

VALUE: HUNGARY National Report

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Volunteering at universities – Hungary

1. Overview of Hungarian volunteering – university interaction

In Hungary co-operative work and mutual help – organized as so called 'kaláka' – have their own historical traditions. After the change of the régime i.e. from the '90s new forms of voluntary activities arised as caritative actions of the then newborn non-profit organizations and churches. Still, the concept of volunteering has attained the public domain and has reached a considerable status only since 2001, the year declared by the U.N. as the Year of Volunteers.

According to the European Value Survey (2009) nearly 11 percent of the total adult population of Hungary, more than 0,9 million people (901 545 persons) took part in voluntary work for organizations in 2008. This representative survey was conducted on the basis of interviews of the volunteer population above the age of 18 years, who worked for either registered or unregistered organizations (Bartal 2010).

According to the narrow explanation of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) – based on the survey of non-governmental organisations by their own admission – in 2009 the estimated number of volunteers was 427 000 in the non-governmental sector. In more than half of the Hungarian civil organisations volunteers worked, more than 93% of the volunteers worked at associations and private foundations, namely in the classical civil organisations.

According to the data of HCSO in the Hungarian non-governmental sector the most volunteers have been present in the field of spare time for years. This is not surprising, as in Hungary the most non-governmental organisations work in this field as well. Following the order of proportions, civil organisations working in the fields of spare time-hobby, social services, culture and the multipurpose donation as well as the protection of public security were helped by the most volunteers.

The nearly 60 million man-hours performed by the volunteers working at organisations can be adequate with 28 000 full time employees' working hours (Nagy-Sebestény 2011).

The number and proportion of the non-governmental organisations having volunteers, the number and proportion of their volunteers according to the type of the activities, 2009

Type of activity	Organisations having volunteers		Volunteers	
	number	proportion, %	number	proportion, %
Culture	4 721	59,2	45 261	10,6
Religion	958	63,1	10 789	2,5
Sports	4 941	62,9	40 446	9,5
Spare time, hobby	6 769	59,5	67 217	15,6
Education	4 685	53,7	26 822	6,3
Research	683	49,9	5 569	1,3
Public health	1 488	49,5	10 306	2,4
Social services	3 297	57,7	47 312	11,1
Protection of citizens, fire service	669	67,3	9 605	2,3
Environmental protection	1 044	61,3	12 275	2,9
Settlement development	2 279	55,3	18 185	4,3
Economy development	574	34,8	3 496	0,8
Protection of law	508	52,0	6 321	1,5
Protection of public security	1 585	68,3	43 133	10,1
Multipurpose donation, non-governmental associations	518	63,0	47 252	11,1
International connections	516	59,1	4 156	1,0
Vocational, economic interest advocacy	1 962	43,5	23 583	5,5
Politics	376	60,1	4 969	1,2
Total	37 573	56,8	426 697	100,0

Source: HCSO, 2011

On the basis of the sample of EVS we can say that a typical Hungarian volunteer is a woman between the age of 18 and 45, who lives in a town or a village, rather married, but can be single with a great frequency, rather has children, generally raise two children, but frequently can be childless, has intermediate or higher degree, works in an economically active, service type job, in which the use of a higher degree on her own is needed, she esteems herself religious in a manner, her average income is between 75-150 000 HUF per month, but it can frequently be 250-300 000 HUF per month, she has become a volunteer in the past 10 years, her most frequent activity at the organisations is help in organising and managing programs and events or she does administrative tasks or helps in child and youth protection programs (Bartal 2010).

The Act No. LXXXVIII of 2005 on the volunteer activity of public utility is a milestone in the growing of interest and in the spreading of volunteering. The parliament approved of the volunteer activity of persons or their communities, which is based on the solidarity of the members of the society, expresses the self-activity of the citizens, and is performed unpaid for the good of other people and created the above

mentioned act. As the preamble of the law says, it came to existence so as to this remarkable social resource might become more effectively mobilizable in the interest of achieving public aims as well. The law frames the basic rules of volunteer activity of public utility, furthermore with ensuring preferences and guarantees it requires to inspire the participation of citizens and their organisations in problem solving and in achieving public aims.

The significance of the law is that it placed volunteering into a legal status, made a clear situation with the expenses becoming tax and contribution free as well as expanded the institution of public utility volunteering outside the non-governmental sector.

In 2007 the government accepted a volunteering strategy, which aimed at propagation, regulation, strengthening of the host institutions and make volunteering acknowledged. Based on a further governmental action a government enactment was made about the program of the active citizen promoting International Year of Volunteers 2011.

The International Year of Volunteers coincided with the Hungarian EU Council presidency, therefore it partook in considerable attention and support.

