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PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM AMONG STUDENTS IN COURSE OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS UPDATING

Evgeniia A. Barmina (a), Olga A. Moskalenko (b), Natalya A. Mestanko (c),
Olga G. Skidan (d)*, Mariia V. Varlagina (e)

*Corresponding author

(a) Sevastopol State University, 33, Universitetskaya str., Sevastopol, Russia, mar.indigo@mail.ru

(b) Sevastopol State University, 33, Universitetskaya str., Sevastopol, Russia, kerulen@bk.ru

(c) Sevastopol State University, 33, Universitetskaya str., Sevastopol, Russia, nat.mestanko@yandex.ru

(d) Sevastopol State University, 33, Universitetskaya str., Sevastopol, Russia, skidan_ua@mail.ru

(e) Sevastopol State University, 33, Universitetskaya str., Sevastopol, Russia, varlaginamaria@gmail.com

Abstract

Volunteerism has been attracting more and more members of the public, age being no longer a criterion of importance. Volunteerism in the sphere of education holds the leading position in social processes structure. As Sevastopol has been recently reunited with the Russian Federation, the issue of youth involvement in volunteerism is strongly connected with national interests of the Russian Federation. The major university of the city, Sevastopol State University, promotes volunteerism as a means of improving one's leadership skills and applying patriotism and civic engagement. This paper takes research into the potential of student volunteerism in general and event volunteerism as its counterpart to develop personality. Large-scale volunteer assistance to the major state projects and international events has become a new norm allowing for students' involvement, which facilitates professional competence formation. The authors seek to define the correlation between the core curriculum subjects and practical experience acquired by the students in the process of international communication, social and professional activity, leadership and teamwork. Having returned to the region of the Great Mediterranean, Russia is seeking to provide its national interests in this strategically important region. For this reason, Institute of Social Sciences and International Relations of Sevastopol State University, which has been updating educational programs in accordance with a multidisciplinary approach, provides professional modules based on the real demands of the market. This paper focuses on the model as a means of civic identity formation and development in context of the XXI century challenges.

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Keywords: Educational programs, civic identity formation, leadership skills, multidisciplinary approach, teamwork, volunteerism



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1. Introduction

Volunteerism has been attracting more and more members of the public. Age is no longer a criterion of importance. Any citizen of the Russian Federation can be a volunteer starting from the school years. One of the main forms of civic engagement for those over 50 is “silver” volunteerism, which has been developing rapidly over the past decade. The federal program “Young at Heart” has been put into action according to the “Action strategy for the benefit of senior citizens of the Russian Federation in 2025”, approved by the Russian Federation Government Order 164-p, dated February 5, 2016. The aim of the program is to promote “silver” volunteerism. 72 regions participate in this movement with over 20,000 “silver” volunteers registered all over the country (Molody dushoj).

According to statistics, the number of volunteers has been growing exponentially all over Russia. The report on scientific, sociological and statistical research aimed at forms and scale of participation of citizens and organizations in volunteerism (Report by Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation, 2019), which has been presented by the Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation, clearly states that volunteerism in the sphere of education holds the leading position in social processes structure. According to the information provided by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Federal Agency on Youth Affairs and FSBI “Russian Patriot Center” (Rospatriotcentr), the number of institutions promoting volunteerism among children and youth was 2898 in 85 regions of the Russian Federation. 1,155,144 young citizens were involved in their activities, which constitutes 4.2 % of all the young residents of the Russian Federation. 5,238,778 young people volunteer including the leaders and activists of the volunteer projects and programs, which are conducted in different spheres of volunteerism (Report by Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation, 2019).

As Sevastopol has been recently reunited with the Russian Federation, the issue of youth involvement in volunteerism is strongly connected with national interests of the Russian Federation.

2. Problem Statement

According to Lenkov, Rubtzova, Matzuk, University and college students constitute a specific group of volunteers. Student volunteerism has recently become an active agent of broad social practices (Lenkov et al., 2018). Statistically, the conditions for volunteerism promotion have been favorable in Sevastopol. As a result, 19 social organizations, communities and volunteering centers have been created in the educational institutions of Sevastopol. The government of the city claims that at the end of 2018 the total number of volunteers was 6,611 people (Report by Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation, 2019). Students in Sevastopol have demonstrated keen interest in volunteering. The major university of the city, Sevastopol State University, promotes volunteerism as a means of improving one’s leadership skills and applying patriotism and civic engagement.

