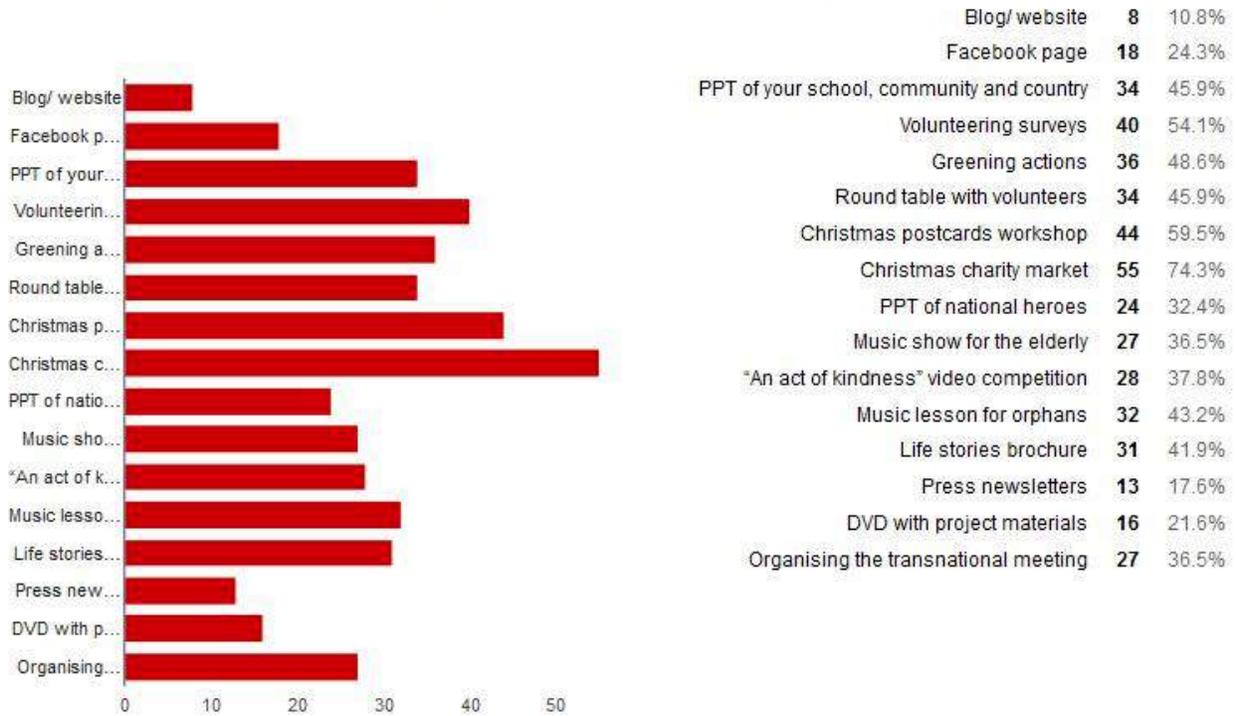
Do you think that the project's aims have been reached?



to a large extent	66	89.2%
to a small extent	5	6.8%
not at all	3	4.1%

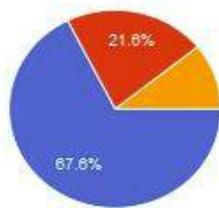
The data indicate that the majority of the students actively participated in the implementing and evaluating of the project activities.

Which are the outcomes of the project you contributed to (either designing, implementing, evaluating)?



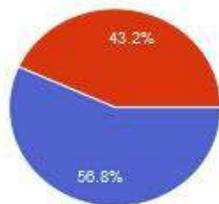
The last two questions show that the respondents are very satisfied with their participation in the project “CAN and HELP” and they have willingness to participate again in volunteer projects and initiatives.

Would you participate again in volunteer projects and initiatives?



Yes, with pleasure	50	67.6%
Yes	16	21.6%
It depends on the project / initiative	8	10.8%
No	0	0%

Are you satisfied with your participation in the project?



Yes, a lot	42	56.8%
Yes	32	43.2%
Not at all	0	0%

Conclusion:

The survey covered the target group and achieved its aim of giving information about the attitudes and opinions of the participants in voluntary and charitable initiatives organized by project CAN and HELP.

Thanks to this survey, we received useful information on the views of project participants and we could conclude that the project has achieved its objectives - helping others, be tolerant, showing solidarity and increased number of volunteers.

The most important things the participants learned during the project were not to be selfish, to be a responsible person and also the fact that little things can make a big difference. You do not need much to make someone happy. Sometimes it is necessary just a little care.

They have learned also that we can all be more polite and kind with disadvantaged people and do good things like helping people with a disability or people who just need a help from someone. At least, the participants have learned more about solidarity, respect and tolerance. They understood that the solidarity is the most important thing in a team and if you have it, you can do almost anything.

