



Pedagogical Aspects of Voluntary School Work

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Abstract: *The economic importance of voluntary work has been exceedingly appreciated in the last few decades. This is not surprising at all, because it is highly profitable according to the related estimated data. There are 115,9 million people doing voluntary work only in Europe, which means that they would create the world`s 7th biggest economy with EUR 282 billion value creation if they formed an individual state. The organizations know that voluntary work has several advantages apart from the economic benefits. It is profitable both for the society and for the individuals as well. Several researches have proven that voluntary work positively influences the development of the personality, because the key-competencies – such as: co-operation, empathy, solidarity, conflict handling, problem solving, etc. – expected in the labor market can be improved.*

Keywords: voluntary work, adult education, higher education, informal learning

In Hungary mainly the elder people have done voluntary work in the past 20 years. Adults who were students before the change of the political system, they often accomplished voluntary work for instance in agriculture. These people remember its nice, community forming environment rather than the straining work. Big multinational companies organize trainings with voluntary work as well, and they use it as the tool of developing the organizational culture with the aim of team building and personal improvements.

Several experts have acknowledged the positive effects of voluntary work and they try to create a new point of view in case of the new generation also with the help of legislation. From 2016 only those students can receive their high school graduation certificates, who participate in 50 hours of „community service” as voluntary work.

The current essay introduces the results of a two sampling primer research and its analysis from pedagogical aspects. The method of the research was questionnaires made completed by high school and college students in May-June 2013 in County Zala in Hungary.

The aim of the research was to find out what the youth think about voluntary work and „community service”. The results also show if there is any difference between the thoughts, motivation of the high school students and of the college students, and also what kind of experience was gained by those who have performed voluntary work.

Paradigm shift – Competence development

The opportunities of pedagogics have widely expanded nowadays. The non-formal or informal learning offers what the education is not able to provide within the frame of formal learning. The winner in any event is the individual, the student, the future employee and all in all the economy, the society. The approach of life-long learning has led to inter alia that adults go to school in their older age and they learn in the formal way or participate in trainings and courses. The negative feedbacks from the labour market aiming at the education have resulted in that getting work experience during school is even more important. The changes in the public education and vocational training are hopefully driving to the above.

The reorientation of the education which was probably motivated by the requirements of the labour market was directed by the European Union`s education policy aiming at not only the institutional rearing, but the *competence development as core task of life-long learning*¹. The European Parliament accepted a framework in 2006, which determines competences as the combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes sufficient to the context. The Recommendation² lists key competencies³, which lay the foundations for personal development, active citizenship, social integration and employment. (Säävälä, 2011:28-29) According to the “DeSeCo”⁴ Recommendation elaborated in the frame of OECD-project built into the European competence-system, the followings are essential for the successful individual life and for the well-operating society:

¹ See: Prologue of The competences of the European citizen (book: Az Európai polgár kompetenciái)

² Recommendation 2006/962/EC (OJ L394, 30.12.2006)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html#basic and
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/II-learning/keycomp_en.pdf

³ The 8 key competencies are: (1) communication in the native language, (2) communication in foreign language, (3) mathematical, scientific and technological competences, (4) digital competence, (5) effective and individual learning (6) social and civic competences, (7) initiative and entrepreneur competence, (8) cultural and expressive competences.

⁴ The Definition and Selection of key competences. Executive Summary (2005)
www.deseco.admin.ch

- ✓ tools such as language, symbols, interactive usage of technology;
- ✓ interaction in heterogenic groups, which means among others respecting diversity, teamwork and conflict handling;
- ✓ ability for autonomous actions such as personal fulfilment, creating goals, exercise of the rights, taking responsibility etc. (Van Woensel, 2011:13)

The European framework precisely describes the 8 competence contents, the related knowledge, skills and attitudes. The Member States detail the competence system further during their implementation and incorporate into their school curriculums. The Member States create different emphasis, but 3 big competence-groups can be recognized everywhere: the intention of the development of the *cognitive*, the *personal* and the *social* competences. The knowledge of subject modules are completed with unique skills related to the subjects, and the teachers are responsible for developing the key competencies of the students within the entire context of school life.

The thinking and problem solving ability, creativity, self-determination, taking responsibility, self-awareness, ability to initiate, co-operation skills, tolerance etc. are all that kind of expectations, which can be improved across and within the frame of the subject modules with different focuses. The so-called classic school and its old methodology has been used for decades can hardly meet the growing new requirements, therefore every non-formal and informal learning situation is useful for the youth, where they can improve their key competencies. Activities outside of the classroom such as excursions, functions, camps, sightseeing etc. all help students to widen their experiences, to learn and to socialize.

Before the regime change, pupils and students had to participate in agricultural work for a week in autumn (picking plums, carrots, grape harvest etc.). Secondary school students had to work in so-called building camps for two weeks during the four years. We are strongly convinced that the old students have more nice memories and positive experiences than “political views” from those days. Experiencing the physical skills, teamwork, fulfilling their duties in these events was different from school experiences, a new knowledge, which meant other views with the classmates and teachers. This was also learning, *experience learning*, personal development, however it was not called as competence development at that time.

Expanding experience learning forms in the world of labour

Any kind of practical experience combining with working improves youth, because it comes with competence development. In the Western-European countries there are classic old schools with traditions, where students can get practical experience besides the theoretical knowledge. The dual education or Danish productive school model operates with the same concept successfully in 15 countries and now it is available in Hungary again.