Pursuant to the list of instructions number Pr-38GS dated 16.01.2019 formulated by the President of the Russian Federation, as a result of meeting of the Council of State, which took place on December 27, 2018, a Resource center was created according to the order 134 dated 25.06.2019 “On the creation of the Resource center promoting volunteerism in Sevastopol”. The center uses the premises of state funded

educational institution “The center of social and sports programs of Sevastopol” as its base. According to the general clause, the resource center is the key element contributing to volunteerism development. It caters for a whole range of services in the sphere of social volunteerism, volunteering resource management, promoting favorable conditions necessary for volunteerism and promoting efficaciousness of the organizations which use volunteers (Regulations on the resource center for supporting volunteerism in the city of Sevastopol, 2019). Sevastopol Youth office along with the resource center work together with the socially oriented non-commercial organizations and volunteer organizations, which in its turn highlights the importance of educational setting in promoting eagerness to participate in the social life of the city and the country.

3. Research Questions

This paper takes research into the potential of student volunteerism in general and event volunteerism as its counterpart to develop personality. Large-scale volunteer assistance to the major state projects and international events has become a new norm allowing for students’ involvement, which facilitates professional competence formation.

Working with the young requires serious analysis of the value system, which is essential to foreign language students who study in Sevastopol in Western sanctions context. Promoting volunteerism at the University requires generalization and constant correction in the context of rapidly developing geopolitical situation for it is the young who reflect the ongoing challenges and determine the potential of the society (Paklina, 2019).

Basic principles of volunteerism have to be pursued systematically among students, which means that specific courses are to be introduced to the core curriculum structure.

4. Purpose of the Study

This paper aims to collect and assess the current event volunteerism involvement practices of Sevastopol State University students whose major fields of study are 45.05.01 Translation and Translation Studies and 45.03.02 Linguistics. We seek to define the correlation between the core curriculum subjects and practical experience acquired by the students in the process of international communication, social and professional activity, leadership and teamwork.

5. Research Methods

The nature of this work is practical. It reflects the experience of Institute of Social Sciences and International Relations of Sevastopol State University, which has been updating educational programs in accordance with the “Grand baccalaureate” concept.

6. Findings

Education policy of Institute of Social Sciences and International Relations is innovative. However, it continues the time honored traditions of Soviet and Russian tertiary education. The program

of “Grand baccalaureate” is constructed by this principle. It contains a common educational core similar to the liberal arts principles. All of the students regardless of their majors have universal humanitarian training, which includes two foreign languages, History, Media, Political Study, Socio-Political, Business clusters. Multidisciplinary approach is the part of the program and the professional modules are based on the real demands of the market. Each module of the program is independent and corresponds with personal and business qualities development. However, all together the modules constitute a wholesome system which enables the graduates to attain social and business success. The model of liberal arts in the humanities laid the groundwork for the “Grand baccalaureate” model. The latter has been reconsidered by the Russian and foreign scholars and is seen as multi - skill baccalaureate enabling students to major in several socio - humanitarian fields. The program allows for independent choices and decision making (Rahimova, 2019). We have collated available expertise and assessed the prospects of this model in Russia (Avdonina, 2017; Ivanova & Sokolov, 2015; Shepelev, 2018).

Having returned to the region of the Great Mediterranean, Russia is seeking to provide its national interests in this strategically important region (Irkhin & Moskalenko, 2020). For this reason, after graduation the students are capable of applying themselves in an array of institutions starting from private and state corporations up to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and special services.

This paper focuses on the model as a means of civic identity formation (Avdonina, 2019) and development in context of the XXI century challenges (Becker, 2015).

The “core” contains the following modules and subjects (Table 01).

Table 1. Structure of core curriculum modules

Modules	Subjects
COGITO	Logics
	Neuroscience
	Foresight
	Russian
LINGVO	Ancient language (Latin, Ancient Greek)
	English
	Language of the Great Mediterranean region (Spanish, French, Arabian)
ARCHEO	Marine Archaeology
	Experimental History
	Political Science
REGIO	International Relations
	Regional Studies of the Great Mediterranean
	Urban Studies
COM	Rhetoric
	Poetics
	Insight into Communication
DATA	Digital technologies
	Big data
GEO	Geography
	Hydrography
	Geology
BUSINESS	Project Activities
	Project Management
	Economics
GYM	Social entrepreneurship
	Sports

One of the main modules is the Business module, which includes such subjects as Project Activities, Project Management, Economics, Social Entrepreneurship.

“Project Activities” discipline is taught in the 1st and 2nd years of study, the volume is 8 credits: 3 hours of independent work, 1 hour contact classroom work.

Since 2018 “Project Activities” educational program has been created for the students whose major fields of study are 45.05.01 Translation and Translation Studies and 45.03.02 Linguistics. Its aim is to form the system of knowledge in the sphere of project activities, which can be later used to deal with the challenges in the professional practical sphere using the project method.

