Volunteering Advantages and Difficulties in Romania

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Abstract: Besides highlighting the reasons for volunteering, its advantages and difficulties, from the previous studies and from the Romanian legislative framework, we tried to understand, through a qualitative study based on a focus group with volunteers, what their perspective is about benefits, reasons, and obstacles involved in carrying out volunteering activities and what opportunities for improvement they see in order to increase involvement of young people in these activities. The results show that most often, personal values are the motivational leverage for volunteering and that the projection of dysfunctions and hindrance are largely oriented towards host organizations for volunteers who are not prepared to value and organize this human resource. At the same time, our research provides us with a lever towards the necessary and desirable change, in order to increase volunteers' motivation and keep them involved.

Keywords: *volunteering, motivation, host organization, difficulties, solutions.*

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1. The premises of the study

Overseeing the necessity to develop the private space in the field of social services, in addition to the government one, and the impediments of economic and legislative mechanisms regarding the possibility to obtain financial resources that ensure the sustainability of organizations, we tried to analyse the premises to which free human resources, based on volunteering, are used in Romania, which are the fulcrums that mobilize them and the consequences of mobilizing them. Also, using research results, we would like to offer solutions to improve social services that involve volunteer work.

To serve this purpose, we reviewed the specialty literature on the motivation of people to engage in voluntary activities, the characteristics of these people, and the resulting benefits.

Going forward, using the data of a broader and longitudinal research, representative at a national level, we have tried to find out the level of involvement of young Romanians in volunteer activities.

Later on, through an exploratory research, based on the focus group method, we tried to find out what are the mechanisms that would motivate young people to engage in volunteering, the benefits they see in doing that, the difficulties they faced and their dissatisfaction as well, as finding the possible solutions which could be the basis for increasing the involvement of young people in volunteering activities and improving the Romanian private system offering social services through volunteering.

2. Legislative framework

The recognition of the social value of volunteering, in general, and of that in the social environment, in particular, is more prominent in Romania after the regulation of the legal framework concerning this activity. Since 2014, with the emergence of the Volunteering Law (Law no. 78/2014), the premises of professional hiring volunteers in the organizational activities, on the basis of a contract, have been created. According to this law, volunteering is seen as activities carried out by individuals *for the benefit of other persons or of the society, organized by non-profit making legal entities governed by public or private law (art.1)*.

In Romania, with the emergence of the Volunteering Law, the professional experience acquired through volunteering, being an educational and moral benefit for the volunteer, is not only recognized symbolically, but also on the labour market, provided that the activity carried out is in line with the field of education (article 10, paragraph 2). The law regulates the

procedure of involving volunteers in the activities of the organizations, the latter having to announce their willingness to work with volunteers (Law no. 78/2014, article 9), to wait for the volunteer to submit the application, to offer basic training for volunteers with regard to the specifics of the organization and the conditions of the collaboration, and finally to issue a voluntary certificate based on a contract previously concluded along with the voluntary record (specifying the activities carried out) and the protection sheet (regulating the committed procedures). Specifically, the law also obliges the organization that receives volunteers to reimburse expenses related to volunteer activities (meal, accommodation, transport). All these advantages have come as a motivational factor for people who want to be volunteers.

The stated intention of the Volunteering Law, if we look at the situation at a general level, was to support social solidarity and the development of the labour market. But, as far as the volunteer is concerned, the intention of the law was to increase education and training opportunities in a practical framework.

3. Theoretical framework

Beyond the **motivational** framework offered by the law, it is important to see what motivational levers are that make people involve in volunteer activities.

In the bibliography we also find more extensive points of view (Newton, Becker, & Bell, 2014), in which the volunteer is seen as the person who offers his/her time, services and skills without expecting anything in exchange, neither symbolically, nor financially. In order to be considered volunteering, any action must meet four conditions: to be a free decision of the person (Chaddha & Rai, 2016), not to aim for rewards, to be for the benefit of others (organization, community, group of people) and developed in an organized framework.

Volunteering was sometimes considered (Andronic, 2014) as an implicitly altruistic action based on a prosocial behaviour. From this perspective, the primary goal of involving in volunteer activities would be community development, bringing multiple benefits for the community, as well as for the volunteer, such as well-being, increasing tolerance, local changes.