The productive school has been existing in Hungary since the 90`s (Zalaegerszeg and Pécs). The education programme had been introduced in 4 administrative areas until 2004. These schools were built on the integration of personal development and vocational training. Already in the school, the students get to know the workflow of the vocation they chose, and they will know the all phases of the work by the time they finish the school and step on the labour market (Arapovics, 2011:92). The productive schools provide realistic circumstances of work for the participants and motivate them for learning and self-development. (...) Social competences (ability to co-operate, teamwork, loyalty, reliability, taking responsibility, preciseness etc.) are more important than professional competences, and they are more relevant expectations on the labour market, than the certificates justifying the formal qualification. (Radácsi-Benedekné, 2005:8-9)

Regarding foreign examples, in the 800 (approximately) institutions of the *French MFR (Maison Familiale Rurale) Network*, teachers work with a similar concept to the Danish productive school, helping with the education of socially disadvantaged students or youth with behavioral disorders, and providing agricultural labour supply to the countryside. There are 600-700 students learning in some of these schools. Theoretical and practical teachings are delivered on a fortnightly rotation. They call it that the period of thinking comes after acting. At the beginning of their studies they work out a professional plan including the goals and the exams. They educate professionals for more economical sectors, and in certain areas university master level can also be reached. They focus not only on acquiring the knowledge, but it is also a main goal to learn the rules of co-operations and maintaining work relationships. The particular importance of the MFRs is that they look after children from disadvantaged circumstances and provide opportunities for them to get back to the public education. Solidarity and respecting other cultures are also part of the civic education. All these are supported with work abroad organized within the frame of international relations. During their work abroad, students get to know the habits and customs of the given country; they learn other cultures and practice the language. Currently there are 506 institutions operating in Europe, 133 in Africa and 228 in South-America, apart from the French MFRs (Jármai, 2012).

Voluntary work is an accepted informal learning method abroad, but in Hungary the culture of volunteering has not yet been as widespread amongst the youth as in the other foreign countries. According to a Hungarian act (Act of CXC of 2012 on The National Public Education, 162nd edition of Magyar Közlöny, 29 December 2011) secondary school students in the 9th-11th class have to provide a so-called public service. This decision was followed by mixed views and feelings. Pursuant to this rule, secondary school students have to perform 50 hours of public service within 3 school years, otherwise they are not entitled to apply for the secondary school graduation exams. The reasoning of the act mentions inter alia as follows: "During the public service the students have the chance to learn new competencies and useful skills for the future job

search. This knowledge can be summarized and justified with a competence portfolio at a later job interview.”⁵

Public service is similar to voluntary work, because public service can be defined with 2 of voluntary work's 3 criteria: the work is done for the sake of others without any remuneration. The difference is the volunteering, but it is also a step towards the voluntary work. Why is it useful if we motivate the youth to perform voluntary work?

Public service offers all the advantages, which can be considered as positive benefits at voluntary work. Several practical experiences can be gained about the workflow of a given profession, the operation, the organizational culture and action techniques of an organization can be known too. We can also mention the professional relationships that can be built between the employees and/or supervisors, which strengthen the social capital and provides the opportunity for future job offers (Arapovics, 2011:93).

Pedagogical and social “benefits” of volunteering

From the 90's, when the number of volunteers increased and the voluntary work started spreading in Europe, the efforts to define this type of work began to strengthen as well. The goal was to create a universal definition, which applies to all voluntary acts, and also the volunteers and their organizations agree with it and accept it. A universal definition became important and necessary in order to socially and economically acknowledge the volunteering, and the continuous widening of the national and international voluntary organizational networks required the common criteria for volunteering as well. Regarding 3 fundamental criteria, all the international organizations (UN, EU) were agreed on a professional and scientific basis. The first criterion is that “voluntary work has to be performed first of all *without any compensation*, but the reimbursement of the expenditure or a symbolic payment can be allowed.” (Czike & Bartal, 2004:4) The second feature is that *voluntary activities are undertaken of a person's free will*, choice and motivation. The third criterion is that voluntary work *aims at the society's benefit and development*.⁶ According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), voluntary work means that “*certain activities or work is performed directly or through an organization without any compensation, voluntarily for others living outside of household or for the benefit of the entire society (for groups, animals or for the environment, etc.)*” (Váradi, 2012:3) Volunteering is a form of aid besides donations (cash or kind) and blood donation.

Volunteering is an important power of social capital; a *form of ethical coordination*⁷. Ethical coordination describes such equal relationships between social and economic operators, which are based on traditions,

⁵ <http://www.onkentes.hu/cikkek/iskolai-koezoessegi-szolgalat-klonja>. Downloaded: 18th May 2013

⁶ However it is well known that volunteering has benefits for the person who performs it as well.

⁷ See more: [Kornai J., 1983]

moral value judgment, and customs; for instance giving a gift for birthday or name day, donation etc. Ethical coordination has two types; one describes the one-sided relationship between the parties (I do not expect anything in return for my activity), the other one is built on reciprocity (I help you now, but I expect your help if I need it). Volunteering is a form of the one-sided ethical coordination; using a recently “trendy” phrase, voluntary work is a *form of thinking of individuals feeling responsible for the society*.

The relevance of social patterns in value interiorization is well known from scientific literature. Children create their values according to the experiences gaining from their direct environment. “Experiencing” is important to emphasize, because those parents also understand the necessity of reading books, who have never read them or been in theatre etc. But children learn from their parents and build their values according to what they see, not what parents talk about (Szabó É., 2006:46) There are of course other external effects as well, but first of all family plays the most important role in socialization.

If a parent performs voluntary work, it is an example for their children and helps their socialization and to be the active member of our community. According to the European framework, “*joining the community*” means as follows: “*The ability of co-existence, union, recognizing the importance of helping and looking after others and creating various social interactions*” (Van Woensel, 2011:13). The intention of social competence development set forth in school curriculums generally aims at achieving this.

