

## ABSTRACT

Volunteering as a form of help, has existed in the social arena for centuries. First in the form of philanthropy and charity, shaped into a civil society, finally accepting the present form - voluntary, free action for people outside the circle of family, friends and acquaintances. In this sense, it does not take into account the opportunities that are presented, and which may be important in developing their professional competence. Particularly important may be in relation to young people graduating from higher education. Analysis of their situation on the labor market proves that they have difficulties in taking up employment. It is the effect of having above all education, with simultaneous experience and professional skills. Observing this state of affairs, based on my own experience and literature query, I decided to undertake a research project which I present in my doctoral dissertation. Its purpose is to explore, describe and explain the role of volunteering in gaining professional competence. The conducted research led to the recognition of volunteering as an arena of professional competence of social science students, to create a description of facts related to the voluntary activities of social science students in the context of developing their professional competences and to explain the role of volunteering of social sciences students in shaping professional competences.

The literature query allowed to verify the state of research on competences gained in volunteering. On this basis, professional competences at work are treated as preparation for the use of knowledge, abilities and social, personal and methodological skills in work and career development. I consider knowledge, skills and attitudes to be components of professional competence, because, in my opinion, they are acquired in the course of volunteering activities. Thus, I am guided by the idea that volunteering has ceased to be only a form of help, and has become an arena for achieving individual goals of volunteers - aimed at gaining experience, professional skills, but also a useful development of free time. This approach makes the position of Lech Witkowski, who recalls the treatment of volunteering in terms of voluntarism and Mirosław Górecki, who in the context of changes in social activity, suggest a change the existing definition of volunteering that I can relate to.

I based the theoretical argument concerning professional competence on the detailed studies of Joanna Aksman and Stefan Nieciński, but also Maria Czerepaniak-Walczak or Kazimierz Denek and Ewa Kantowicz. The comparison of qualifications and competences is based on the position of the European Union. Description of volunteering is the analysis of texts, i.a. - Anna Kanios, Barbara Kromolicka and Mirosław Górecki. I analyze the motivations of volunteers based on research conducted by Andrzej Olubiński, Zbigniew Tokarski. On the

other hand, volunteering as a social activity I analyzed on the basis of pedagogues' texts - Helena Radlińska and Stanisław Kawula - and a sociologist - Max Weber.

The idea behind my work is that students consciously decide to volunteer in order to gain the necessary competences and then find a job easier. On the other hand, I was interested in the perspective of employers who, according to my assumptions, were more willing to employ former volunteers, due to the competences they had just acquired in the voluntary service. I placed such thinking in the theory of rational action of Max Weber, who argued that every human action originates in specific motivations: goal-oriented, values, present emotional state and habits. Similarly, the volunteer's activity may be targeted due to a specific goal, in my opinion it is often selfish.

Selected theory of action, as well as the purpose of the research determined the embedding of the concept in the quantitative strategy, which in turn resulted in research and analysis methods consistent with its assumptions. In the research work I used the diagnostic survey method. In the form of a questionnaire, I collected research material from a student sample, who allowed me to solve two research problems: 1. What role does volunteering play in the life of students?; 2. What role does volunteering play in shaping the competence of professional social sciences? The second technique used during the research is an interview conducted among employers. He helped to answer the third research problem: What role does volunteering play in gaining employment by graduates of social sciences?

The dissertation has a classic structure: it is divided into a theoretical, methodological and empirical part. The first part - the theoretical one - concerns two categories that connect in my opinion. First, I present the analysis of literature on professional competence. In this chapter I characterize the concept of competences, also in terms of social sciences. The descriptions primarily concern the attempt to determine the most appropriate definition for the needs of my research project. In these categories I also follow the distinction between qualifications and competences, and then discover the spaces in which the university and the organization are shaped. At the end of the first chapter, based on statistical data provided by labor market institutions, but also research of scientists, I describe the situation of young people.

The second chapter is a comprehensive description of volunteering, including its historical outline, legislative foundations of volunteer activities, as well as definitional arrangements that have existed so far in the literature. This part also includes considerations on the role of volunteering in society and in the life of the volunteer, as well as motivations in the light of research. Searching for sources on this subject allowed attention to the repeated omission of volunteering as a space for professional and personal development. The last

subsection of the theoretical part is an attempt to organize knowledge about social action in the light of pedagogical and sociological theories.

The second part - methodological - is a description of set research goals, problems, hypotheses and indicators for research. This is where the search for the right method was found and, at the same time, the research techniques, which eventually allowed the choice of the diagnostic survey method using the questionnaire and the interview. Here, too, there is a description of the research area and the characteristics of the research trials. A detailed description of the data analysis, as well as the subsequent stages and activities that make up the organization of the research, I express my concern for openness and transparency of my project. In the last part - empirical - in accordance with the adopted quantitative strategy, I make a statistical analysis of the collected data. On its basis, in conclusion, I summarize the entire research project and draw conclusions.

The presented work is the result of many years of plans, searches, investigations and efforts to contribute to the current achievements of science. Research results show that volunteering plays a role in employing volunteers by potential employers of social sciences graduates. At the same time, research shows that students of social sciences are aware that volunteering can contribute to their personal and professional development, but they do not work only because of it.