A form of classifying the motivational factors (Herzberg, 1966, as cited in Chaddha & Rai, 2016) was to divide them into: extrinsic (having their source in the environment) and intrinsic motivations (with an internal

determination, based on the wishes of the person). The link between the type of motivation and the person's involvement is that intrinsic factors have a positive and long-term effect upon volunteering involvement; while extrinsic factors often have a short-term and immediate effect. Still, it is important to keep in mind both of the motivation sources, so that the absence of one does not cause demotivation and abandonment of the commitment.

Another division was made between altruistic and selfish reasons, depending on the feelings committed and the pursuit of rewards from the initiated activities.

Finkelstein (2010) remarks among the most frequent reasons, especially at young people, the need to live new life experiences, the desire to be part of collective activities, the need to be together with those in their own generation with whom they share the same values. In the opinion of other authors (Stankiewicz, Bortnowska, & Seiler, 2016), the altruistic and instrumental reasons are those that determine people's involvement in volunteering, including the opportunity to develop professional skills, with major benefits for building a route in life for those at the moment of professional debut.

Taking Clary's perspective over and assessing the extent to which motivational sources are to be found in volunteers, Allison, Okun, and Dutridge (2002) has shown that the most important is the *value*, i.e. the concern for the well-being of others from a humanitarian spirit, present as a main reason for volunteer involvement, in a 84% proportion. Another motivational source is *comprehension*, seen as the opportunity to learn new abilities, knowledge, skills. The other four motivating sources generating volunteer involvement are: the opportunity to develop a career or join a job, spending time favourably with other friends, or involving in a socially well-seen activity (a motivation more significant for the elderly), reducing the negative feelings caused by personal problems, and personal growth through self-esteem enhancement and personal development.

To these motivational sources Chaddha and Rai (2016) add recognition, as the satisfaction of having contributed to the well-being of others, and reciprocity, implying the feeling that God will reward them for the good they did.

In a qualitative research conducted with volunteer students in social services, Bacter and Marc (2016) assessed both the motivation of persons and the benefits of volunteering they see, along with the difficulties encountered. They have shown that among young people intrinsic motivations dominate, such as altruism, personal / spiritual satisfactions,

and the need for social involvement. But other motivational factors can be found, such as professional development, experience gaining (especially since volunteering is recognized as work experience), the possibility to meet people with similar interests, building social relationships, a better social image, getting known in a professional guild.

Another important motivational source is the sharing of the same values by the volunteer and the host organization (Von Schie, Güntert, Ooslander, & Wehner, 2014). If this axiological congruence exists, then the volunteer can more easily identify himself with the environment in which he works and will feel the need to support the organization in achieving its goals, since its purposes become his.

Some people, although engaged in remunerated gainful activities, also involve in volunteer activities, because the degree of satisfaction from volunteering is higher than from paid activities (Orwing, 2011). This decision is often generated by the fact that people frequently feel the need for new challenges. Overall, the degree of satisfaction is related to the degree of knowledge and acceptance of the organization's mission, as well as to the extent to which they can observe the results of their activities and benefit from continuous training.

Among the main sources of motivation for volunteers to remain in an organization they were active in (Newton et al, 2014) are: providing support, the presence of a social networking, the lack of repetition of tasks and their clarity, and the presence of training methods. To these, recognition of persons can be added.

Knowing the motivation behind people's involvement in volunteering is valuable both for managers of organizations working with volunteers to attract and motivate them as a human resource, as well as for volunteers. But, as it can be seen in studies (Rodell & Lynch, 2016), volunteering is not always well seen at societal level. We meet both positive and negative attitudes of colleagues towards employed volunteers. Positive or negative attitudinal direction is given by the motivation behind the involvement in volunteering. If the volunteer's work colleagues assign an intrinsic motivation to the person's act, then they will develop an appreciative attitude towards that person. However, if the motivation of volunteering is thought to be the desire to create a good impression around, an attitude of stigmatization and rejection of the person will appear.

Beyond the reasons for their involvement, most often the **benefits** of volunteers are: the possibility of knowing and working with specialists, mentality change, increase of self-esteem and self-confidence, increase of the degree of realism by understanding existing social issues and knowing their

own ability to engage in solving them, and development of communication and networking skills.

The benefits of volunteering should not only be seen from the perspective of volunteers, but especially from the perspective of the organization and of the community, users of volunteer services. The economic and practical value of the investment is undoubtedly a major asset, alongside developing the spirit of communion and cohesion among members, as well as an increased moral value and social responsibility.