This intention is getting stronger, because public educational institutions have to fulfil the social rearing tasks as well. The level of social function of families has been highly decreased in the past few years. (...) Experience opportunities have to be planned knowingly. The effect of guided or directional activities is shown in contacts, conflict-handling and in their social competencies (tolerance, empathy, co-operation etc.) of the students (Borosán, 2011:145). It is not the concrete duty of the school to organize the voluntary work, but it can provide opportunities for the students motivating them to activities of responsibility (for instance internal school work of individual topics, decorations, organizing functions, events etc.).

It is well known from interviews with creative people that their attention was drawn by one of their teachers giving more serious tasks to them after school. Sometimes this kind of coincidences, involving into the real life means the greatest forming efforts of schools. It can be read in a research study about American students that youth were completely isolated from work. (...) According to the social criticism of the research study, the recent society wants these students to be more consumers – consumers of abstract information, entertainment and useless products – and not to pay attention to be in active and relationship with the environment. It is essential for the youth to have the opportunity to experience the joy of creativity and useful activity with its responsibility before they involve in the world of the monotonous work (Roney & Wolf, 2011:310-312).

If school are able to focus on the group interests, then the practice of co-operation can also be completed. Students learn through co-operation how

to combine collective and individual goals, and they learn that they can achieve more with co-operation than with competing. Aronson's establishment is very thoughtful. He developed more methods for co-operation and proved how important it is to avoid aggression and exclusion in the school. It seems that the basis of the recent American culture is competition: winners are rewarded, losers are ignored. Our education system has been based on competition and on the rule of selection. Apart from a few exceptions, we teach our children to get good marks in school and to achieve high scores at the entrance exams to the universities instead of to love learning. (...) Our entire culture is struggling in the craziness of the willingness for winning (Aronson, 2008:261).

It is obvious that the education system preferring the extremely individual activities does not help the individuals with the community developing behavior, which is the condition of the constructive lifestyle. (Bábosik, 1999:16) Recently we call social competencies those behavioral forms, which enable us "to complete high level social functions and to perform social activity with determined quality", and the improvement of these were earlier listed by pedagogic literature as the duty of the moral education. We can mention as an example the value protective behavior as the protection of mental, cultural and environmental values of the community, such as willingness to help, creativity etc. (Bábosik, 1999) It can be seen that there are universal value carrier behavioral forms, which are essential (moral, social, economic, psychological etc.), because they serve the optimal human co-existence.

Even more market organizations recognize the educative effects and benefits of volunteering. Volunteering can be considered as a stop on the way to make employees creative and diverse; it improves the company's reputation and increases the morality of the work.⁸ The improvement of work ethic is followed by economic benefits that is how individual and collective interests are therefore combined and makes the society more valuable and richer.

It should be noted that volunteering is an activity useful for all age groups, but particularly for the youth. Voluntary work develops the social skills – detailed above – and highly improves the professional experiences. The relevance of public service is that it can be the first step towards the real work, which improves the worker more than the beneficiary. Why does a teenager need this "forced" experience?

Psychologists researching developmental psychology and career structure set up recently also valid theories amongst others about teenagers. D. E. Super developed the career stages, in which he analyzes the continuity of the processes of career exploration, career establishment and career maintenance through the entire life. *Exploratory stage* coincides with the 14-25 age range. The young person is experiencing the challenges at school, doing some work in their spare time and in the related roles. They begin to more clearly understand different occupations and see their reality. Self-testing, self-awareness is getting more relevant, the profession is determined by the experiences from the school and from the spare time for instance seasonal work during the holiday. Exploratory stage includes the *prying phase*, which is a kind of like dipping your toes

⁸ <http://www.onkentes.hu/cikkek/mi-az-az-oenkentesseg> Downloaded: 10th of May 2013

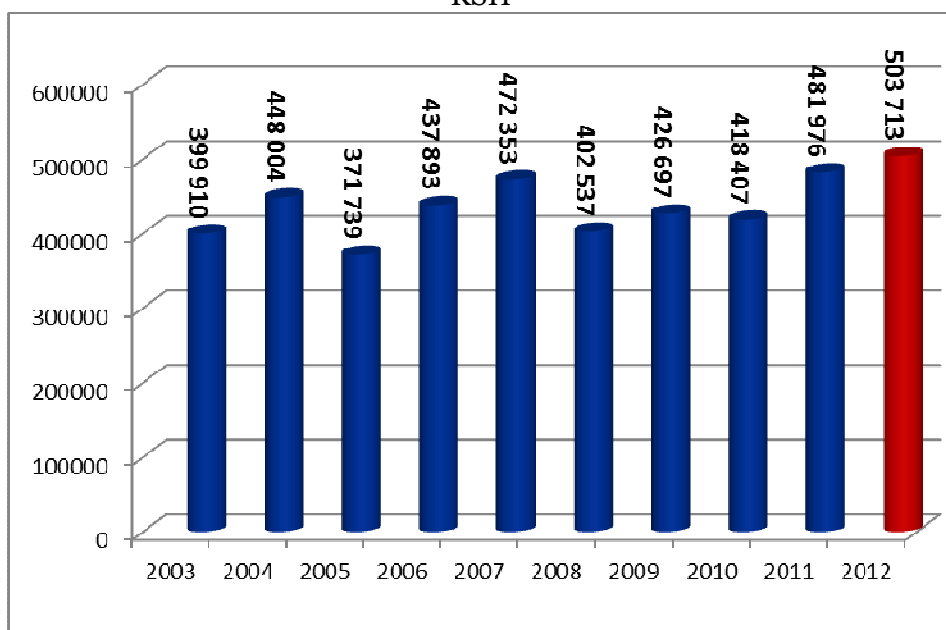
into the bathtub to make sure the water is not too hot; personal interests, skills, personal values become more important and the young person is looking for the new opportunities. There might be temporary professional decisions and young people try to realize these decisions with the help of thinking and conversations about the topic, or according to what they experienced at school or during the seasonal works. This is followed by the establishment stage, when a person selects a job and starts working. Then the next step is the maintenance stage, when they check how much the profession complies with their own definition. (Szilágyi, 2007:60, 69) These psychological processes relating to the stages are working so nowadays as well, but we know more about them than years ago. We can read the followings in Csíkszentmihályi`s book.