A Short History of Volunteering around the World

Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic activity where an individual or group provides services for no financial gain "to benefit another person, group or organization". Volunteering is also renowned for skill development and is often intended to promote goodness or to improve human quality of life. Volunteering may have positive benefits for the volunteer as well as for the person or community served. It is also intended to make contacts for possible employment. Many volunteers are specifically trained in the areas they work, such as medicine, education, or emergency rescue. Others serve on an as-needed basis, such as in response to a natural disaster.

The verb was first recorded in 1755. It was derived from the noun *volunteer*, in C.1600, "one who offers himself for military service," from the Middle French *voluntaire*. In the non-military sense, the word was first recorded during the 1630s. The word *volunteering* has more recent usage—still predominantly military—coinciding with the phrase *community service*. In a military context, a volunteer army is a military body whose soldiers chose to enter service, as opposed to having been conscripted. Such volunteers do not work "for free" and are given regular pay.

Volunteering Worldwide

One of the main actors playing an instrumental role in the promotion of volunteering at a global scale is the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. Active in around 130 countries, it mobilises more than 7 700 people every year, with 80 % coming from developing countries, and more than 30 % volunteering within their own countries. UNV help to organise and run local and national elections and support a large number of peacekeeping and humanitarian projects. They comprise one third of all international civilians working in UN peacekeeping operations. In addition, UNV operates the Online Volunteering Service, a webbased virtual volunteering platform for various projects. UNV celebrates International Volunteer Day on 5 December every year. Other major international volunteering schemes include the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with more than 17 million active volunteers.

Volunteering in the EU

Volunteering is a core expression of civic participation. Over the last 20 years, some 100 000 young people have taken part in international volunteering through the European Voluntary Service, thus contributing to sectors as varied and diverse as education, youth, culture, sport, environment, health, social care, consumer protection, humanitarian aid, development policy, research, equal opportunities and external relations. Main features and challenges

Facts and figures

Estimates show that between 92 and 94 million adults in the EU – i.e. 22 % to 23 % of Europeans aged over 15 – are involved in volunteering, defined as an activity undertaken of a person's own free will, primarily within a nongovernmental organisation for a non-profit cause. A Eurobarometer survey published in April 2015, revealed that the most common areas for volunteering are charity, humanitarian and development aid (44 %); education, training or sport (40 %), and culture or art (15 %). Their activities are usually aimed at a local community (66 %) or the volunteer's country as a whole (27 %). Cross-border volunteering remains modest, with only 7 % of activities being aimed at another EU country, and 11 % at other parts of the world. Even though there has been a general increase in the number of active volunteers and voluntary organisations in the EU over the past ten years, 93 % of respondents indicated that they have never volunteered abroad. The survey also suggests that more than half (54 %) of the young people who had taken part in organised voluntary activities did not incur any expenses, a further 28 % of respondents incurred expenses without receiving any contributions, and one in six respondents (16 %) were compensated for their expenses.

Volunteering has evolved at a different pace across the EU. While some countries have long-standing volunteering traditions, in others, the voluntary sector is still poorly developed or has yet to emerge. For instance, over a third of young people in Ireland (42 %), Denmark (39 %) and the Netherlands (38 %) have done a volunteering activity, while respondents in Bulgaria (10 %), Greece (13 %) and Sweden (15 %) are the least likely to have done so. Compared to the largest increases can be seen in Cyprus (+8 %), Italy (+7 %) and Portugal (+6 %).

Barriers to volunteering

A 2015 EPRS analysis (Cost of Non-Europe report on cross-border volunteering) concluded that the costs associated with barriers to cross-border volunteering amount to an estimated average of around €65 million per year. These barriers could be overcome through EU action and are mainly linked to a lack of legal recognition (leading to the loss of social security and unemployment benefits), consistent recognition of the skills acquired, diversity in recruitment, and adequate training for cross-border volunteers. Practitioners deplore the lack of clear and consistent policy on volunteering at national level. At the same time, it remains difficult to regulate volunteering, because of the complexity and diversity of the voluntary sector across EU countries. To unleash the full potential of cross-border volunteering, the existing barriers need to be removed by setting uniform standards across the EU. A European Parliament resolution (2013) recommended the creation of a European Statute on Associations, to ensure that volunteer organisations are given proper legal and institutional recognition. However, experts argue that the costs linked to the development of such a statute would be disproportionate, and suggest instead a voluntary code on crossborder volunteering through a Commission communication.

EU initiatives

EU-funded schemes are the main suppliers of cross-border volunteers in Europe.

The European Voluntary Service

Over the last 20 years, an estimated 100 000 young people have taken part in international volunteering through the European Voluntary Service (EVS). It started in 1996 as a pilot action. Later, EVS became part of the Youth programme (2000-2006), and continued to be a flagship activity under the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013) and within the current Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020). An EVS project is a partnership between two or more promoting organisations. Projects last from 2 weeks to 12 months. Volunteers – aged between 17 and 30 – receive support to cover travel and living costs, as well as pocket money and insurance. Upon completion of the project, they obtain a certificate confirming their participation.