4. Volunteering in Romania

A survey conducted by the Centre for Marketing and Social Prognosis (CMPS, 2013) in Romania on a national sample of 830 randomly selected people, aged 15 years and over, shows that only 14% of the studied population participated in volunteering actions during the last year. Compared to the United States, whose volunteer participation rate is 24.9%, in Romania a relatively low participation of the population in volunteer activities can be seen prior to the emergence of the Volunteering Law.

Age share of the population shows that students (29%) are the most involved in such activities, followed by people over 80 (22%) and those aged between 18 and 24 (18%). In educational categories, people with higher education (19%) are the most present among volunteers. The gender breakdown shows that men are more involved in volunteer activities (61%).

The factors that block the involvement in volunteer activities, according to the above-mentioned study, are the lack of information (34%) and time (34%). The most common types of organizations involving volunteers are those for social services (25%), followed by environmental (18), educational (13%) and health (11%) ones. This can be related to the factor that plays a major role in volunteering involvement, namely the value (Allison, Okun, & Dutridge, 2002), i.e. the desire to help others and to increase the well-being of the underprivileged population.

This also results from the statistical data (CMPS, 2013), which shows that the most widespread motivation factors of volunteers in Romania are: the desire to help (40%), the need for new professional experience (15%), the desire to socialize (14%), and personal experience (10%).

If we refer exclusively to young people aged between 15 and 25, in a survey conducted by the Oricum Association & British Council (2006) on a randomly selected sample of 99 subjects, it is shown that 57.7% of them did volunteer work, predominantly the age group of 20-25 years. For them, the main reason for engaging in volunteer activities was the *development of personal*

skills, followed by the *desire to help their peers* and the *opportunity to meet other interesting people*. The most frequent volunteering actions that young people were involved in were those who targeted humanitarian actions in social services.

Thus, as Bacter and Marc (2016) have shown, for young people the desire for professional achievement and intrinsic motives prevail.

Using the data from the national project “Outcomes of adolescence. A longitudinal perspective on the effect of social context on successful life transitions” (project PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0543, financed by National Council of Scientific Research) we distinguished the percentage in which young people from Romania are willing to involve in volunteer activities and the relationship between the characteristics of young people and their degree of involvement in volunteering.

The **first and second wave** of the *Outcome of Adolescence Survey*, based on an **on-line, self-administered questionnaire** were applied to a sample of 3509 Romanian students on their XIIth grade, who completed the first wave of the OAQ during 2012-2013, and 1509 Romanian young people, who completed the second wave of the OAQ two years after (<http://www.viitoradult.ro>).

Table 1 presents the structure of the studied population by gender, background and family material condition in the two waves of research.

Table 1. Structure of the studied population
(Project PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0543)

Comparison between the 2012-2013 and the 2014-2015 Sample		I st Wave 2012- 2013 (no)	I st Wave %	II nd Wave 2014-2015 (no [*])	II nd Wave %	Percentages II nd Wave/ I st Wave (% ^{**})
Gender	Girls	2043	58.2	891 (-1152)	59	43.6
	Boys	1466	41.8	618 (-848)	41	42.1
The High School in the environment	Urban	2962	85.7	1389 (-1573)	92.4	46.8
	Rural	493	14.3	114 (-379)	7.6	23.1
Family deprived material		610	19.5	236 (-374)	16.6	38.6
Total		3509		1509		43

Characteristics of the sample as far as religion is concerned shows that 79% of these are Orthodox; 7.9% Roman (Greek)-Catholic; 6.5% (Neo)-protestant; 2.4% No religion, atheist; 4.2% Other situation. Assessing the importance of religion in everyday life, it was observed that the

distribution of responses was: at all - 8.2%; very low & low - 26.6%; much & very much - 65.2%.

Being questioned about their involvement in volunteer actions in the community 35.1% (1140) responded in the affirmative, and 64.9% (2105) responded negatively.

Analyzing the correlation between the degree of involvement in volunteer actions and religiosity, it was observed (Table 2) that there is a significant correlation ($p < 0.01$), the degree of religiosity being closely related to the degree of involvement in volunteer actions. It can be understood that more religious people are also the most motivated to engage in volunteer activities.

Table 2. Correlation between religiosity and the degree of involvement in volunteer actions

	Volunteer actions in the community		Significance
Importance of religion	No (%)	Yes (%)	chi ² =23.93 2, p<.001
At all	9.1	6.5	
Very low & low	28.7	22.8	
much & very much	62.2	70.7	
Total	100	100	

These results were similar to those described by Okun, O'Rourke, Keller, Johnson, and Enders (2014), who states that both religiosity and spirituality are good predictors of significant value for motivating volunteers and their involvement ($p < 0.01$).

