



Sociological Aspects of Volunteering

Larisa Antonovna Kim; Dilshod Saydullaevich Yusupov

Senior Lecturer of the Department of Social and Humanitarian Disciplines, Almalyk Branch, Tashkent Technical University, Republic of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan

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Abstract

The article analyzes the essence of volunteering from the point of view of relations and processes considered at the level of society as a whole. The essence of the concept of "volunteering" in sociological discourse is revealed, the main aspects of volunteering are noted, the importance and necessity of volunteer work in modern society are shown. The dynamics of volunteering as a community and social institution is considered, the types of volunteer activities, the functions of the external and internal orientation of the social community of volunteers are highlighted. The transformations of the nature and content of different types of volunteer activities are revealed.

Keywords: *Volunteer; Volunteering; Volunteer Movement; Volunteering; Volunteering; Society; Motivation; State; Altruism; Social Structure; Social Institutions; Social Processes*

Introduction

In modern conditions of growing socio-economic and political risks, the phenomenon of volunteering is becoming more and more significant, capable of reducing social tension, taking on functions that the state and the commercial sector cannot cope with for certain reasons. At any stage in the development of human civilization, there were various kinds of volunteer initiatives through which a person or a group of people disinterestedly solved the pressing problems of society. Currently, the institution of volunteering is becoming more and more important for solving social and environmental problems, a resource for "improving the quality of life." Participation in volunteer work has no political, religious, racial, or age boundaries. Volunteers play an important role in the development of innovative ideas, in improving the welfare of the state, in national programs and UN programs related to the provision of humanitarian assistance, human rights, technical assistance, democratization of society and the consolidation of peace. The work of many organizations and professional associations is based on the ideas of kindness, compassion, compassionate help. They show especially vividly their work, where there is an acute shortage of state participation in organizing care for the elderly, helping single mothers and families in difficult life situations, homeless children, improving the environmental situation, etc. It was these niches that socially active citizens began to fill, helping people solve their life problems.

In world practice, the term "volunteering" is used to characterize volunteer work as a type of activity that is carried out by people voluntarily on a gratuitous basis and pursues the achievement of socially significant goals, and also solves the pressing problems of civil society. Volunteering, by its social nature, sets the following goals:

- Help in creating a stable position of people in society;
- Supplement the services provided by state authorities, as well as entrepreneurship, but in cases where these services are economically ineffective, but are vital in society.

There are three criteria for the movement of volunteers, covering all types of volunteer activities around the world, and at the same time excluding other forms of social behavior that resemble volunteerism.

1. Activities are not aimed at making a profit.
2. Activity is the result of human free will.
3. The result of the activity benefits third parties, but also the volunteers themselves. This criterion helps to distinguish voluntary activity from various leisure activities.

Real events associated with the pandemic and objective facts demonstrate the possibilities of volunteering, its positive functions as a social phenomenon, and indicate the prospects for the development of this social movement.

II. Significance of the System

Over the past two decades, volunteering has attracted a fairly wide interest of specialists in various fields of activity. The relevance and necessity of studying this phenomenon is explained by the following circumstances:

- The social, economic, cultural and political significance of volunteering, which consists in solving social problems, relaying socially significant values (compassion, sympathy, mercy), which are the ideological basis for the consolidation of society;

- Saving budget funds (volunteer work is carried out free of charge);

- Development of democratic values in the course of representing and defending the interests of the population, certain social groups in the structures of civil society

- The ability of volunteering to solve socially significant problems in areas where the state and the commercial sector are inactive. Volunteering, as part of the "third sector", is designed to fill the gaps in the state and the market.

- The positive experience of developed countries in the field of institutional regulation of volunteering, in which the state is actively involved in organizing, coordinating and stimulating volunteer activities, which results in a significant socio-economic effect. In the United States, for example, in 2014, voluntary contributions were estimated at 7.9 billion hours, which in monetary terms is about \$ 184 billion [11].

General trends in the changes in the types of volunteer activities will theoretically determine the framework for their controllability at the macro, meso and micro levels, in a practical sense, fill the model of social management of volunteering, taking into account its dynamics, with specific mechanisms and technologies.