The youth`s attitude relating to their future career becomes stronger, when they learn to combine the thought of work with their own activities and with their certain (either positive or negative) experiences. (...) The development of positive work ethic at the youth depends on what kind of impressions they have about the job, what they understand about work and what kind of emotions they have during work nature activities. (...) The quality of experiences gained during activities with work nature determines if a teenager is excited about their future jobs or they are afraid of it (Schmidt & Rich, 2011:106, 111). The quality of experiences means that the experience improves the students` self-esteem, they have positive feelings about themselves, they meet their own and others expectations, acknowledge their relevance, feel proud, and all in all they are happy to work.

Approximately 115.9 million people perform voluntary work in Europe. If we estimated its financial value, it means that Europe would form the 7th biggest economy in the world according to this. In the European Union the proportion of the volunteers shows a big standard deviation within the population per country; 5-40% of the population performs volunteering.⁹ It has as great effect on the beneficiaries as on the volunteers regarding for instance the health. People performing voluntary work are happier and live longer, which is explained by several psychological and medical reasons. Many positive effects have been seen in the case of elderly people on both mental and physical health – said Lester Salamon the professor of John Hopkins University in Baltimore.

⁹ Source: Conference on the Voluntary work in Hungary organized by the Hungarian Central Statistic Office in Budapest, Hungary, 13th of November 2012

Figure 1. The number of volunteers in Hungary between 2003 and 2012. Source: KSH¹



Some critics (for example: Czike, 2006:25) could be read in the past few years about that statistical data measures only the organizational volunteering. However there was a survey in the 3rd quarter of 2011 in Hungary, which mapped the formal and informal volunteering as well. “28.4% of the population (age range: 15-74) in Hungary, which is about 2 million and 153 thousand people stated that they performed some kind of voluntary work within 12 months before hiring” (Váradi, 2012:3). The economic benefit of the volume of this amount of voluntary work is undisputable.

Research on the school-age students’ attitude to voluntary work

The aim of the research is to get acquainted with the attitude and motivation to voluntary work of high school and college students, to discover the characteristics of voluntary work, to collect the experience earned by young people through voluntary work. The following research questions were investigated:

- What is the attitude of college and high school students to volunteering? How typical is volunteering in this age group?
- What is the school-age students’ motivation in this field?
- What kind of experience was gained by students who have performed volunteer work?
- May the ‘compulsory community service’ of high school students facilitate the later volunteering?
- Is there any difference between the two age groups’ attitude to voluntary work? Do the ‘*compulsory nature*’ of community service influence the opinion of high school students on volunteering? Is their opinion different from that of today college students who did

not have compulsory community service, i.e. volunteering is an *option* for them?

The method of research: review of related literature, collecting secondary information and primary research (research with two questionnaires). The results may help to understand the motivations of voluntary work and to get acquainted with the directions of future youth voluntary work. All these results may contribute to more effective organization of the – highly debated – community service of high school age students in order to make this activity more valuable.

The general characteristics of primary research

Two primary researches were conducted in May-June, 2013, in Zala county to answer the research questions shown in the introduction. Both primary researches included questionnaires, one of them was prepared for *college students*, the other was for *high school students*. The characteristics of primary research are represented as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. The characteristics of the two primary researches

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Questionnaire for college students</i>	<i>Questionnaire for high school students</i>
Population	Budapest Business School, Faculty of Business Administration Zalaegerszeg, full time students	9th–11th grades of Zala county high school students
Sample size	211 people , 46% of the population	352 people , appr. 5-6% of the population
Place of research:	Zalaegerszeg	Zala county
Method of questioning:	personal	online
Type of research:	non representative	non representative
Sampling:	random	random
Date of questioning:	May-June, 2013	
Questions:	maily closed questions, some open questions	

Both questionnaires¹⁰ prepared for the two samples involved some identical questions as well, it has become possible to compare some features of the answering students while analysis.

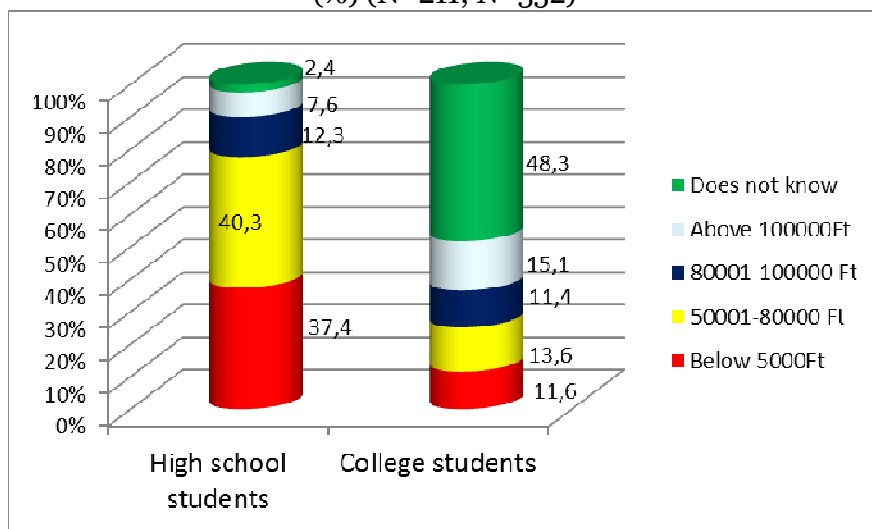
The gender, age, place of living, income per capita composition of the sample