The EU Aid Volunteers

Another opportunity for cross-border volunteering is offered by the EU Aid Volunteers programme that provides practical support to humanitarian projects and disaster-affected communities for periods of between one and 18 months. It also hosts an online platform for virtual volunteering. The initiative is open to EU citizens and longterm third-country residents in an EU country, aged 18 or over. The first volunteers will be deployed in autumn 2016. The programme covers travel costs, insurance and accommodation. In addition, volunteers receive a monthly subsistence allowance. Other cross-border volunteering schemes include the Europe for Citizens programme, and the Grundtvig Programme.

Role of the European Parliament

A 2013 resolution of the European Parliament underscored the importance of the skills and knowledge gained through volunteering for the integration of the job market and put forward the creation of a 'skills passport'. Members have also repeatedly called for more funding, the removal of technical barriers, and the creation of a European Volunteer Centre Development Fund. The Parliament also initiated the European Year of Volunteering 2011 to celebrate the efforts of those who take part in voluntary activities. The Parliament is to invite the Commission to outline its plans for the EVS and support to volunteering more broadly during the October II plenary.

Study of Volunteering in the European Union

Romania

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN ROMANIA

History and contextual background

Literature indicates that Romanian civil society emerged during the early 20th century when cultural and sport associations started to develop alongside the Catholic Church, which has been historically involved in helping disadvantaged groups through its monastic orders and church associations. However, during the communist regime, many of the civil society structures were destroyed and those remaining were placed under the control of the totalitarian administration. Following the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, the voluntary sector re-emerged in Romania. External factors also helped to promote voluntary activities and organisations: after 1990, a large number of foreign volunteers arrived in Romania, many of whom took part in social assistance activities or contributed to social services. More recently, the 2001 International Year of Volunteering helped to launch the Romanian Volunteering Law.

Whilst progress has been made in the development of a Romanian civil society in line with those seen in Western Europe, further development is still needed. Statistics have shown that the rate of volunteering in Romania has remained persistently constant. Furthermore, in 1990, around 300 NGOs were founded every month. However, on a comparative basis, at that time Romania continued to have the lowest number of NGOs amongst the ex-communist countries.

This is in part due to low levels of social trust in Romania and a lack of tradition in forming associations (whether formal or informal). According to Voicu & Voicu (2003), the low levels of volunteering and negative prejudices associated with it stem from the communist period in Romania, during which "voluntary work" meant unpaid and mandatory activities, imposed by the communist public administration on its citizens. "Voluntary" patriotic activities would include agricultural activities (harvesting for state companies), cleaning public places, and gathering recyclables⁴. Penalties could be applied in case a person refused to participate into these activities. Moreover, during the communist period, non-governmental associations could not be established and operate without state control. The law also prohibited the civil right of individuals to free association. As a result, there were very few non-governmental associations in existence at that time (such as, the Women's National Association) and they would normally be controlled by the state. Furthermore, such organisations often had strong political ties, with the central or local authorities naming the heads of local and national associations. As such, it can be argued that the communist regime disempowered the civil society in Romania (Voicu & Voicu, 2003). In addition to the legacies of the communist regime, there are a number of other factors, which have impacted on the slow development of the NGO sector in Romania. These include: the traditional character of the Romania society in which social connectedness is exclusively confined to family ties; and the lack of social trust in other reference social groups, outside of the family circle. Studies undertaken by the John Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Projects also suggest that the voluntary sector in Romania may be affected by the national economic situation (Epure et al., 2001). For

instance, the decreasing trend in volunteering between 1996 and 1997 – a period marked by economic downturn– may indicate that volunteerism in Romania does not have the character of “economic complementarity”, but of “superposition”. Results have shown that periods of economic hardship tend to correlate with lower rates of volunteering.

Definitions

The Romanian Law on Volunteering was adopted in 2001 and amended in 2006. It defines volunteering as:

a) Volunteering is an activity of public interest, undertaken out of free will by a person aiming at helping others, without being motivated by financial or material gains.

b) The public interest activity is carried out in various domains such as social assistance and services; environmental protection; culture, education, arts etc.

c) The organisation hosting the volunteers or carrying out the voluntary activities may be a non-profit private or a public organisation, run in the public benefit. Once the nature of voluntary activities, their complexity, risks and impacts are taken into account, the two parties - the volunteer and the host organisation - can sign a volunteering contract.

d) If the contract is signed, the volunteer is obliged to carry out an activity in the public interest without gaining any financial remuneration.

e) The beneficiary can be an individual or an organisation; the organisation recruiting and signing the contract with the volunteer does not have to be identical with the beneficiary of the voluntary activities.

In practice, however, certain observers believe that the concepts of volunteering and volunteer require further clarification for a number of reasons. First, there are categories of paid professionals who are also grouped under the same umbrella-concept of “volunteer”. For example, the law on the “voluntary military service” stipulates that the “volunteer soldiers will receive a monthly payment” for their contracted services⁷. In that sense, the Romanian Dictionary defines the concept of “volunteer” as pertaining not only to actions out of one’s free will (i.e., without constraint) but also to persons “joining the army out of free will or performing a service willingly and unselfishly”. Furthermore, fire brigades can also be included in the category of “volunteers” although they are not subject to the Romanian Law on Volunteering.