5. Qualitative study

In order to better understand the experience of volunteers, both as engagement and trigger (motivational) factors, and from the perspective of the consequences (advantages and difficulties), we conducted a focus group in 2017 with a group of 7 students from the Department of Social Assistance at UBB Cluj, all of whom having volunteer experience before and after starting university courses. The subjects were selected on the basis of their volunteer experience.

The research questions that guided our study were: *What triggers and supports / prevents young people from engagement in*

volunteering? and ***What are the results of the volunteering experience, both positive and negative?*** We also tried to find out how volunteers see opportunities to improve the quality of volunteering in Romania.

For most participants, choosing to engage in volunteer programs was their own decision, subsequently sustained or obstructed by their own entourage: mother, friends, teachers, sister, colleagues, etc. The promptings behind this decision were:

- *to feel useful*
- *out of pity for those in difficulty*
- *from a desire to help others*
- *to test their own abilities and skills*
- *as a basis for further career development*
- *from a desire of not being alone*
- *of the need to extend their own social network*
- *in order to do something different from the others*
- *for personal development*

These motivational factors are also found in the specialized bibliography of most authors (Andronic, 2014; Chaddha & Rai, 2016; Stankiewicz et al., 2016). It is noticeable that both intrinsic and extrinsic motives are present, as well as altruist and selfish ones.

However, triggering factors may diminish or be diminished in the process by the emergence of certain disruptive factors that affect the motivation and commitment of young people in volunteer activities in a negative way. Demotivation factors have been especially extrinsic, due to the organizational environment, which has led to a sense of time and energy loss in a non-constructive way.

Among the difficulties reported by the subjects that led to their demotivation, were:

- the lack of a coordinator – “The lack of organization of the ones who were dealing with us”, “There is no paid and trained coordinator for coordinating volunteers”
- the lack of an activity schedule – “The lack of responsibility towards the volunteers”
- travelling to the organization – “The problems of transportation to the practice place, inflicting my participating in activities for a longer time than I had”
- the commitment of personal financial resources – “They asked me to move around on my money and I did not always have resources”

- the lack of valorisation - "They didn't use us, and made us go in vain", "Our enthusiasm was not valued"
- the lack of training - "The lack of a proper training of the volunteers before their implication in the activities"
- the lack of feedback - "There is no final evaluation of the volunteering activity nor feedback"

One important point noted by the focus group participants was the existence of a link between volunteering and choosing the profession. By experiencing work with certain categories of beneficiaries, organizational environments, and types of activities, they were able to discover the activities for which they had skills, resources, and willingness to get employed, and for which they did not have, so for some of them this was a defining feature in choosing the profession.

I wanted to study Journalism and do a career in journalism. So, in the first year of study, I started volunteering and found the work different from what I had imagined. At the end of the first year, due to volunteering, I dropped out of college, being disappointed by the system and the profession, and started volunteering for children in an NGO. It fascinated me so much that I looked for the profession that was closest to what I did in the framework of volunteering. So I discovered the Social Work that I follow now and which did not disappoint me, because I knew what it meant. (Social Work student, third year, 24 years old)

Other consequences of engaging in voluntary activities mentioned by subjects, both with positive and negative effects on them, were:

- recognition of experience as professional experience,
- greater employability,
- a good source of self-knowledge,
- an additional source of stress,
- growing up,
- formation of time management and resource valorisation skills,
- experiencing the sense of utility,
- theory makes sense through practical experience.

Starting from the positive and negative experiences they had during their involvement in volunteering actions, the students outlined some solutions they consider useful for improving the way to deploy and integrate volunteering in organizational and community activities in Romania:

- *the presence of a coordinator,*
- *giving training prior to engaging in more consistent work,*
- *teaching how to deal with special situations,*
- *assessing our resources and adapting activities to the needs and knowledge of volunteers,*
- *a permanent program and monitoring of activities,*
- *feedback should be provided, especially in situations of failure,*
- *training the staff to have a supportive attitude and acceptance of volunteers,*
- *offering freedom of initiative and involvement,*
- *reimbursement of expenses required by the activity performed,*
- *offering symbolic rewards: thanks, diplomas, appreciation, use of resources in the future.*

Part of the students said it would be very important to introduce volunteering in high schools as a subject of study, both theoretical and practical, this allowing young people to choose the volunteering field in the professional direction subsequently pursued. This change would be a source of support for students' professional orientation and an approximation of the theoretical and practical fields, of the academic world and the labour market:

"I would introduce volunteering in high schools as mandatory in the professional field one wants to choose, so that he can figure out if he likes and wants to follow that path. If he doesn't like children, then he will not become a teacher." (Social Work student, third year, 26 years old)

Previously, also Cuskelly et al. (2006, as cited in Newton et al., 2014) noted that the planning and practical orientation of volunteer activities are significantly associated with the issue of keeping them in the organization.