In both samples *the rate of women is much higher* than that of men. It is especially high in the college group, where the rate of women is 76% (women are overrepresented due to the fact that 68.1% of full time students are women at the college). The rate of girls is 60.2% in the high school student sample. The *age composition* of the samples shows that 90.4% of the college students belong to the 18-23 age group (this age group is a little overrepresented in the sample resulting from the fact that 85.4% of full time active students are part of this group), only 9.6% of the sample belong to the 24-30 age group. 9th-11th grade high school students were questioned. Among the answering students the rate of 9th graders is the highest (58.8%), 37.5% are 10th graders, while the rate of 11th graders is only 3.7%. The higher rate of 9th graders may be resulting from the 'compulsory community service' that applies first to their grade, therefore, they are considered the most relevant group in the topic of our questionnaire. 78.1% of the sample learn in secondary grammar school, the rest of students questioned study in secondary technical school.

The *place of living composition* of the samples does not reveal any significant difference, since in both samples the rate of town dwellers is higher. In the college sample 43% of the students' family belong to the 50,001-80,000 Ft *income per capita* bracket. The group of families with an income of less than 50 000 Ft per capita income is very high, as 37.4% of the questioned students fall into this category (Figure 2.). It is surprising that 48.2% of the questioned high school students do not know properly the income situation of their families. In the high school sample families with higher than 100 000 Ft per capita income constitute 15.1% of the questioned students. There is no significant difference in the rate of students belonging to various per capita income brackets, i.e. the distribution of high school students in per capita income brackets is relatively even.

¹⁰ The research team of BGF GKZ (Budapest Business School, Faculty of Business Administration Zalaegerszeg) participated in Verso Interreg (Volunteers for European employment) international project. The questionnaires – created by Erzsébet Jármay - for the project were adapted to the research carried out among college and high school students.

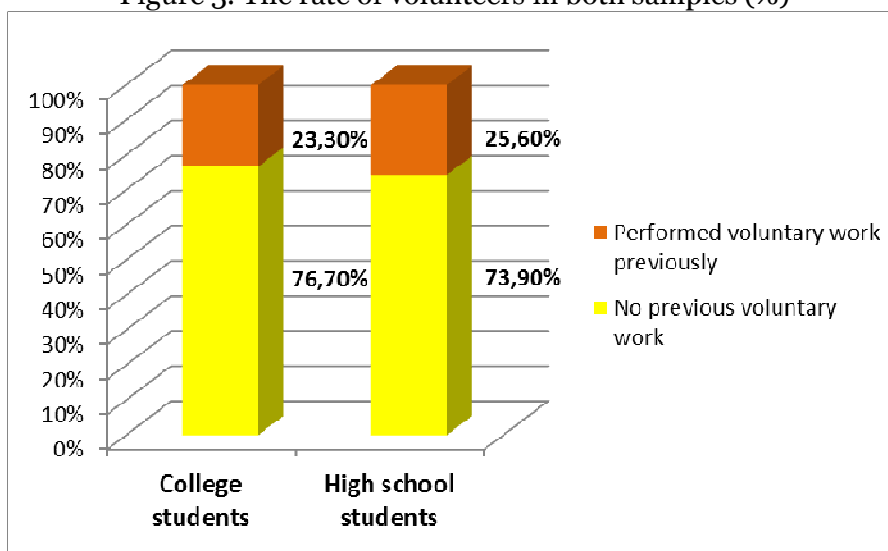
Figure 2. The income per capita composition of the answering students' families (%) (N=211; N=352)



The characteristics of voluntary work among the answering students

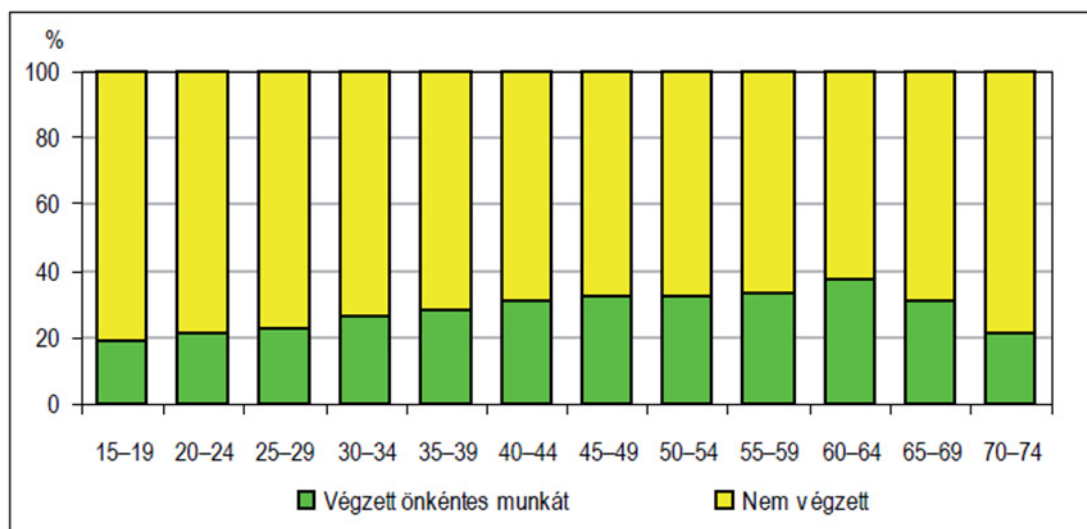
207 college students answered to the question if they did volunteer work previously. **23.3%** of the answers is in the affirmative. Consequently, volunteering is an unknown field to the rest of them. Among high school students the rate of the affirmative answers is 25.6% which exceeds the data of college students to a small extent (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The rate of volunteers in both samples (%)



It is worth comparing the data of both samples to the latest KSH (Hungarian Central Statistical Office) survey that refers to Hungary. It can be concluded that the rate of Zala county students performing volunteer work is a little higher than the country data characterizing the studied age group.