Besides other significant steps were taken: a network of voluntary activity coordinating institutions came into existence, and in 2003 the National Civil Fund (NCF) was established for support of the civil organisations. This fund for example called for applications in connection with the European Year of Volunteering for programmes, which develop and serve volunteering. The civil sector follows actively that the new civil laws under preparation put an end to the NCF, and create a new fund and supporting system.

Comprehensive statistics about the voluntary work of undergraduates have not been made, however, the survey of the Eötvös Loránd University titled "Universal values in the universities" assessed the students of the middle region of Hungary based on a representative sample.

Research titled "Universal values in the universities" came into existence with the initiation of the andragogy students of Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Education and Psychology (ELTE PPK). The research in which 1750 people were involved was to survey the opinion of freshers about the democracy, public trust, self-activity and value preference among others. From the data it turned out that although most of the young people are curious and said that they were interested in the programs, their participation in regular voluntary actions is very low and few of them are members of associations. Only 7% of the questioned signaled that he or she participates in the activity of an association or works as a volunteer. Democratic deficit can be detected from that altogether 2% of the respondents took part in the advocacy of the undergraduates.

The following gradation formed on the basis of the signaled activity: undergraduates participate in activities connected to spare time (44%), community pages on the internet (40%), associations, volunteering ((7%), caritative actions (5%), blog editing (4%), student self-governance (2%), youth organisation of a party (0,5%).

It should be noted that predominance of organisations with spare time and sport activity profile is typical in the Hungarian non-governmental sector as well – young people who took part in community forming activities significantly chose choir, dance, sport courses (EÉE 2011).

2. Good practice examples and effectiveness of the interaction

In Hungary Nonprofit Educational Workshop (NKM) have been operating since 2000. The workshop is formed by lecturers teaching in the non-governmental sector of higher education and leaders of acclaimed civil organisations, civil professionals, researchers. When it was established the aim was to increase the democratic preparedness of students participating in the higher education, it was formed in connection with the developing of the "Civil society, non-governmental organisations" educational programme starting at the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). The workshop undertook the aim not to let students graduate without attending one or two semesters on democratic values, civil society regardless of what speciality they chose to study. The education of the "Civil society, non-governmental organisations" programme was started in 19 higher educational institutions. The members of the workshop participated in the renewal of the non-governmental manager vocational certificate (2005-2006) as well as in the registration of the community-civil organizer higher level vocational certificate into the National Training Register (2006), creating of many trainings outside of the school-based education and in the survey of questions affecting the civil sector. In 2010 their aim was completed with the initiation of how to make recognized the voluntary activity in the higher education. They help the civil sector and voluntary work with the introduction of good examples and effective practice and with information exchange. The Hungarian Association for Community Development and the Nonprofit Information and Training Centre Foundation (NIOK) are standing members and cooperating partners of the workshop.

Nearly fifty professionals worked on the elaboration of the validation system model and the rules of procedure as well as on the proposals referring to the introduction of the above mentioned regulations from EU and governmental support (TÁMOP 4.1.3. project) to develop the higher education validation system. The developing work started in the summer of 2009 and it ended in the spring of 2011. Experts made proposals for the documentation of the brought knowledge. Documentation means the process in which the person collects the documents and other evidences about the existence of the brought knowledge and arranges in a form required for the procedure in order to be comparable with the reference available. As a part of this development experts made proposals for the recognition of the learning in an informal environment. They intent to make the kind of learning recognized, which is performed within non-organised frames, namely it is not depending on educating institutions and curriculum, where there are no supporting persons or not professionals help the learning process. Typical form of it is the self-education and the experimental learning of which can be performed at a workplace or at home or in the community life or in the course of voluntary work (Derényi-Tót 2011).

In 21st May 2011 the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice and the Ministry of Rural Development cooperating with the National Volunteer Centre organised a large waste collecting action within the confines of the European Year of Volunteering 2011. The title of the action was "Day of Higher Education Volunteering and *Te szedd!* voluntary action for the clean Hungary". The actions were implemented in the following academic towns: Budapest, Pécs, Debrecen, Szeged, Miskolc, Győr, Eger, Gödöllő, Szolnok, Sopron.

The Students in Community Service (HAKÖSZ) was established to draw the undergraduates near the real problems of the society, to help in educating decision-makers of the future to be responsible citizens who have solidarity with the community, to enhance the role of the universities in the help of the burning problems of our environment, at the same time increasing significantly the prestige of the institutions. The HAKÖSZ came into existence at the Corvinus University of Budapest spreading the establishment of the intellectuality and practice of taking social responsibility, the community education and the volunteering in the circle of students. In the course of their activity they cooperate with other student groups, the Student Self Governance, student organisations, dormitories, other student self-organisations, in addition they try for good cooperation with the faculties, departments and lecturers.