Also, Bacter and Marc (2016), conducting a qualitative research with 12 volunteers, noted that the difficulties observed by volunteers in their activities were: the development of attachment relationships between beneficiaries and volunteers, which can lead to addiction; overloading, volunteers tending to involve in relationships in an unprofessional way, due to the lack of training and supervision; over-accountability and task loading by the coordinator; lack of seriousness on the part of the organization by failing to meet the deadlines and conditions of deployment.

6. Directions of change

Based on the previously reported data on the situation of volunteering in Romania, both at a general-statistical level, where we can observe a poor representation of this activity, and at a concrete-personal level, where we can see a number of dissatisfactions and difficulties mainly due to the lack of training of organizations for volunteer involvement, we noticed the urge for some changes in policies and procedures for working with volunteers in Romanian organizations.

Often, the main motivational factors that determine people's orientation towards volunteering are intrinsic, but maintaining them in the work of organizations depends largely on a series of extrinsic factors that target the organizational environment. Therefore, the increase of the volunteer rate in Romania should be based on the creation of an organizational system that understands and employs the factors that keep it on the labour market.

To this end, we propose a model for the integration and coordination of volunteers in the Romanian organizational environment (Figure 1). This model includes 12 factors to maintain and streamline volunteer work in an organization.

Figure 1. Solutions for more effective volunteering in Romania

1. Volunteers are not a handy and inexhaustible resource, but a resource that needs to be searched and placed in the **right** place, in order to streamline its involvement and maintain it as much as possible on the labour market.

Therefore, at first there must be a selection of volunteers in recruitment centres so that placement is not based on chance, but on a

process of matching, of synchronizing the **values** of volunteers with those of organizations. As Finkelstein (2010) remarked, the organization and volunteers need to share the same values in order to increase their degree of cohesion and maintain the level of motivation as high as possible.

2. Unrealistic or non-achievable **expectations and desires** in a particular social context will bring about the disappointment of the person and, implicitly, the withdrawal. That's why it's important to know them from the beginning and tailor them to the real possibilities of the moment. This reduces both volunteer's internal tensions and between volunteers and the host organization.

3. The presence of tensions between volunteers and employees is a known and identified issue in several countries and organizational environments (Bittschi, Pennerstorfer, & Schneider, 2015; Overgaard, 2014). Most often, volunteers are perceived by employees as a threat to the safety of their job or their responsibilities, which can be taken over by volunteers. The tension is higher in organizations where the level of competition is higher (Bittschi et al., 2015).

Reducing these tensions can be done by **prior training of employees** on the role and tasks of volunteers, their motivation, as well as the perspectives for the evolution of volunteer activation in the organization and the benefits they bring to and for the organization. Also, the organizational environment, including equipment, space arrangement, resource supplementation, needs to be adapted to receive volunteers.

4. **The preparation of volunteers** must include (Pro Vobis, 2003) the notification of the specifics of the organizational environment, the mission, the purpose, the tasks, the required deadlines, the expected results, the working procedures and the local customs.

Also, the preparation can not be done without prior knowledge of volunteers, as well as without giving feedback on their own optics on the volunteer route. In order to prepare the volunteers, we will consider both maintaining the group and developing the membership in the organization.

5. If the process of correlating volunteer **tasks and resources** is not done in a careful and correct manner, there will be a risk of overloading volunteers (Bacter & Marc, 2016) or the induction of feelings of futility and devaluation. It is important for the tasks to be established with the volunteers in order to have their agreement and responsible commitment, and to create more clarity. It is useful to avoid the repetitiveness of the tasks (Newton et al., 2014) so that boredom and, implicitly, demotivation will not show. People, especially those already employed, involve in volunteering because they are looking for new challenges (Orwing, 2011). They will find

them in the organizational environment most likely, given the diversity of tasks assigned to them.

6. The volunteer **program** should be prepared with volunteers and in accordance with their availability of time, so as to aim to their being aware of the route they have to go, to increasing their responsibility for a better and coherent commitment, as well as to the use of time in such a way that volunteers feel they have offered maximum of services with minimum resources.

