

Marlena Pieniżek, MA
Department of Mediatized Society Research
Institute of Pedagogy
College of Social Sciences
The University of Rzeszów

Summary of the Doctoral Thesis entitled:
Students volunteering – expectations and realisation
Supervisor: Associate Professor Janusz Miąso, PhD, DSc
Auxiliary supervisor: Madga Urbańska, PhD

The 21st century is an exceptional time given the scale of globalisation, the development of mass media and the automatization of the areas of daily functioning, which is continually growing. Human relations are also undergoing a change being simplified by the constant presence of the youth in the virtual world. There is nothing which can replace establishing a real relationship with another person. Social activity is one of the methods of communication of a man with the contemporary world, something which protects against isolation and indirectly against solitary. One of the area where young people, especially students, can realise their need to be with others is volunteerism. In the literature there is an array of definitions of this term. They mainly concentrate on underlining that volunteerism is an un compelled, unpaid and willingly undertaken job, providing services to other people (not including members of family, friends, acquaintances). It is worth remembering that this term is relatively young, as it was legally regulated in 2003 and since then it has been a fast growing trend of the emergence of non-governmental organisations based on unpaid work of volunteers. Volunteerism is such an important space of social life that further research challenges connected with it are worth being done.

In the present research paper the topic of the expectations of volunteers towards volunteerism and their realisation was addressed. Volunteers taking up a job for a given organisation have specific expectations of a role they are going to play, benefits (non-material) which they will receive, people who work there, how they will behave themselves in relation

with another people, and also how they will feel after helping others. It happens that while they are committed, after the initial phase of enthusiasm, discouragement and the lack of motivation start to occur. The clarification of possible reasons of this process was one of the inspirations to take up the subject of the research.

The present thesis is of a theoretical and research character, divided into five chapters. Three of them are theoretical and two remaining include methodological assumptions of study and the presentation of own research findings.

The first chapter introduces the issues related to volunteerism and social activity. The theories and psychological conceptions explaining the phenomenon of altruism and helping others are cited. In order to understand the covered subject better, the history of volunteerism is cited, its types and environment, where the attitude of help is reinforced.

Another chapter discusses expectations which appear in relation to undertaking active social work, including volunteerism. The expectations of volunteers analysed in the light of selected theories are also depicted. The third chapter concentrates on human realisation, the social process of learning and the path of development connected with fulfilling needs as viewed, among others, by Abraham Maslow and complements to his theory.

Chapter four demonstrates the methodological basis of research, the main and specific research problems of the paper. Another chapter presents the results of the analysis of research material. In order to illustrate personal experiences of volunteers, the qualitative (content analysis) and quantitative (diagnostic survey) research was implemented in this study. Qualitative research was conducted on the basis of the volunteers' diaries. Research problems were also depicted in a wider context, using the method of diagnostic survey addressed to the volunteers.

The quantitative analysis of the volunteers-students' diaries – made it possible to observe the mechanism of volunteer work, which was divided into three phases from a decision about the activity through further steps of involvement. That allowed to take the attempt to construct the model of volunteer commitment, which in some aspects can be universal for the majority of young community workers – students.

The objective of the research, which was to determine the relation between the expectations of volunteers towards volunteerism and their realisation in student volunteering, has been achieved. The research part of the study closes with displaying the conclusions from the research, attempting to interpret them, putting forward pedagogical postulates and presenting the model of work and involvement of a volunteer. Having knowledge not only as a volunteer, but also as a person managing volunteers, it will be possible to plan assistance

activities more effectively. Having observed the process of confronting the expectations, will result in greater self-awareness. Community involvement is a proposal significant, especially to students who have the possibility not only to gain work experience, but also find a way of achieving their own life ambitions.

The dissertation is supplemented with an introduction, conclusion, list of tables, charts and figures. The appendix consists of the used model of research tools.