



"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2014
Brasov, 22-24 May 2014

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

Răzvan-Lucian ANDRONIC*

*Faculty of Psychology and Pedagogy, University Spiru Haret, Braşov, România

Abstract: *Volunteering is often discussed in relation to a number of terms used frequently in social and human sciences: prosocial behavior and altruism; charity and philanthropy behavior; social responsibility; democratic behavior and active citizenship; community development. Further, I will present an analysis of the relationship between volunteering and these concepts.*

Keywords: *volunteering, prosocial behavior, community development, social responsibility.*

1. PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR, ALTRUISM AND VOLUNTEERING

Septimiu Chelcea (1998, 2003) approached prosocial behavior in an integralist manner, defining it as "an intentional behavior, carried out without being a professional obligation and aimed at supporting, preserving and promoting social values, without waiting for any moral or material rewards from others" (Chelcea, 2003, 86). Prosocial behavior includes a variety of ways of expression, which also include altruism as a subspecies of prosocial behavior (Chelcea and Taran, 1990, 178-179). The same view is to be found in James W. Vanden Zaden (1977/1987, 299-300), which included altruism among the manifestations of prosocial behavior, defining it as "a behavior performed for the benefit of another person, without waiting external reward. "

By comparing the definitions above we can conclude that:

a) Altruism differs only apparently from volunteering, by a nuance of expression: altruistic behavior is characterized by a lack of expectation of "external rewards" and

volunteering does not imply the existence of a "material reward". The difference is profound though: the volunteer does not expect material consideration, but frequently searches (and is legally justified) to obtain other types of external rewards.

Moreover, in the vast literature on volunteer management, providing external rewards is seen as a sine qua non component of an efficient activity. In addressing Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre in Cluj-Napoca (2006, 6-7), the recognition of the merits of volunteers includes a formal dimension (awards, certificates, medals and organizing events where volunteers with outstanding accomplishments are formally mentioned) and an informal dimension (the staff is encouraged to express their sincere appreciation as often and spontaneously as possible for the contribution made by volunteers).

In conclusion, altruism and volunteering differ in terms of an essential aspect: in altruism external rewards are excluded (by its very definition), while in volunteering they may exist, except the

material ones. In the practice of working with volunteers, nonprofit organizations should have their own system to reward volunteers, which would have to include all the ways in which this recognition occurs routinely: "The recognition of the accomplishments of volunteers is not an event, a gift or prize – it is a process, an attitude that needs to exist in everything that is done to attract, inspire, maintain and coordinate volunteers" (Pro Vobis National Volunteer Center, 2006, 6).

b) Volunteering is different from prosocial behavior, primarily due to a higher duration of the event. Psycho-sociological approaches of the prosocial behavior most commonly refer to giving help in emergency situations, through behaviors that have a duration which is usually measured in minutes.

Compared to the assistance in emergency situations, volunteering appears as a systematic individual approach of giving help, with a duration that can vary from a few hours a week to a sustained effort over many years. Emergency interventions are motivated by identifying the situation itself as an emergency, while the volunteer needs sustained (moral) motivation to continue work. This statement is provided, usually by the reward systems of the volunteering beneficiary- organization.

Both prosocial behavior and volunteering, refer however, to the same type of activity: to helping others. When the need of help is acute, the helping behavior is "pure", disinterested, taking the form of prosocial behavior. If we are dealing with a person who needs "chronic" help then we can talk about volunteering, social practice that includes - as a rule - moral rewards as well.

2. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY BEHAVIOR

For Daniel Saulean (1999, 19) the charitable behavior is a way of mitigating the economic based inequalities in a society: "He is sometimes spoken of as a social phenomenon that reflects not only the level of development achieved by the society, but a large part of the complex of values and social norms." The charitable behavior can occur between people

who belong to the same social class (eg, helping a neighbor who had lost his home as a result of natural disasters), but is most commonly initiated by those who have a surplus of resources. In the latter case, the charity provides a redistribution of resources as a form of solidarity "top-down" on the social ladder.

Philanthropy is defined in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (1998, 379) as "a charity action for the benefit of poor people." Philanthropy is "commonly made by those who have surplus for those in need", being a strong economic determined behavior: "The intensity of philanthropy varies in time depending on the periods of increase or decrease of the economy" (Saulean, 1999, 19).

The relationship volunteering / philanthropy is addressed by Bogdan Voicu (2005, 121-123), which states that "volunteering is a form of social recognition, of affirmation of the philanthropy features", a form that is available to all persons who have the knowledge, skills or time resources necessary for helping others. In other words, volunteering gives each individual the opportunity to produce charitable behaviors and to probe the qualities required to prove for philanthropy. If the volunteer gets to have at one time a surplus of economic resources, it is likely that it will initiate philanthropy or other charitable behavior.

3. SOCIAL RESPONSABILITY

In English, the 'responsible' initiatives of companies were called by a variety of terms: "corporate citizenship", "corporate philanthropy", "corporate societal marketing", "community affairs", "community development".

The preferred term today is "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR), a term that describes the current thinking on the contribution that companies must have in the development of modern society. As states and international institutions have realized that adopting CSR principles serve the objectives of sustainable development, emerged the need for international standards to define what constitutes a "desirable corporate behavior."