Main voluntary activities

There is a lack of statistical data available on this issue. Anecdotal evidence suggests that working directly with beneficiaries (of social services and similar) constitutes the main activity of volunteers, followed by administrative/clerical tasks and activities in marketing and arts/crafts. Very few voluntary activities entail campaigning or lobbying.

Drawing upon the data from a sample of 12 cities in Romania, Pro Vobis reports that volunteers spend a great proportion of their volunteering time on working directly with beneficiaries (29.7%), as well as organising events (15.9%), managing or coordinating activities (12%), and being involved in communication or public relations activities (11.8%). Fund-raising activities occupy a good proportion of their time too. Such activities usually require volunteers to go out in the streets in order to circulate

information about the activities of a certain NGO or to promote a specific social cause whilst motivating people to make financial contributions.

Main public bodies and other organisations involved in volunteering

Main public body responsible for volunteering

There is a general consensus that there is no main public body currently responsible for the monitoring and regulation of voluntary activities and institutions in Romania.

Other public bodies involved in volunteering

A number of public bodies are involved in the voluntary sector. However, it is important to note that this is often on an ad-hoc basis: the Ministry of Environment; the Ministry of Work, Family and Social Protection; the Governmental Department of Relations with the Associative Domain (*Directia Relatii cu Mediul Asociativ*); the Agency for Governmental Strategies; and the National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (*ANPCDEFP*), which works under the tutelage of the Minister of Education, Research and Innovation. According to some observers, the Agency for Governmental Strategies was allegedly recently charged with the responsibility of acting as a formal mediator between the Romanian government and the NGO sector - however, this has not been confirmed by the parties involved.

The public bodies involved in the voluntary sector (albeit on an occasional basis) have different roles to fulfil. For example, the different ministries have a regulatory role, whilst the Agency for Governmental Strategies has a predominantly consultative/cooperative role. The Department of Relations with the Associative Domain ensures constructive dialogue between the prime-minister and NGOs (i.e., associations and foundations).

The National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (*ANPCDEFP*) is responsible for volunteer exchanges under the Youth in Action programme as part of its wider mission to develop cooperation in the education field and to enhance the participation of Romanians in various European VET programmes. According to the data provided by the Agency, there were 169 foreign volunteers entering Romania in 2007 and 186 in 2008. A further 37 Romanian volunteers participated in the scheme in 2008.

Organisations that promote volunteering, facilitate cooperation and exchange of information

In Romania, very few structures aimed at promoting volunteering have been created. Those that do exist include the national network of volunteer centres coordinated by the National Volunteer Centre *Pro Vobis*, as well as its online platform dedicated to volunteering (www.voluntariat.ro).

The concept of a national network of volunteering centres emerged in 2001 when several volunteering centres from Bucharest, Baia Mare, Cluj-Napoca and Timisoara decided to collaborate and develop a unified vision of volunteering in Romania. The initiative to establish a national network benefitted from the support of the Soros Foundation, and later from international funding structures such as USAID and the EU Phare Programme. The network was created in 2001 and a National Council of Volunteering was established with the aim to: promote and develop the volunteering in Romania; support organisations working with volunteers; promote a unified vision of volunteering at national level; and to disseminate and implement good practice in the voluntary sector. Between 2001 and 2003, the number of centres increased significantly from 5 to 11. The Centres have been involved in the National Week of Volunteering, organising events related to the International Day of the Volunteer, and

introducing a specific award for individuals and organisations involved in voluntary activities as an acknowledgement of their contribution to the voluntary sector. In addition, the National Forum for NGOs also forms another important structure. The Forum was established in 1992 to provide NGOs with an institutionalised setting for consultations. Every year hundreds of NGO representatives, local and national public authorities, and the media come together at the Forum. In 2009, the National Forum brought together around 100 representatives of NGOs and relevant funding bodies to discuss the highly topical issue of the "Sustainability of the non-governmental sector". The Forum set up an executive group, the Group for the Implementation of the NGO Forum Resolutions (GIR), to undertake lobbying activities to promote and implement the resolutions adopted at the NGO Forums. Other key institutions regularly involved in the voluntary sector include CSDF, Centras, ARC, and various student organisations such as, AIESEC and BEST.

Affiliation with European umbrella organisations/networks

There is very limited information available on affiliations with European umbrella organisations/networks. The National Volunteer Centre Pro Vobis is affiliated to European Volunteer Centre and certain other voluntary sector organisations are affiliated to the United Nations Volunteers. In general however, affiliation tends to be sector-specific.

