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International Scientific Conference**YOUTH VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY AS A RESOURCE FOR
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract**

Voluntary activity in any society is considered to be an effective tool for involving young people in public life, increasing their social and political participation, and providing opportunities for realizing their potential. The current difficult situation caused by the spread of the Coronavirus infection has served as a kind of trigger for the development of new forms of voluntary activity, including "socially distant volunteering". The use of digital methods and technologies significantly expands the opportunities for attracting additional youth resources, as it allows people to get direct access to the information bases of volunteer organizations from social networking sites and significantly simplifies the process of voluntary participation. However, attracting a youth voluntary resource requires direct assistance from institutional structures, including assistance provided at the regional level, since young people do not always understand all the areas voluntary help could be applied in. Targeted information and propaganda work need to be conducted among young people to form an infrastructure to support youth volunteering through the introduction of some programs and projects in educational institutions, youth centers, and centers of additional education, as an integral part of the teaching-educational and educational processes. The authors of the article, based on the comparison of the results of the sociological survey conducted at different times on the territory of the Kemerovo Region, revealed the students' attitude to voluntary activities and identified the main problems that arise in the work of voluntary and volunteer organizations when choosing participants for the implementation of their projects.

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1. Introduction

The concept of long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020, approved by the order of the Government of the Russian Federation on 17 November 2008 No. 1662-R, announced the main purpose of state youth policy as "creating conditions for successful socialization and effective self-realization of youth, development, and potential development of young people, and its use in interests of innovative and spiritual development of the country." (The order of the RF Government No. 1662-R..., 2008).

Unfortunately, in modern society, young people are at risk of being excluded from civil and political participation; they are characterized by an apathetic attitude to public and political institutions and are not interested in modern political and social processes. Voluntary activity in any country is a traditional mechanism for involving young people in socially useful and meaningful activities and is regarded as a recognized pedagogical process aimed at acquiring important life skills, realizing personal growth and individual development (Kukushkina et al., 2020).

2. Problem Statement

The advantage of voluntary activity is a wide range of areas in which a young person can self-actualize, namely participation in social programs, medical care, environmental protection, intellectual or creative development, sports, tourism, and military training (Baum et al., 2010).

For the state, increasing the participation of young people in voluntary activities is of great importance, since young people are the broadest resource needed in many areas of society. At present, there are about a thousand public organizations in Russia that actively develop youth voluntary socially significant projects and programs. But there is still a problem of attracting more young people to socially significant activities and realizing their potential.

Young people do not always understand all the opportunities offered by voluntary activity on their own. A survey conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) among young people aged 14 to 25 shows that the most common form of voluntary activity today is participation in the improvement of territories; 72% of the surveyed young people have experience in this kind of activity. About 15 % of the respondents transferred money to people in need or participated in the collection of donations. No more than 12% of all the respondents know about the availability of other forms for voluntary activity (Volonterstvo v Rossii: segodnya i zavtra, [VCIOM], 2018).

Limited awareness is due to the lack of information networks (lack of common information space), lack of information about organizations engaged in volunteering, and direct access to information about voluntary opportunities.

3. Research Questions

The situation is that a huge personal potential of Russian youth volunteering, its internal resources are only partially involved. In this regard, the given research is aimed at identifying priority problems of

attracting young people to voluntary activities, as well as finding new approaches to generate interest in volunteer initiatives.

4. Purpose of the Study

Study of the orientation of the student youth of the Kemerovo Region, Kuzbass, to participate in voluntary activities and development of recommendations aimed at improving the work of institutional structures responsible for work in the field are under discussion in the article.

5. Research Methods

A study was conducted among the students of the Kemerovo region, Kuzbass in 2019. In the course of the survey, 150 people studying at universities in Kemerovo aged 18 to 22 were interviewed by a questionnaire, as well as experts, representatives of functioning volunteer organizations, and employees of regional and municipal authorities, whose functions included interaction with youth and public associations, also participated in the experiment. The method of collective assessment was used for the selection of experts. The sample-set was determined by calculation, which made it possible to identify the students' attitudes to voluntary activities and to detect the main problems that arise in voluntary and volunteer organizations when choosing participants for the implementation of their projects.

6. Findings

Development and support activities for volunteering in the Kemerovo Region is part of the Integrated program "Development of volunteerism in Kuzbass in 2019-2025 "approved by order of the Government of the Kemerovo Region, Kuzbass "On the development of volunteering in Kuzbass" on 26.08.2019 № 531-R (The order of the Government of the Kemerovo Region №531-R..., 2019). In total, there are more than 20 volunteer organizations in the region. Charity and social events are held annually with the involvement of voluntary organizations and volunteers.