"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2014
Brasov, 22-24 May 2014

These standards were developed by the United Nations Organisation, the European Commission or the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

CSR concerns are relatively recent in Romania (and in Eastern Europe in general) being generally associated with the activity of multinational companies, despite the principle that "for the effects to be felt globally, their actions must be supported by others made by small and medium enterprises (SMEs)." In the SME sector in Romania, social responsibility is met with a substantial dose of skepticism and is very commonly confused with philanthropic activities undertaken by companies (Smith, 2008)

The ways in which a company (regardless of its size) can act as a result of social responsibility are diverse: philanthropy (en. "Corporate Philanthropy"); cause related marketing (en. "Cause Related Marketing"); social marketing (en. "Corporate Social Marketing"); socially responsible business practices (en. "Socially Responsible Business Practices"); promoting a cause (en. "Cause Promotion") and volunteering in the community (en. "Community Volunteering").

The later course of action (also known as "corporate volunteering") seems to be the "middle way" between social responsibility at the company level (CSR) and the potential for expressing helping behavior among employees (Andronic, 2008). It is a kind of initiative that the company encourages its employees to participate as volunteers in supporting the community, an NGO or a cause of concern to the community in which it operates.

4. DEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOR AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Cristina Rigman (2008, 6-7) emphasizes that the skills and abilities developed by volunteers prepare them for an active political and social life, equipping them with valuable information and resources on active participation, access to networks of mobilizing the community resources, trust, tolerance and consensus building skills with others and especially the acquisition of a state of *empowerment*. The absence of this condition makes most people not to engage in civic and political life (Rigman, 2008, 6-7).

Volunteering is associated with empowerment ("the ability of a social actor to self-sustain, to control their living environment" - Sandu, 2005, 215) as the skills and abilities mentioned above are easily transferable to other contexts of democratic participation. Volunteering appears as a tool for learning and practicing participatory democracy or as an expression of democratic culture (Voicu, 2005).

In this context, the relationship volunteering- active citizenship (defined as "a potential of individuals to organize in a variety of forms, to mobilize resources and to exercise the power they have to protect or gain certain rights or to produce public goods" - Dodescu and Hatos, 2004, 10) is one of major interest. Bernard Crick (2004), in an article dedicated to this topic, noted that individuals "before being citizens should be volunteers" and "active citizenship must involve, at one time, volunteering, but not every volunteering involves citizenship". There are volunteer activities taking place without involving important components of active citizenship: a good level of knowledge about the functioning of a democratic system; processes leading to improving the knowledge capacity of individuals and advocacy- concept describing "the activity of defending / supporting a

principle or point of view (individual / general / of an organization) to a government institution or a legislator " (Pro Democracy Association, Academy of Advocacy and Society of Professional Journalists, 2007).

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Dumitru Sandu (2006, 15) defined community development (DEVCOM) as "voluntary changes by and for the community, beginning from the experience of practice in post-communist Romania":

DEVCOM has a much broader scope of coverage than volunteering, including numerous activities of human groups which do not exclude the involvement and obtaining of benefits, including materials, being "a tolerant label for a family, relatively disorganized of practices or patterns of local intervention who have or tend to have as result a "greater good of the community "" (Sandu, 2005, 15).

In this form of social development volunteering is included, and it is addressed in this context, especially in connection with the development of the necessary abilities DEVCOM (United Nations Volunteers, 2004).

REFERENCES

1. Andronic, Răzvan-Lucian. (2002). Voluntariatul în sectorul social-improvizație sau management? În *Eficiență, legalitate, etică în România mileniului III – Lucrările celei de a-X-a sesiuni de comunicări științifice a Universității "Spiru Haret"* (pp. 401-404). Brașov: Editura Lux Libris.
2. Chelcea, Septimiu și Țăran, Constantin. (1990). Psihosociologia comportamentului prosocial. În Septimiu Chelcea (coord.). *Psihosociologia cooperării și întraajutorării umane* (pp. 176-201). București: Editura Militară.
3. Chelcea, Septimiu. (2003). Comportament prosocial. În Septimiu Chelcea și Petru Iluț (coord.) *Enciclopedie de psihosociologie* (pp. 86-87). București: Editura Economică.
4. Crick, Bernard. (2004). Citizenship and Volunteering. În Philip Collins and Moussa Haddad (editori). *Giving Something Back: Business, volunteering and healthy communities* (pp. 40-43). Londra: Social Market Foundation.
5. Dodescu, Anca și Hatos, Adrian. (coord.). (2004). *Cum se învață cetățenia activă în România? Rezultate de cercetare și recomandări de politici*. Oradea: Editura Universității din Oradea.
6. Righman, Cristina. (2008). *Volunteers in Romania: A Profile*. Cluj-Napoca: Centrul pentru Studiul Democrației
7. Sandu, Dumitru. (2005). *Dezvoltare comunitară. Cercetare, practică, ideologie*. Iași: Editura Polirom.
8. Saulean, Daniel și Epure, Carmen. (1998). Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Romania. În Lester M. Salamon și Helmut K. Anheier (editori). *Working Papers of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project*, nr. 32. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies.
9. Saulean, Daniel. (1999). Sursele sociale ale vieții asociative și filantropiei în contextul tranziției. www.fdsc.ro/documente/22.pdf
10. United Nations Volunteers. (2004). *Enhancing Business-Community Relations. The Role of Volunteers in Promoting Global Corporate Citizenship. Global Report*. Bonn: United Nations Volunteers.
11. Vander Zanden, James W. [1977] (1987). Altruism and helping behavior. În James W. Vander Zanden. *Social Psychology* (pp. 297-327). New York: Random House.
12. Voicu, Bogdan. (2005). Voluntariatul. În *Penuria pseudo-modernă a postcomunismului românesc. Volumul I. Schimbarea socială și acțiunile indivizilor* (pp. 121-136). Iași: Editura Expert Projects.