7. Newton, Becker, and Bell (2014) encourages the organization to offer volunteers **opportunities for learning** and development, which is often the reason why young people want to involve in volunteering. New acquisitions will prove to volunteers themselves that experience is a mutual gain, not only for the organization / community, but also for them. On the other hand, the efficiency of their work also depends on their level of training. As the latter grows, the quality of the programs in which they were involved is indirectly increasing.

8. Studying the impact of organizational environment on volunteers and their motivation, Von Schie, Güntert, Ooslander, and Wehner (2014) concludes that the degree of **autonomy** is in direct correlation with motivation. This means that if volunteers experiment autonomy (by making decisions on their own, independently), variety (through diversity of tasks), identification (by engaging in tasks throughout their deployment), meaning (by understanding the importance of their work) and feedback (by receiving information about their achievements), then they will be more motivated to remain in activity, to increase their dedication and commitment, ultimately creating a long-term binder between the organization and the volunteer.

9. Chaddha and Rai (2016) argue that continuous support for volunteers, no matter what the beginning reasons are, will bring about an increase in their efficiency in activities. This support can be provided in the form of **supervision**, including support for activities, emotional support, identification of limits and adaptation of tasks to the latter, etc.

Schie et al. (2014) recommends giving importance to the volunteer supervisor delegated by the organization, who should support volunteers in choices they make in accordance with the organization's functionality. Their key role is to transform the organization's needs into self-determination actions of volunteers, maintaining both the organization's functionality and the high level of motivation of volunteers. Supervisors will monitor the work of volunteers and will be able to intervene when the volunteer does not properly adapt his actions to the situations he faces. This way, the quality of their work increases and the process of continuous training is emphasized.

10. Continuous training implies the organization's creation of development opportunities for volunteers, in accordance with their deficiencies and the need for knowledge and skills that the organization requires. Continuous training results in increased volunteer training level and, implicitly, in quality of their work. In these situations, the great risk for organizations is the possibility that volunteers withdraw from activity at any time and the investment in their training remains without results.

11. Offering feedback at the end and throughout the deployment of activities implies clarification, avoiding the wrong route, improving of skills. Feedback can often be a form of reward for volunteers, if this includes the presentation of results and value of the actions carried out.

12. In the absence of financial rewards, not allowed by the quality of volunteering of the work, it is useful to hire symbolic rewards and reimbursement of expenses related to the activities carried out (Pro Vobis, 2003). For symbolic rewards materialized in appreciations, praises, diplomas, positive remarks, highlighting results in front of others, etc., most often the organization's engagement effort is minimal, but the level of motivation and satisfaction is high.

This multi-factorial model of responsible involvement of volunteers in organizations is based on the requirements of the law obliging organizations to announce their intention to work with volunteers and to go through a process of preparing its internal environment for this purpose. Each step implies increasing the motivation of volunteers, having as a final target a responsible and long-term engagement of volunteers in organizations, with remarkable benefits and satisfactions for both sides.

7. Conclusions

Volunteering in Romania, although more clearly regulated by legislation since 2014, is still quite limited as spreading.

We can understand the motivation of people involving in volunteer actions on the basis of a multi-factorial model that includes varied and multiple (not singular) motivations, but it is important to also think about factors that make it easier to keep people in volunteering actions on long-term.

Most of the benefits invoked by the studied population certify the opportunity for personal and professional development as a result of engaging in volunteer activities, but from the perspective of the community and the organizations that benefit from volunteering, the increase of social

cohesion, wellbeing of certain categories and economic efficiency are observed.

From the data of the quantitative and qualitative researches carried out, it is clear that religiosity is closely related to the involvement of people in volunteer activities, while the difficulties experienced by volunteers in their actions were mainly due to lack of preparation of host organizations for receiving, integrating and organizing work with volunteers.

The results of the research are relevant for the Romanian private entities that aim to involve volunteers in their activities. The reasons for involving volunteers in activities seem to be the same as those we find in international specialized literature.

Significant differences and the specificity of volunteering in Romania can be found in the difficulties faced by volunteers, difficulties that take in consideration the way volunteering is valued and the procedures for their involvement in the work of organizations.

Taking into account both the multiple advantages of volunteering and the dysfunctional organizational structures present in Romania, it is important that organizations follow a program of work with volunteers to streamline work and achieve a maximum of benefits, for both the organization and the volunteer.

We believe that the program we have proposed has major national relevance, but its take-up by international organizations would require the adapting to the cultural and procedural needs specifics to each organization.

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