Volunteering in the context of education and training

Recognition of volunteers' skills and competences within the national educational and training system

According to the Ministry of Education, volunteers' competences are recognised in the national education system. More specifically, the Ministry Ordinance OMECT no. 1734/2007 regulates voluntary activities under the National Strategy for Community Action. National Strategy for Community Action has broad objectives such as to integrate children from disadvantaged families, with special needs or placed in special schools into the local communities; to involve children with social difficulties alongside teachers, students and other volunteers in collaborative projects; to engage students in promoting the educational development of disadvantaged children. Under this strategy, volunteers from high schools can initiate new programmes of community action in collaboration with children placed in special schools or centres and NGOs. Volunteers can organise a wide range of activities for children such as sports activities, involving art, drama, crafts and dance. The National Strategy for Community Action is organised at the national, regional and local level. There is a National Coordinator for the National Strategy for Community Action as well as Regional, County-level Coordinators as well as Local Coordinators for each high school or beneficiary institution involved. Most importantly, the National Action for Community Action has been recognized in Europe as an example of good practice. As part of the strategy, pupils who engage in voluntary activities can receive certificates acknowledging their contribution. Teaching staff can also obtain certificates recognising their role as coordinators of voluntary activities.

It is worth mentioning that the Law on Volunteering was modified in 2006 to make it compulsory for voluntary organisations which sign a contract with volunteers to issue a competence certificate at the end of the voluntary work period.

Some national policies have recognised the role of volunteering– for example the Ministry Ordinance OMECT 1734/2007 allows for voluntary activities during school hours. Voluntary activities have also been made part of the high school curriculum as an optional subject.

However, with regard to other policies, there does not appear to be a formal link between the LLL strategy and volunteering in Romania as the LLL strategy and the national qualifications framework) are only now being developed.

There is some recognition of volunteering at the different levels of the education system; however, this formal recognition does not always translate into a coherent and consistent practice of supporting pupils and students who wish to take part in voluntary activities.

There is a common understanding that schools should encourage more students to take up volunteering. According to the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, educational institutions support volunteers and volunteering through ESF-funded projects and the National Strategy for Community Action. Both the Ministry and school inspectorates have signed cooperation agreements with various NGOs who support education through voluntary activities.

Education and training opportunities for volunteers

There is no national training programme for volunteers and in general, NGOs train volunteers. Volunteers usually receive an induction session and on-going training throughout their voluntary activities, although the mentoring of volunteers is not a common practice.

There are very few general training courses that cater to all volunteers. A number are run by Pro Vobis and Centras. Furthermore, ANPCDEFP through the Youth in Action programme trains EVS volunteers. According to the information provided by ANPCDEFP, 306 EVS volunteers had already benefitted from training.

Pro Vobis also ran a formal training programme for all volunteers during 21 – 28 July 2008 to provide international training on „the management“ of volunteers. The programme was supported by the European Commission (ANPCDEFP, as part of Youth in Action) and NGOs from Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Latvia and Greece. The training programme was open to members of organisations working with volunteers, in particular those members in Human Resources.

Study of Volunteering in the European Union

Bulgaria

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN BULGARIA

History and contextual background

The history of volunteering is based on the traditional feeling of community (19th 20th Century). After 1944 (heavy state and ideological regulation under the communist regime), volunteering was associated with physical and strenuous work and political propaganda.¹ Despite the long tradition of solidarity and help, the somewhat negative image of volunteering in Bulgaria still prevailed at the beginning of the democratic reforms in the 1990s. The state of volunteering was additionally aggravated by the sharp political changes and difficult socio-economic conditions in the country.

The transition to democracy simultaneously brought about the dynamic development of Bulgarian civil society and the third sector. Despite the existing prejudices, volunteering is a strong feature of the third sector. Volunteering has become popular among young people who are willing to contribute to the social and economic development of the country. Significant efforts by various stakeholders have been made to enhance the third sector and to promote volunteering in Bulgaria. In 2000 non-profit organisations initiated a variety of activities, particularly for children and young people, thus raising public awareness about the voluntary sector and positioning a better image of it in the minds of the Bulgarian people. The connection between democratic participation, active citizenship and volunteering is slowly strengthening. Nowadays, voluntary activities are growing in the fields of environment and culture. In addition, non-profit organisations have increasingly become providers of social services.

Definitions

Traditionally, the term *volunteering* in Bulgaria refers to any provision of work and services without concern of financial gain. Accordingly, a *volunteer* is any person who provides such free and gratuitous labour. In the country's legal system, however, there is no legal definition of either volunteering, or provision of work and services without concern of financial gain. Consequently, the status of volunteers as well as their rights and duties is not set in law or formally recognised.