Figure 4. The composition of 15-74-year-old Hungarian population according to volunteering and age groups (green: Performed voluntary work previously; yellow: No previous voluntary work)



Source: Váradi et al., 2012:5

The questionnaire for college students asked the reasons of those who have not done volunteer work yet. The most usual answer was that the idea of participating in volunteer work did not come to their mind (32.2% of those who did not perform volunteer work previously gave this reply). 20.9% of the answers are on the second place: 'I did not find any type of volunteering close to my hobbies and interests'. One more frequent answer can be mentioned (17.1%): 'I wanted to, but there was no opportunity for volunteering in my neighbourhood'. If we take a closer look at the per capita income in families of the students performing volunteer work, we can see that there are young people doing volunteer work in each income bracket. The distribution of students doing volunteer work is just the same as the distribution of the sample in income brackets. There is a little shift in the two lower income categories (e.g. 38.8% of the volunteers belong to the 50 000 Ft or lower per capita income category, while their rate is 37.4% in the sample) (Figure 2.).

The latest survey conducted by KSH – 3rd quarter of the year, 2011 – states that '29.1% of the women (1148 thousand persons) worked gratis, while 27.6% of men (1005 thousand persons) helped free of charge (Váradi, 2012:4). In both samples the rate of women is higher among volunteers, and this rate exceeds – the above mentioned – rate characterising women. Among college students 81.6% of the volunteers are women, while it is 71.4% among high school students.

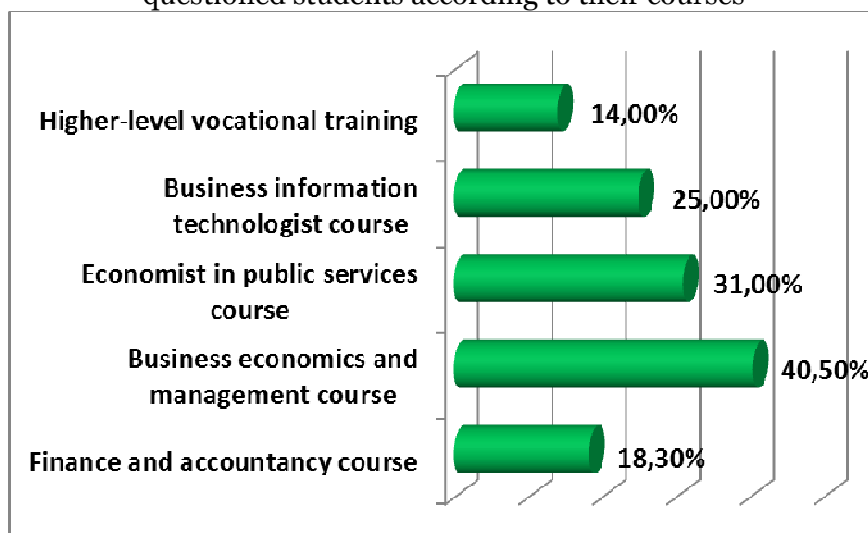
The questioned college students represented *all full time courses*. Among the students who filled the questionnaire the finance and accountancy BSc course had the highest ratio (38.9%)¹¹, it is followed by the students of higher-level vocational training (20.9%)¹², the next is

¹¹ This student group is a little underrepresented, because their proportion is 42.9% among college students.

¹² This is a little overrepresented segment in the sample, the students of higher-level vocational training has 17.9% among full time students.

business economics and management course (18.0%)¹³. Economist in public services course had 14.2%¹⁴, business information technologist course is represented by 8.1%¹⁵ in the sample. It is worth investigating which course had the highest proportion in volunteering. This difference between courses is shown by Figure 5.

Figure 5.: The rate of college students with volunteering experience within the questioned students according to their courses



It can be concluded that the students of business economics and management course (40.5%) are the most active in volunteer work, while the students of higher-level vocational training are the least energetic (14.0%). There is no correlation between courses and volunteering – confidence is 95% (Cramer's $V = 0.193$ approx. Sig=0.053).

How were students informed about the possibilities of volunteering?

Among college students, 46% of those who performed volunteer work previously learned about volunteer work options *at school*, 22% were informed by friends and 16% by family members. The ratio of getting information via internet or by professional organizations is the same (8-8%). 48.1% of *high school students* were informed about the possibilities of volunteering *at school*, 20.9% by friends, 13.2% by family members, 7.0% on the internet, 4.7% by professional organizations. In a few cases the information was passed by the needy, by the health visitor or by acquaintances.

¹³ The ratio of this group is the same as its part in the population that is 18.2%.

¹⁴ It is an overrepresented group, since its ratio is 10.0% in the population.

¹⁵ This group is a little underrepresented, since its ratio is 10.9% in the population.