The main aims of the educational discipline are the following:

i. To provide an insight into types of projects, structure of the project, algorithm of working on a project; teach how to set a goal and tasks, make up the plan of the project; use a variety of information sources; make a project report in the form of presentation, make up a written part of the project; be aware of the project evaluation criteria, assess the result of the work; make up a project realization report, draw conclusions; be aware of the risks, where they come from and how to deal with them.

ii. To promote student creativity, ability to analyze, highlight the important, impart the message both orally and in the written form, apply, accumulate and systematize the received information, promote cognition, ability to reflect and draw conclusions.

iii. To develop understanding of the importance of teamwork, cooperation, common activities in the process of fulfilling creative tasks, promote ability to communicate.

iv. To shape up the experience of working in a team, managing the project, developing a real project in the sphere of linguistics, translation, cross-cultural communication.

The program contains four main thematic sections: theoretical insight into project activities, insight into volunteering, insight into efficacious project planning, social psychological aspects of project planning. The “Insight into Volunteerism” includes introduction to the work of unified information system “Volunteers of Russia”, volunteerism prospects of the region, insight into volunteerism for current and perspective volunteers, educational platform Uznaj.PRO, the picture of a volunteer, volunteer movement in Russia, spheres of volunteerism, legal aspects of volunteerism, instruments of volunteerism support in the Russian federation.

As a result of studying this educational discipline 200 people (students of the first and second years of study whose major fields of study are 45.05.01 Translation and Translation Studies and 45.03.02 Linguistics) have joined a unified information system “Volunteers of Russia” since 2018. 174 students have created their personal profiles in AIS “Youth of Russia”. In 2019, 89 students completed a basic course at online university of social studies on the platform of “Volunteers of Russia” and received the certificates of Volunteering Center Association. Registration in the system enables the students to keep up with current events in the sphere of volunteerism in different regions, join the event as a volunteer, form electronic book of the volunteer, keeping track of the number of hours and personal rating, participate in different contests and become a member of the mobility program (a project which engages volunteers in participation in large scale Russian and international events and educational internships). Today 2,772 volunteers and 113 organizations are registered on the “Volunteers of Russia” platform in the city of Sevastopol.

As President Putin stated in his speech addressed to the participants of the international volunteering forum on December 5, 2019 in Sochi, “Volunteerism is important always and everywhere, but it is especially important in today’s world because we witness the period of rapid development, a new technological revolution. Machines seem to be capable of substituting people in all spheres. Artificial intelligence might be more efficient to some extent, but it lacks something characteristic of a human being – it lacks the heart, the soul and compassion. You are the perfect examples of this idea and this is the value that the mankind should cherish” (International volunteer forum).

All in all, the University as well as the region share the general trends in sphere of volunteerism. As Kiriyenko states, “volunteerism has been developing rapidly recently. To some extent it is the matter of self-identification; there used to be a few million volunteers a couple of years ago. And now over 50 million Russian people are proudly called volunteers”. Since 2014 Sevastopol State University has been a base for student volunteering organizations and relies on volunteers while holding scientific, business and cultural events.

The students of Sevastopol State University are engaged in volunteering for the city benefit. Great Victory volunteers organize patriotic events, interpreters volunteer at the meetings with foreign delegations. In 2019 digital television volunteers helped the elderly use a new TV format. Volunteerism has become an integral part of University and city life. New formats are appearing. Kiriyenko announced the participation of the volunteers in National population census in 2020, when 20 thousand volunteers will join the professionals. We prognosticate active participation of Institute of Social Sciences and International Relations in this large-scale event

7. Conclusion

The role of youth volunteer initiatives cannot be emphasized enough in current situation as it is these initiatives which define the social processes structure. This issue is thought to be particularly acute considering the fact that the international relations are currently being volatile. Youth policy of the country and its regions is strongly connected to the Homeland Security. Having reunited with the Russian Federation in 2014 Sevastopol and Crimea have occasional difficulty integrating. Negative information field contributes to the difficulties, proliferating the idea of social opportunities shortages in the regions where sanctions were introduced. It is particularly important to monitor the degree of participation and see the perspectives of young people engagement in political, economic and cultural life of the region, the country and the whole world. The findings clearly demonstrate that youth policy in Sevastopol and student volunteerism prove to be successful and supported by resource centers and civil movement. From experience of Sevastopol State University, it can be recognized that “Project Activities” discipline promotes the young people’s commitment to participation in social processes of the city and the country. This educational course provides an insight into volunteer programs, personal pathways, upward mobility, all of which boosts their volunteer incentives including not only event volunteerism, but also to patriotic and social volunteerism.

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