The existing legal framework on volunteering is only partial and far from being well-developed. In 2006 a Law on Volunteering⁵ was drafted by a number of non-profit organisations among which the Bulgarian Red Cross, the National Alliance for Volunteer Action (NAVA), the Lale Foundation, and the Bulgarian Centre for Not-for-profit Law (BCNL). If ratified by Parliament, the definition suggested by this Law would identify volunteering as an *activity outside of an individual's legal employment relations which is done voluntarily and without remuneration at non-profit organisations, local and state institutions.*

A definition of youth volunteering is provided under Article 23 of the draft Law for Youth Development introduced in 2008, where the term is coined similarly. In addition, the definition ascertains that young volunteers are usually *associated with a volunteering organisation* and that volunteering is an *activity which broadens the knowledge, skills and experience of volunteers and the people they help.*

There are a number of problems in defining the terms *volunteering* and *volunteer* which stem from the difference in the perspectives of citizens, volunteers and representatives of third sector organisations. There is a perception, Bulgarian citizens perceive volunteers as people who have found a

solution to their everyday problems of sustenance, i.e. who have a guaranteed standard of living and can afford to spend time and other resources to do something for others. According to volunteers, the most important factors in taking the decision to get involved is the matching of their interests with voluntary opportunities, the benefits of an interesting experience and the feeling of satisfaction. According to representatives of third-sector organisations, volunteering is a social activity where the humanistic attitudes and active social position play the leading role.

Number and types of organisations engaging volunteers

Definition of voluntary organisations in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria there are many terms used to describe the organisations working in the third sector, for example, non-profit, non-governmental, voluntary, community etc. The Law on Legal Entities with Non-profit Purposes (2001)¹⁵ defines such organisations as associations and foundations which self-determine themselves as organisations pursuing activities for public or private benefit.

According to the law, non-profit organisations:

- shall freely determine the means for attaining their objectives
- may pursue additional business activities provided that they relate to the main subject of activities for which the organisation is registered and provided that the revenues are used for the purpose of attaining the objectives of the organization
- are non-profit distributing.

In addition, non-profit legal entities defined as pursuing activities for public benefit use their property for achieving any of the following goals:

- development and strengthening of spiritual values, the civil society, health care, education, science, culture, engineering, technology or physical culture
- assistance to the socially disadvantaged, the disabled or the persons in need of care
- support of social integration and personal realisation
- protection of human rights or the environment
- have a collective supreme body and managing body.

Main public bodies and other organisations involved in volunteering

Main public body responsible for volunteering

In Bulgaria there is no public body responsible for volunteering from a regulatory or institutional perspective. Directorate Youth Policy and in particular, Unit International Youth Programmes at the State Agency for Youth and Sports used to deal with volunteering among young people until July 2009 when the Agency was transformed into a Ministry of Physical Education and Sports. The work of Directorate Youth Policy and its constituents is now transferred to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. The **National Centre European Youth Programmes and Initiatives**, which is the main Bulgarian authority managing the Youth in Action programme, is now also part of the same Ministry and will be responsible for youth volunteering. The Centre provides funding for youth exchanges and volunteering projects, publishes EVS promotional materials and provides information on youth activities through the EURODESK19 network. Over the years, however, voluntary organisations have become

used to working with volunteers without a legal framework and public body responsible for volunteering.

Other public bodies involved in volunteering

Youth Centres in Bulgaria are municipal structures whose work broadly aims at the civil society education of young people in the country. Youth centres offer many volunteering opportunities for young people's community involvement and often have an especially established Volunteering Centre within its structure (e.g. Youth Centre Haskovo). Such **Regional and Local Volunteer Centres** are responsible for placing volunteers, training, vetting and capacity building.

The network of 35 **Youth Information and Consultation Centres** across the country offers various services for young people or organisations which work for and with young people, including information on volunteering opportunities and obtaining funding for youth activities and initiatives both through state funding and other donor organisations in the country and in Europe.

Organisations that promote volunteering, facilitate cooperation and exchange of information

National Alliance for Volunteer Action (NAVA) is a non-profit organisation working to benefit the Bulgarian public and local communities through the provision of social services. The organisation was established in May 2000 with headquarters in Plovdiv and five other Regional Volunteer Centres in Varna, Gabrovo, Haskovo, Targovishte and Lovech. Its membership consists of 8 Regional and 17 Local Volunteer Centres as well as 6 Centres for Social Support. NAVA's main purpose is to serve as a mediator between voluntary organisations and people willing to volunteer. Offering brokerage services to its regional members, NAVA is one of the only networks coordinating activities of voluntary organisations in Bulgaria, including recruitment of volunteers, training of volunteers and voluntary organisations, research-related activities etc. However, the organisation lacks real national representation capacity partly because its headquarters is not in the capital.

The **Bulgarian Red Cross** has a network of 28 municipal branches across the country. The organisation holds a General Assembly every year. The forum, attended by network representatives from across the country, discusses the work and achievements of the organisation and adopts the annual action plan and budget.

There is, however, no umbrella organisation representing the voluntary sector in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, voluntary organisations often cooperate with one another forming working groups in pursuance of legislative or other initiatives affecting the development of the voluntary sector.

Affiliation with European umbrella organisations/networks

At present, 65 voluntary organisations in Bulgaria are EVS accredited sending, hosting or coordinating organisations. NAVA is in the process of evaluating its capacity to become an EVC/CEV member.

Although there are no Bulgarian members in the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO), nor in the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations (ALLIANCE) yet, voluntary organisations use them as valuable sources of information.