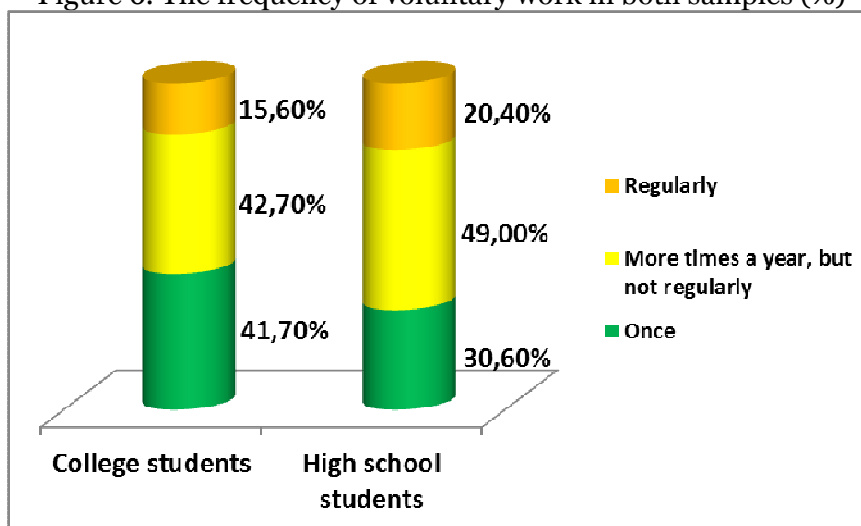
The place of volunteer work

The majority of college students was engaged in volunteer work in their residence (70%), only 30% of volunteers are motivated to do voluntary work farther from their place of living. Among the high school students the majority (57.3%) is involved in volunteering in their residence. Obviously, on the one hand this intention is derived from their age, and on the other hand there are more volunteering possibilities in towns (where the majority of the questioned students live). The rate of voluntary work performed farther from the residence is 42.7% (31.1% of the high school students is involved in volunteering within a 30km distance, while 11.6% of them farther than 30km).

The frequency of voluntary work

Among college students the rate of those who perform volunteer work more times a year, but not regularly is the highest (42.7%). The rate of students who did volunteer work only once is nearly the same (41.7%). Those who perform volunteer work regularly has the lowest rate (15.6%) (Figure 6). Among high school students the percentages are similar concerning the frequency of volunteering. The rate of volunteer work performed more times a year, but not regularly is greater (49%), the rate of students who did volunteer work only once is lower (30.6%). Those who perform volunteer work regularly has a higher rate (20.4%).

Figure 6. The frequency of voluntary work in both samples (%)

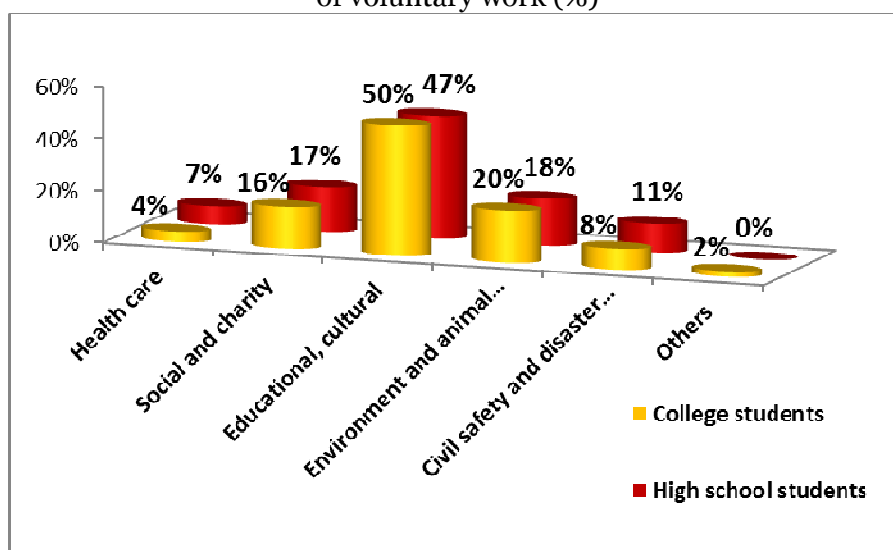


In summary, *neither college, nor high school students can be characterised by regular volunteer work*. The college students who take part in volunteering choose a field of *voluntary work that is related to their future profession (economists, business information technologists) in 10% of the cases*. It is more common that the type of work is far from their professional activity.

The fields of the volunteer work

If the fields of voluntary work are investigated, we can conclude that in both samples educational, cultural and community work is very common (college students: 50%, high school students: 47%). (Figure 7). The rate of volunteers who prefer nature conservation and animal protection is relatively high (college: 20%, high school: 18%). It is followed by social and charity activities (c: 16%, h: 17%)¹⁶, the next areas are civil safety and disaster preparedness (c: 8%, h: 7%). The end of the row is health care volunteering (c: 4%, h: 7%) and other activities. In both *samples the students are attracted by different voluntary work fields in the same way, i.e. their interests are the same*, which can be explained by their young age.

Figure 7. The composition of volunteers according to the type of voluntary work (%)



The idea of voluntary work

In the college group, the majority of students (58.0%) who did volunteer work was inspired by a sudden idea to get engaged in volunteering, while 42.0% planned to help others consciously. 44.9% of the students performed volunteer work within the organization but on their own initiative, 30.6% volunteered to help inspired by organizational request, while 24.5% volunteered to work on their own initiative and search for opportunities. The majority of high school students who did voluntary work previously, had a sudden idea to help (72.3%). The conscious voluntary work refers to 27.7% of them. Summing up the above data, it can be stated that *conscious voluntary work increases with the age* among the students who choose to help without payment. *94% of the college students who have experience in volunteering would like to perform voluntary work in the future as well*, which shows that they earned positive experience in the past.