In the autumn of 2010 the Department of Andragogy and their students (ELTE) joined the "Add tovább!" (Pass on!) movement started by the Hungarian Association for Community Development. The aim of the movement is to promote the public and democratic socialization of youth by providing opportunities to the social role, and to help the renewal of the communities of the settlements.

The movement of "Add tovább ELTE!" undertook the propagation of volunteering and the mediation of students (who take on voluntary work with pleasure) and host organisations between institutions and communities. The movement supports initiations that are based on the cooperations with the close environment of young people (e.g. organising children's camps, giving lectures, supporting old people, organising excursions, assistance in carrier orientation, mentoring, organising self-educating and learning circles). These are the little steps of the undergraduates towards taking social liability.

The local organisation of the Red Cross in the Károly Róbert College was established in 2008 with the aim to do voluntary work in the form of an organisation. In the organisation, recognized by the General Directory of Hungarian Red Cross, 52 students did voluntary work on organised blood donations for two days in a half year. A precondition of a successful program is to be well organised. Previous to the event, volunteers draw the attention of the students for the importance of the voluntary and free of charge blood donation in the college, dormitory and their circle of friends and afterwards voluntary students greet their fellows on the blood donation days, where they see the donors through the whole process of blood donation and help them to get over their fears of blood donation.

In 2010 for the aid of the residents – of the three settlements whose houses were flooded by the alkaline red sludge in the course of the industrial catastrophe – instructors of the Faculty of Law, Eötvös Loránd University cooperating with the lecturers started a caritative action called "Pancake Bistro". The students fried 1340 pancakes that were given for monetary grants in the area of the university and the income was sent to the indigents. Devecser got 172 310 HUF, and about 250 pancakes were given to homeless people on the day of the event. The successful voluntary action is about to be repeated in 2011.

3. Barriers and opportunities for future development

In Hungary the framework and regulation system of volunteering is being evolved. The European Year of Volunteering did much for propagation, but the motivating factors and the recognition of voluntary work should be strengthened. The propagation of the existing opportunities in the universities is another important task. For example the law on higher education makes it possible to count in the gained knowledge (elements), capabilities, skills, competence (elements) acquired through work with experiential learning. In the Hungarian higher education – apart from the formal, curriculum-organised professional practice – the count in of the former work experience into the accomplishment of the educational requirements is limited to 30 credits by the current Hungarian legislation. However, students take advantage of this only on few universities.

In Hungary many of the secondary school students do community service, charity service, particularly in the faith-based schools. The good examples and the social stress actuated the Hungarian education system to order the school community service for every secondary school student by the forming public education law. Although only the draft of the law is known, it challenges the schools and the civil organisations as well as the public institutions hosting volunteers and community service workers. The ongoing process will definitely have an effect on the higher education.

It is important to develop how to count in the knowledge of those who gained experiences in the civil sector into the organised training programs in the higher education. It would be worth making appropriate these new, still forming training programs for the take-in of the brought experimental knowledge. This would increase their draw in the circle of the potential students.

Most of the Hungarian civil organisations operate in reduced circumstances. Accordingly beside the higher education programs development of the host organisations, training of the staff and financing the volunteer trainings would be necessary.

Youth in Action Programme became more and more familiar in Hungary as well as the European Voluntary Service (EVS), which present opportunity for young people to do voluntary work in another country in a determined length of time. A broad circle of voluntary works are offered by different participating organisations, everybody can find the most adequate activity for his or her interest in the cultural, environment protection, sport, media and different social areas.

According to surveys these programs help in the problem of youth unemployment, promote gaining professional experiences, teamwork, intercultural learning and last but not least developing the command of a language. Young people who participated in voluntary activity chose a profession more consciously. The programme also has a social-cultural effect on the volunteer, he or she becomes more open, understands EU programmes better, will be a more active citizen.

It would be practical to develop a system similar to the host organisations of the EVS in Hungary, to prepare the organisations for the coordination of the volunteers.

Initiations have been done already, but much of the Hungarian civil organisations are not ready yet for the host of the volunteers.

The National Volunteer Centre is a starter and generator of several good projects. More cooperations began between the Centre and the universities. The "competence portfolio" – titled "Assessing Voluntary Experiences (AVE) in a professional perspective" – that was worked out in the course of Leonardo da Vinci research programme (2003-2006), is a significant initiation. The developed instruments help in the identifying of the capabilities, competences, knowledge acquired through volunteering, which can help in finding a job for those who have voluntary experiences. In 2011 the Centre – according to the viewpoints of the European Qualifications Framework – renewed the volunteer portfolio and the volunteer passport. The process was helped by lecturers and students as well. The competence portfolio might promote the recognition of voluntary activity and the counting in into the university credit system.