Food for thought

- awesome quotations on volunteering-

“Wherever you turn, you can find someone who needs you. Even if it is a little thing, do something for which there is no pay but the privilege of doing it. Remember, you don’t live in the world all of your own.”

~Albert Schweitzer

“Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve.... You don’t have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

“You can study government and politics in school, but the best way to really understand the process is to volunteer your time.”

~Rob McKenna

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”

~Elizabeth Andrew

“You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.”

~Winston Churchill

“Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation’s compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain loving one another.”

~Erma Bombeck

“You may not have saved a lot of money in your life, but if you have saved a lot of heartaches for other folks, you are a pretty rich man.”

~Seth Parker

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in”.

~Author Unknown

“The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.”

~Oscar Wilde

“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth.”

~Muhammad Ali

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”

~Elizabeth Andrew

“If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever.”

~Kofi Annan

“What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.”

~ Aristotle

“We have to do what we can to help wherever and whenever it is possible for us to help.”

~Jackie Chan

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

~ Winston Churchill

“If compassion was the motivating factor behind all of our decisions, would our world not be a completely different place?”

~Sheryl Crow

“Only a life lived for others is worth living.”

~ Albert Einstein

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

~ Mahatma Gandhi

“Whatever community organization, whether it’s a women’s organization, or fighting for racial justice ... you will get satisfaction out of doing something to give back to the community that you never get in any other way.”

~Ruth Bader Ginsburg

“If every American donated five hours a week, it would equal the labor of twenty million full-time volunteers.”

~Whoopi Goldberg

“As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands — one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.”

~ Audrey Hepburn

Quotes to Inspire Your Volunteers
“I believe that every human mind feels pleasure in doing good to another.”

~ Thomas Jefferson

“The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves.”

~ Helen Keller

You make all kinds of mistakes, but as long as you are generous and true and also fierce, you cannot hurt the world or even seriously distress her.

~ Winston Churchill

Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present.

~ Albert Camus

Pride only helps us to be generous; it never makes us so, any more than vanity makes us witty.

~ George Eliot

Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love.

~ Lao Tzu

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

~ Charles Dickens

It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.

~ Mother Teresa

Bodily passion, which has been so unjustly decried, compels its victims to display every vestige that is in them of unselfishness and generosity, and so effectively that they shine resplendent in the eyes of all beholders.

~ Marcel Proust

I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy.

~ Kahlil Gibran

Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough, money can be got, but they need your hearts to love them. So, spread your love everywhere you go.

~ Mother Teresa

One must be poor to know the luxury of giving.

~ George Eliot

The poor don't know that their function in life is to exercise our generosity.

~ Jean-Paul Sartre

Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Too many have dispensed with generosity in order to practice charity.

~ Albert Camus

To practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness.

~ Confucius

True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands--whether of individuals or entire peoples--need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world.

~ Paulo Freire

Generosity is the most natural outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and loving-kindness.

~ Dalai Lama

I must be willing to give whatever it takes to do good to others. This requires that I be willing to give until it hurts. Otherwise, there is no true love in me, and I bring injustice, not peace, to those around me.
~ Mother Teresa

Generosity is not giving me that which I need more than you do, but it is giving me that which you need more than I do.

~ Khalil Gibran

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Our generation has the ability and the responsibility to make our ever-more connected world a more hopeful, stable and peaceful place.”

~ Natalie Portman

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.”

~ William Shakespeare

Volunteering vocabulary

To volunteer means to freely offer up your time and service to help. So **a volunteer** might offer to water a neighbor's plants while he's on vacation or sign up to serve dinner at a local homeless shelter.

When it came into usage circa 1600, the noun volunteer referred to a person who offered himself up for military service. It wasn't until a few decades later that the word was first used in a non-military sense. And a little over a hundred years after that, volunteer expanded from functioning as just a noun to also playing the role of verb. A volunteer is someone who volunteers: willingly performs a task or offers a service.

Vocabulary items	Meaning	Example
associations	An association (also sometimes called a voluntary group, union, voluntary organization, unincorporated association, common-interest association) is a group of individuals who enter into an agreement as volunteers to form a body (or organization) to accomplish a purpose.	<i>"The association meets four times a year."</i>
altruism	Altruism or selflessness is the principle or practice of concern for the welfare of others. The adjective is altruistic .	<i>"It was an entirely altruistic act"</i>
basic obligation	this we should do for family and friends like taking care of a grandparent when he/she is sick.	
benevolence	an inclination to do kind or charitable acts	
care	To care means to feel concern or interest; attach importance to something. The noun is care .	<i>"These are children in public care."</i>
charity	donating something, like money, to a cause or person in need	
change lives	common phrase used when talking about charity: a little bit of money can make a big difference to people whose lives are less fortunate than yours	
community	1. the people who live in the same area, town ... 2. a group of people who have the same interests, religion, race etc	<i>"There's a real sense of community in this neighbourhood."</i>
community chest	a charity supported by individual subscriptions; defrays the demands on a community for social welfare	
cooperation	It is a joint operation or action. The process of working together to the same end. The verb is to cooperate .	<i>"a society founded on mutual cooperation and shared prosperity"</i>
contributions	To contribute means to give something such as money or time so as to help a person, a cause or an organization. The noun is contribution .	<i>"We like to think that we are making a positive contribution to society"</i>
deed	action	
dig deep	This is an idiom. One its meanings is to make a lot of effort with all one's resources; to reach down into the	<i>"We ask from our contributors to dig deep in order to help the"</i>