To attract youth voluntary resources to implement socially significant projects and to form a positive young people's attitude to volunteering, the regional authorities have organized interaction with non-governmental organizations supporting voluntary initiatives:

- Kemerovo Regional Public Organization "The Support for Public Initiatives Resource Center»;
- Autonomous Non-Profit Organization "The Development and Support of Social and Public Initiatives Center "Social Partnership" (Novokuznetsk);
- Autonomous Non-Profit Organization "The Social Initiatives Assistance "Points of Growth" (Leninsk-Kuznetsky). Center

Competitions of social projects for the consolidated budget for non-profit organizations are organized annually together with the Kemerovo Regional Public Organization "Kuzbass Center "Initiative".

The survey of student youth revealed the following facts: the overwhelming majority of all surveyed students tended to positively assess socially significant work performed voluntarily (64% of all respondents), 14% found it difficult to answer, and only 2% of the surveyed youth tended to assess voluntary activity negatively. Young people felt insecure in their knowledge, skills, and abilities, did not

consider them sufficient to carry out high-quality work, and 34% of the respondents were afraid to harm people. Another 18 % said that they tried to participate in voluntary projects, but came across poor work organization and could not understand what their duties were. More than 20 % of the respondents did not express a desire to participate in voluntary projects, as they were afraid of a negative reaction or misunderstanding of the surrounding environment. For young people, the importance of social identification is undoubtful and the negative reaction of a social group is a significant negative motive (Alderfer, 2013).

The results of the study showed that students who were enrolled in such areas of study as social work, organization of work with youth, psychology, etc were involved in the volunteer activities most due to the field of their study where they learned the basics of voluntary and volunteering activities and the activities of various voluntary organizations. Moreover, they planned to connect their future professional activity with socially significant jobs. Such students work in the much-discussed areas of voluntary activity related to social volunteering (assistance to orphans and the elderly), and they usually participate in such social projects.

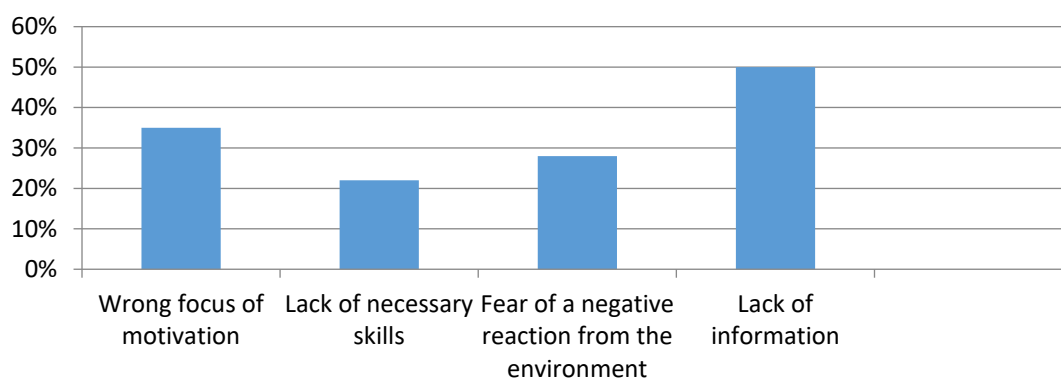


Figure 1. The problems of attracting young people to participate in voluntary activities

The problems of attracting young people to participate in voluntary activities, identified in the survey, are presented in Figure 1. In the first place is the lack of information that young people experience. Those means of communication that students use tend to focus their attention on traditionally positive results including the involvement in a joint activity, the ability to organize their free time, the fulfillment of public duty, the feeling of social significance, and the ability to express civil attitude. These young people tend to do more pragmatic things, and according to the results of the earlier conducted survey, the main motives of participation in voluntary activities are "obtaining practical experience" (48%), "the life becomes more exciting" (27%), "finding new friends" (20%), "benefiting others" (5%) (Ivanov et al., 2018).

Similar results were obtained within the present research: professional interest, the possibility of acquiring special knowledge and skills, and the base for future career growth were named among the leading motives for volunteering (Table 1). This indicates that young people want to understand the significance of their volunteer work. The only traditional motive that keeps a high position in the ranking is the desire to

simply help people, although the researchers do not exclude the possibility that the respondents do not always mark this point sincerely.