The labour market project of the National Volunteer Centre, the ÖTLET project, and the self-starter program – serving the development of civil sector and volunteering – offers subsequent opportunities for the cooperation between universities and civil organisations.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

In Hungary a number of changes took place in the past two decades. The international years of volunteers (2001, 2011) brought significant changes in the propagation of volunteering. The frames of legal regulation became incentive as well, although administrative charges were not reduced by the arrangements. At present Hungary is in for the reforming of civil laws, which means opportunities and barriers at the same time. A voluntary strategy planning was started, organisations and universities organised a lot of actions. Aside from drawing attention it is necessary to support and enlarge the capacity of the host organisations and to affirm the voluntary work.

The implementation requires good organization. It would be practical to locate "volunteer-coordinators" in the student self-governances or in the university carrier offices.

Coordinators should keep in touch with the organisations and students, check and monitor the voluntary work, have the organisations offered an opinion. It could be possible to do voluntary work regularly through the year and occasionally as well (e.g. summer camps).

The volunteer coordinator arm-in-arm with the student self-governance may fulfill a lobbying role in the process of having the university recognize the educational achievements gained in the course of volunteering.

5. Further information

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- Nagy Renáta – Sebestény István (2011) A Nonprofit szervezetek Magyarországon, 2009. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. Budapest

Voluntary organisations and home pages

- Ministry of Public Administration and Justice - Civil Info Website (Közigazgatási és Igazságügyi Minisztérium Civil Információs Portál) <http://www.civil.info.hu/>
- National Volunteer Centre (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány) www.oka.hu <http://www.otletprogram.hu/>
- Nonprofit Information and Training Centre Foundation (Nonprofit Információs és Oktató Központ Alapítvány) www.niok.hu www.nonprofit.hu
- Foundation for Democratic Youth (Demokratikus Ifjúságért Alapítvány) <http://www.i-dia.org/> <http://www.kozod.hu>
- Hungarian Association For Community Development (Közösségfejlesztők Egyesülete) <http://www.kozossegefejlesztes.hu/> www.kkapcsolat.hu www.addtovabb.kka.hu
- Mobilitas National Youth Service (Mobilitás Országos Ifjúsági Szolgálat) <http://www.mobilitas.hu/flp/evs> www.euodesk.hu

Others

- <http://www.onkentesen.eu/>
- <http://www.onkentesseg2011.hu/>
- <http://volunteermotivation.hu/>
- <http://www.hakosz.hu/>
- www.nepfoiskola.hu
- <http://onkentes.lap.hu>
- www.korhazionkentes.hu
- www.civilszemle.hu

Glossary

Recognition/validation (in higher education): A procedure with several steps in which brought, namely previously gained knowledge – is compared with a qualification or educational programme requirement standards (reference) by an assigned person or body. In the process brought knowledge must be proved by documents or is being evaluated directly. Depending on the result of the comparison brought knowledge is recognized (it is counted in as credits, exemption is given for the formal accomplishment of certain educational requirements) or the application is rejected for lack of adequacy in the required measure.

Considering its function the procedure may serve the entrance into a given educational programme, the exemption for part of the educational programme or gaining a qualification.

The principle of the recognition/validation procedure is that it accepts the different learning methods equal, so it evaluates the result of learning without reference to the mode of gaining knowledge.

Brought knowledge: Gained knowledge beyond a given educational programme (in any learning environment and in any way). The person asks for recognition of his or her brought knowledge into the accomplishment of the given educational programme. It is in use as the synonym of the "previously gained knowledge".

Competence: The combination of knowledge, skills/abilities and behavioural characteristics.

Volunteering: is a kind of activity, which is performed individually or through a group, regularly or occasionally, inland or abroad in support of the common good from a personal free will and unpaid. The activity does not return profit for the volunteers, furthermore the volunteers do not substitute for the paid employees. Volunteers do not help their own families principally, their work occurs as an added value in the life of the host organisation. The activity can be carried out within the confines of non-governmental, civil organisations or governmental institutions, in rare cases for-profit organisations (firms, enterprises). It facilitates the social integration, contributes to the reduction of poverty and exclusion and to the full employment. Volunteering helps in ameliorating our environment and community (National Volunteer Centre).

Portfolio: The (validation-aimed) portfolio is one of the possible methods of the documentation of the brought knowledge. It is a structured collection of evidences

and other writings (e.g. curriculum vitae, references), which confirm the existence of the brought knowledge. The collection is set out on the basis of the rules of procedure.