III. Literature Survey

In world scientific thought, volunteering is most often viewed as an element of civil society, as the participation and involvement of the population in the activities of the third sector. In modern foreign literature, studies of the phenomenon of volunteering are widely represented. Most of them are of an applied nature and are devoted to the study of incentives and motives of volunteerism (J. Anderson, L. Moore) from different points of view: economic (F. Wolf, R. Devlin, S. Ziemek, J. Carpenter, E. Katz, M. Mueller, L. Pruthi, A. Thompson, R. Freeman), psychological (E. Brunell, J. Greenslade, S. Dolnicar, J. Clary, M. Okun, K. White, D. Harrison), social demographic (D. Burns, J. Wilson, D. Gillespie, T. Janoski, M. Musik, J. Reid, L. Hustinks, K. Einolf), cultural (L. Hustinks, F. Handy).

Sociological interest in the study of volunteering is due to the classic sociology issue of social order, social solidarity and morality (E. Durkheim, O. Comte, P. Sorokin, G. Spencer, T. Parsons). B. Anderson, G. Bloomer, E. Butkevicienė, G. Lebon, B. Mercer, L. Rinkevicius, F. Tennis, P. Štompka, G.E. Zborovsky, N.B. Kostina, M.O. Mnatsakanyan, B. D. Parygin, V.A. Poisons, etc.

In world scientific thought, economic studies of volunteering prevail, volunteering is more often viewed from the point of view of a labor approach (F. Vardel, S. Ziemek, J. Lishman, L. Salamon).

The motivation of volunteers is considered by foreign authors on the institutional (A. Gil-Lacruz, K. Marcello) and individual (D. Baidy, J. Bono, T. Vantilborg, P.K.Dwyer, S. Nigel, M. Snyder, T. Schlesinger) levels, as well as within the framework of various areas of volunteering: event (M. Johnston, G. Treuren, J. Zhang), sports (H. Bang, C. Wang, G. Kaskell, H. Mirsafian), social (D. Gabard, R. Knaan, S. Plenap), ecological (I. Greenspan, L. McDougle, F. Handy).

Thus, the analysis of scientific literature shows that today there is a large number of empirical studies of the phenomenon of volunteering, some of its types and problems are being investigated [6, 8, 10, 13 [Electronic resource]]. A static cut of the characteristics of the community of volunteers allows us to trace the genesis of certain types of volunteer activities, to understand their nature and national characteristics. [1,2, 5, 9, 13]. But practically all the data of sociologists are characterized by the fixation of the current state of affairs, and their analysis is largely descriptive, including because of the relative "youth" of the object of study.

IV. Methodology

At the methodological level, the article presents a spectrum of theoretical approaches to the study of volunteering (systemic, community, institutional, activity), which makes it possible to comprehensively study this phenomenon as a social institution, community and activity, as well as to consider its individual manifestations in dynamics.

Community and institutional approaches as basic make it possible to consider volunteering at different levels - from personal (micro-level of social interaction) to institutional (macro-level), in different spheres of society. From the point of view of the community approach, volunteers are investigated as a kind of social community that really exists, is empirically fixed, is relatively unified and has certain characteristics that determine the nature of institutional regulation. Within the framework of

the institutional approach, the concept of institutional regulation of volunteering is determined, in the implementation of which many sociologists assign the leading role to the state.

The systematic approach allows us to define the social management of volunteering as a complex hierarchical multipurpose system that has three levels (macro-, meso- and micro-levels) depending on the subject of management, the highest of which is the macro-level of institutional regulation.

V. Experimental Results

In the scientific literature, within the framework of sociological discourse, definitions of volunteering are most often given from the position of the activity approach. The specificity of the sociological approach lies in the desire: to consider all phenomena in society as a result of the activity of social forces, groups, individual individuals with generalized interests (and not just private momentary desires); to understand the obvious and latent structural parameters of all social phenomena, to reveal the structural connections between internal elements, to show the place, position of a social phenomenon in the system of social relations and its relationship with other elements. structure of society; to reveal the impact of traditions and the historical past on the present; recognize the great diversity and variability of social life.

Sociological interest in the study of volunteering stems from the classic sociological question of public order and social solidarity [4]. Volunteering is a unique type of social connection due to its voluntariness, gratuitousness and collective orientation. Volunteering is recognized as one of the most important and exceptional forms of social solidarity that binds society and promotes its integration. From this point of view, sociologists are interested in the social portrait, the social "profile" of volunteers. [7].

Thus, the specificity of the sociological approach is "the ability to link any event in society with the structural, cultural and historical context, as well as with the individual and collective actions of members of society" [12].