	very bottom of your trouser pockets to get all the little coins that you forgot about	<i>orphanage continue its work"</i>
do things for charity	run a marathon, get sponsorship	
donate	to give to an organization or good cause	<i>"The money was donated by an anonymous benefactor."</i>
donation	To donate is to give something for charitable purposes, to help a cause. The noun is a donation .	<i>"The association is funded by public donation."</i>
fundraising	noun: fundraising; noun: fund-raising the seeking of financial support for a charity, cause, or other enterprise. adjective: fundraising seeking to generate financial support for a charity, cause, or other enterprise.	<i>"a new development director in charge of fundraising"</i> <i>"a fundraising campaign"</i>
generosity	The adjective generous refers to a person who is willing to give and share unsparingly, showing a readiness to give. The noun is generosity .	<i>"Generosity is the most natural outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and loving-kindness. " Dalai Lama</i>
help	As a noun help means an action given to provide assistance. Synonyms of help include <i>aid</i> and <i>support</i> .	<i>"The homeless center relies entirely on voluntary help."</i>
homeless	This refers to someone without a home, and therefore typically living on the streets.	<i>"He found himself homeless after his marriage broke up."</i>
internship	a job that last for a short time that someone does to learn more about a profession (job). The person is usually not paid.	<i>"Jane has a summer internship at a local TV station."</i>
nonprofit	not making or conducted primarily to make a profit.	<i>"charities and other non-profit organizations"</i>
organization	An organized body of people with a particular purpose.	<i>"UNICEF is an international organization"</i>
orphan	This refers to a child whose parents are dead. An orphanage is a residential institution for the care and education of orphans.	<i>"He was left an orphan at the age of three."</i>
philanthropy	The desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.	<i>"It's a family noted for its philanthropy."</i>
philanthropist	person who donates a lot of money to an organization or cause	<i>"a donation from a wealthy 19th-century philanthropist"</i>
pledge their donations	to give money to a charity	
poverty	the situation or experience of being poor	<i>"There is a disappointing poverty of creativity in their work."</i>
public charity	a charity that is deemed to receive the major part of its	

	support from the public (rather than from a small group of individuals)	
raise money	To raise money means to work to earn money or encourage donations for the benefit of someone, something, or doing something. Fund raising is an expression that means to raise funds or money.	<i>"Some people were in the street raising money for charity"</i>
rescue	To rescue means to save someone from a dangerous or distressing situation.	<i>"a financial rescue package for the company."</i>
service learning	volunteering that is required for a class that is followed by reflection so that students can understand the class content more deeply	
social responsibility	wanting to make your community (school, city state) a better place	
social work	This refers to work carried out by trained personnel with the aim of alleviating the conditions of those in need of help or welfare.	<i>"She is doing social work."</i>
soup kitchen	a place where food is dispensed to the needy	
sponsorship	the money that someone promises to give to charity because somebody completes an activity	<i>When you run the marathon, I will give £10 to your charity</i>
street children	Street children is a term for children experiencing homelessness who live on the streets of a city.	<i>"Street children face a bleak future"</i>
sponsor	A sponsor is a person or organization that provides funds for a project or activity carried out by another. Sponsorship refers to the position of being a sponsor.	<i>"He's been sponsored by a well-known company."</i>
support	To provide for or maintain by supplying with money or necessities. Synonyms of support include <i>aid</i> and <i>help</i> .	<i>"The association received strong support from farmers"</i>
volunteer	a word that describes someone or something that is connected to volunteering; a person who sees a need and who is willing to act with an attitude of social responsibility and with being paid. It is a person who will take action beyond his/her basic obligation in order to improve the community.	<i>"The Health clinic is relying on volunteers to run the office and answer the phones."</i>
To volunteer	is seeing something in the community that is not working right, choosing to act because you feel a social responsibility to improve the community, and being willing to take action without getting paid. This is an action that is going beyond your basic obligation to your family.	<i>"During the emergency many staff volunteered to work through the weekend."</i>
volunteering	the act of helping the community without being paid	<i>"Volunteering has become worldwide spread lately."</i>
volunteerism	the use or involvement of volunteer labour, especially in community services; the principle of donating time and energy for the benefit of other people in the community.	<i>"The foundation promotes volunteerism and public service."</i>

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Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

~Mark Twain



I've seen and met angels wearing the disguise of ordinary people living ordinary lives.

~Tracy Chapman

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