According to the experts, the problem lies in the lack of information, and it can also be explained by the fact that modern young people do not want to participate in activities that require too many personal resources and would prefer to participate in projects related to the Internet volunteering (creating databases, sharing information). This opinion corresponds with the results of the lifestyle survey and value preferences of young people in postmodern society, and above all, the worldview of the so-called "Z" generation (Danilov et al., 2017).

A noticeable surge of voluntary activity of young people in the region occurred in connection with the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID 19), in the spring of 2020, when the Kuzbass regional volunteer headquarters, based on the Regional Volunteer Center "Thank You", united almost all major volunteer organizations in the region, including the All-Russian Student Rescue Corps, Student Construction teams and Universities volunteer teams. The situation of complete self-isolation served as a kind of trigger for the development of new forms of voluntary activity, including "distant volunteering" (Voronina & Barsukova, 2019). The use of digital methods and technologies has significantly expanded the opportunities for attracting additional youth resources, as it has provided direct access to the information bases of volunteer organizations directly from social networking sites and has significantly simplified obtaining information about ongoing volunteer actions, as well as the opportunity to join them.

Table 1. The Motives encouraging young people to participate in voluntary activities, %

Motive	Percentage
The acquisition of professional skills	45
The base for future career growth	37
The opportunity to visit other cities and countries for free	32
The desire to help people	62
Expanding the circle of acquaintances	22
The sense of belonging to a joint activity	15
The possibility to organize your free time	14
The fulfillment of a public duty	12
The feeling of social significance	10
The expression of civic attitude	8

During the work, young people participating in the campaign received 5625 phone calls from the elderly. 36 thousand applications were processed and completed. More than 70% of phone calls were about food delivery, 20% of people called asked to purchase medicines and about 5% of phone calls were about payment for housing and maintenance bills, 5% of phone calls were transferred to specialized "hotlines". This suggests that young people have sufficient potential and desire to engage in voluntary activities, the task is to find methods to activate the potential.

We consider the following steps necessary to take at the regional level:

1. To form a regional infrastructure to support youth volunteering through the introduction of several programs and projects in educational institutions, youth centers, centers of additional education, as an integral part of the teaching-educational and educational processes.

2. To organize targeted information and propaganda work among young people using new digital information and communication technologies. To provide information, it is necessary to identify the target group this information will be addressed to and to identify the characteristics of this group including age; educational level; gender; individual interests and motives for participating in volunteering, and young people's abilities. The information should be clear, targeted, and appropriate to this form of work. It is especially important to pay attention to the fact that the advertising of voluntary activities should fully correspond to its nature and content.

3. Encourage young people to participate in voluntary projects permanently, and reduce spontaneous volunteering. This step contradicts the fundamental principle of volunteering to some extent because selfless work should be for the benefit of the one in need, however, it is possible to apply non-monetary incentives, for example, taking volunteer hours for the internship within the curriculum, writing a letter of recommendation to a university (for schoolchildren), as well as making up for the volunteers' expenses (food, travel). Focus on the development of additional professional skills suitable for career growth (Trapeznikova, 2016).

4. Supplement the functions of the regional executive body responsible for the youth policy issues with the following tasks:

- taking into account actual and planned indicators reflecting the situation and the need for voluntary resources;
- creation of mechanisms for the development of youth volunteering in the region based on monitoring, analysis, and forecasting;
- formation of complete information support for voluntary and volunteer projects and programs;
- study and spread of new successful practices of youth volunteering and new effective methods and technologies for the development of volunteering and the implementation of volunteer projects;
- creation, maintenance, and support of resource centers for the development of volunteering;
- conducting systematic monitoring of the level of involvement of youth resources to participate in regional voluntary programs and projects.

7. Conclusion

The development of volunteering today allows us to see that young people are a resource for solving social problems. Young people have sufficient potential and desire to engage in voluntary activities in new areas of volunteering. But due to the lack of research on how to attract young people to such areas, insufficient information about the importance and the activities of such projects, there are problems in the lack of interest in volunteering among young people, and the problems with volunteer organizations that need a youth resource and potential for their successful activities.

To develop the volunteer potential of young people, it is important that volunteer associations should not be spontaneous, and they should work permanently, have clear goals, tasks, constant dynamics of development, mechanisms for attracting new volunteers, experienced workers, and trained curators.

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