The analysis of different points of view on the definition of volunteering made it possible to highlight the key elements of the term: voluntariness, conscious nature, gratuitousness, public benefit.

Common characteristics of volunteers can be considered such features as:

- The availability of resources, primarily economic and cultural, acting in the form of professional knowledge, skills, competencies.
- The presence of common interests and values, such as altruism, collectivism, the desire to help those in need;
- Social solidarity, acting as a unity of beliefs and actions, mutual assistance and support of members of the social community of volunteers;
- Regular implementation of joint activities, interaction or "virtual social contact";
- Similar characteristics, factors and conditions of life (above average income, high level of education, good health, religiosity contribute to volunteer activity).
- Awareness of belonging to a community, identification with it, the presence of a "common status";
- Recognition of volunteers as a community by other communities and society as a whole.

The social community of volunteers is inscribed in the structure of society and interacts with other elements.

Let's highlight the following types of volunteer activities:

Social (social security); educational; event (including sports); social and legal; natural and ecological; activities in emergency situations (including exploratory volunteering); political; religious; military. The selection of types allows you to get a fairly complete and complete description of the internal structure of a community, as well as to systematize the collection and processing of statistical information.

The social community of volunteers can also be structured based on volunteerism. The main motive for volunteering is the desire to be useful, to help those in need (58%). Much less often people volunteer "in order to solve a specific problem (14%), because of the desire to share with others the way to solve it, to repay people with good for good (12% each). Some survey participants also note that they become volunteers for their own pleasure (17%), interesting pastime (12%), gaining useful skills (5%) and new acquaintances (4%) [3, p. 29].

From the point of view of public (external) orientation, the social community of volunteers carries out:

- A social function, providing support and assistance to vulnerable segments of the population (specific people), acting as a mobilization force in emergency situations;
- An economic function, providing assistance to those in need free of charge, without receiving remuneration for their work, which allows to reduce government spending and save a significant share of budget funds;
- Cultural function - the function of relaying socially significant values (compassion, sympathy, mercy) to beneficiaries in the process of providing assistance;
- Political function - representing and defending the interests of the population, certain social groups in the structures of civil society.

In terms of internal orientation, the social community of volunteers implements:

- A communicative function (assumes communication and social interaction of community members);
- Supporting function (occupying an intermediate, middle position in the social structure, connects the individual and society);
- Cultural and leisure function (being one of the ways to use free time in order to acquire new acquaintances, social contacts, participate in large-scale cultural and sports events);
- A regulatory function (assumes compliance with certain rules and regulations by members of the community);
- The function of socialization (assimilation and acceptance of certain values in the course of volunteer activities, for example, by volunteer students in the process of obtaining professional education).

Unlike other types of civic activity (protest, political), volunteering is that element of the social structure, which, in any case, should have broad state and public support. This is possible only within the framework of the rule of law, in all other cases, volunteering develops not "thanks", but "in spite of", due

to internal aspirations, people's intentions, manifestations of anthropological essence and the realization of individual desires. The conceptual task posed in the study of the dynamics of volunteering is associated with understanding the conditions of social management at all its levels, in which volunteering can realize its development potential in all its practices and manifestations, not only in organized, but also spontaneous volunteer initiatives (formal and informal) ...

Volunteering, of course, is closely related to the cultural sphere of society. On the one hand, the development of volunteering in each country is determined by the corresponding cultural tradition and values. On the other hand, the very phenomenon of volunteering can be viewed as a cultural phenomenon, which, among other things, can ensure the preservation and transmission of cultural values and spiritual traditions. This demonstrates the role and significance of the phenomenon of volunteering in the cultural sphere of society. The sociological approach to the analysis of any social phenomena (including volunteering) allows you to obtain objective information about a specific phenomenon, problem, clarify the social situation, describe it objectively, present an analysis of people's subjective opinions (using various research methods).

It is well known that involvement in volunteering is not tied either to age, or to a profession, or to any nation or nationality, or to the political or religious views of people in a particular society at a certain stage of its development. A volunteer always works free of charge, has a desire to make a personal contribution to the implementation of socially significant public projects and initiatives aimed at the good of society, and the result will be the gratitude and appreciation of people who received the necessary help and support (beneficiaries). Undoubtedly, personal motivation plays an important role. Being a volunteer means participating in a volunteer mission without pay, of your own free will.

Volunteering develops in the context of constant socio-economic and political transformations, while the volunteers themselves are always socially useful. Their activity has a positive focus, is aimed at specific socially significant results and is in demand in spatio-temporal localization. The constant need of society for the help of volunteers, an ever-expanding range of problems (economic, social, environmental, cultural, political, etc.) in its various spheres affect the volunteers themselves.

The dynamics of the community of volunteers and their activities primarily depends on the prevalence of informal types of assistance to each other, on the nature of their manifestation and the frequency of spontaneous unification of people in order to solve newly arising practical problems. In turn, organized volunteering, managed "from the outside", in its development is more transparent and understandable and is well studied today. Existing studies by both Russian and foreign sociologists mainly cover formalized volunteering.

Let us note the global trend of the emergence of an increasing number of areas of volunteer activity and forms of volunteering, which determine the complexity of the structure of the volunteer community and complicate the conditions for managing it at all levels (organizational, territorial, national). This is especially true in countries where "post-Soviet" and "mixed" types of volunteering are implemented. Everywhere there are new forms of individual involvement of the population in volunteer practices, implemented without the mediation of non-profit organizations. The development of informal volunteering is generated by the growing social needs of the population for help from other people. Another tendency that characterizes changes in the volunteer community beyond any national boundaries is associated with the problems of maintaining in different types of society the social differentiation of its members, manifested in volunteering, despite its key essential characteristics. The functional load of volunteering is also subject to changes, which connects a volunteer of any age group with the labor market, becomes his personal resource, providing him with a certain status, a set of competencies and opening up additional opportunities for employment or consolidation in the labor market.

World practice has accumulated a wealth of experience in organizing volunteerism, its legal regulation, stimulation and development.

Conclusion and Future Work

Volunteers are that social community and at the same time that social movement, which has pronounced signs of dynamism. We include certain indicators of quantitative and qualitative changes among them. They include the number of volunteers in the country, gender, age characteristics of volunteers, involvement in volunteering of various social groups (professional, educational, etc.), plans and intentions of volunteers, as well as qualitative transformations of volunteering (changing the content of different types of volunteer activities, their spectrum, the relationship between formal and informal structures, resource endowment) and conditions that have a significant impact on the volunteer activity of Russians in various spheres of society. Volunteers are an extremely segmented community that includes people who, in real life, create their own special culture, form a unique ideology. Many volunteer groups and associations have the potential to be self-governing and adaptable to changing environments. At the same time, an active external managerial influence is currently directed at individual sub-communities of volunteers.

Taking into account the highlighted global trends in the development of volunteering, we highlight several key provisions and proposals:

1. Dynamics of volunteering, on the one hand, is determined by international trends in the development of volunteering, on the other hand, by national specifics, which is reflected in the peculiarities of the development of a number of formal types of volunteering.
2. Volunteering develops in conditions of constant socio-economic and political transformations, while the volunteers themselves always turn out to be socially useful. Their activity has a positive focus, is aimed at specific socially significant results and is in demand in spatio-temporal localization. The constant need of society for the help of volunteers, an ever-expanding range of problems (economic, social, environmental, cultural, political, etc.) in its various spheres affect the volunteers themselves.
3. Volunteering is not only a significant phenomenon, but is also actively involved in the implementation of various areas of social policy, which can develop in the country only in the event of a systemic increase in the level of socio-economic well-being of the population;
3. It is necessary to embed the technologies of systematic development of volunteering in the educational process, taking into account the national traditions of upbringing and education;
4. For the development of volunteering, it is necessary to increase the level of public confidence in government institutions and the third sector;
5. Monitoring and resource support of proactive, informal types of volunteering are one of the promising areas of activity in relation to the implementation of the possibility of effective management of volunteering. In scientific discourse, methodological approaches, as well as empirical data on the study of informal volunteer practices, are extremely limited. Informal volunteering today requires a special research view, a certain methodology of empirical research that does not limit its consideration as manifestations of situational assistance to each other.
6. Clearly outlined global trends in the systemic development of volunteering indicate that formal and informal norms, as well as the rules of interaction of volunteers with each other and with those

people whom they help, largely depend on the institutional environment where volunteering develops. The basis of this environment is formed by the system of values of the population of certain territories and the traditions of volunteering and mutual assistance that have historically developed in certain societies. They are closely related to the level of economic well-being and social stability of society, fit into the context of certain public administration practices that set the conditions for the development of the third sector and the formation of civil society.

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