¹⁶ c=college students; h=high school students

Preparation for the voluntary activity

34% of the college student volunteers answered that they were given professional preparation before the beginning of voluntary work, while the majority (66.0%) did not have any previous training. In the case of high school students 31.6% of those who had previous practice in volunteering got professional preparation before work, however the majority did not get any. The reason for *the low rate of professional preparation before voluntary work* can be explained differently. On the one hand the nature of voluntary work does not require any previous knowledge, on the other hand the organizations admitting volunteers did not have any capacity for preparation. The highest rate of preparing students for work can be observed in patient care (50%) and educational, cultural and community activities (39%).

The motivations of volunteering

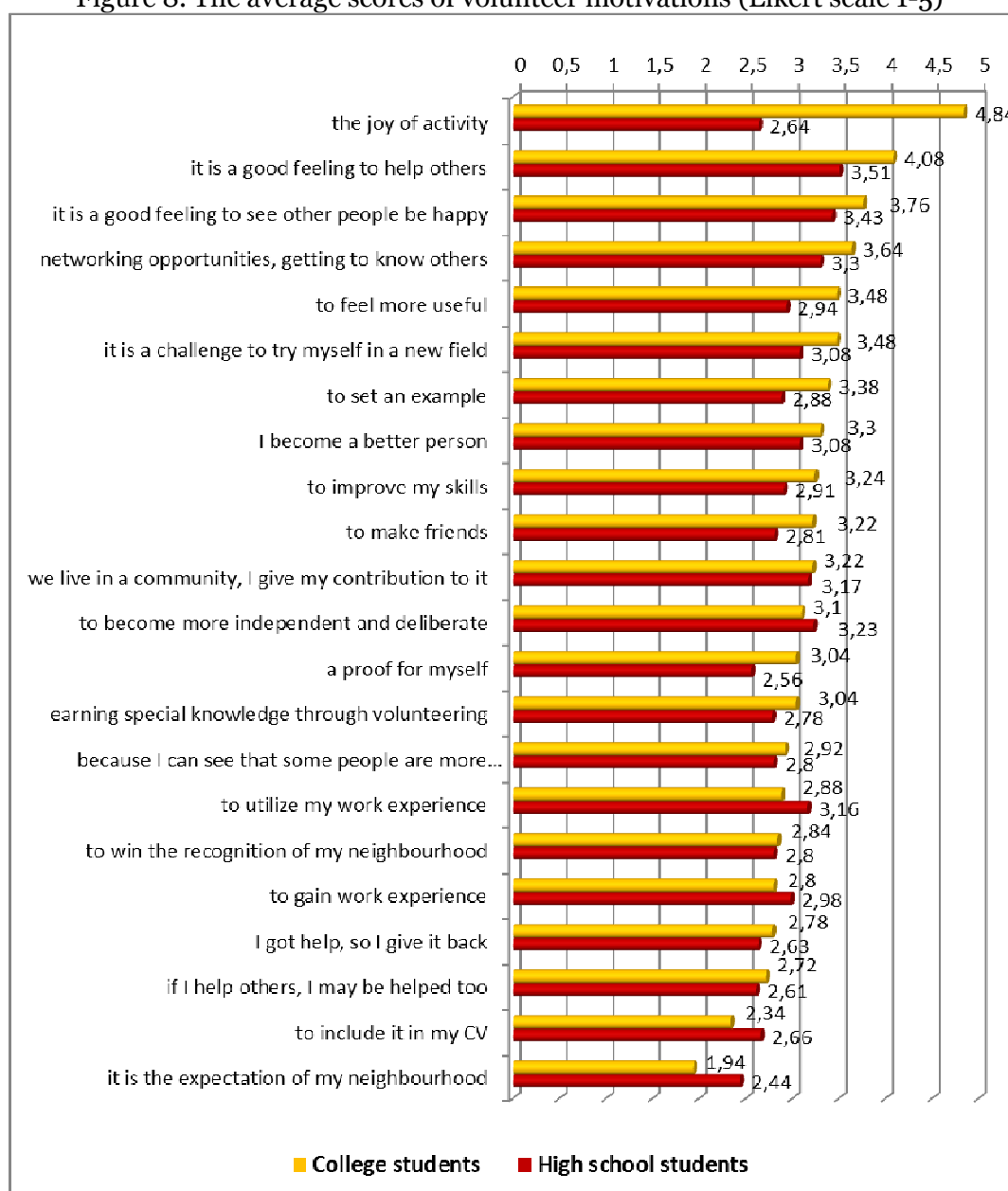
To research the reasons the 5-point Likert scale was applied in the questionnaires. The results are illustrated by Figure 8. The vast majority of the college students volunteer to help because of *the joy of acting* (4.84). Second, the following statement was selected by the college students: 'It is a good feeling to help others'(4.08). Third in the row of motivations, 'It is a good feeling to see other people be happy' (3.76). It is wise to look at the end of the row! The option stating that the volunteer will get help too if it is needed later, had a low point: 2.72. It shows that volunteering means a unilateral way of helping others for the youth. It is followed by including volunteering into the CV (2.34). The expectation of the neighbourhood closes the row (1.94), which reveals that volunteering is really motivated by inner inspiration.

In the *high school* student group, 'It is a good feeling to help others' and 'It is a good feeling to see other people be happy' statements are on the first and second places, like in the case of college students, but the points are lower (3.51; and 3.43). It is interesting to notice that the third highest point was given to networking opportunities (3.3). It shows developed social sensitivity. Then, among the results – a little lagging behind the previous one – it can be found that the youth choose to volunteer because of becoming more independent and deliberate. At the end of the row the mutual expectation can be read (2.61) here, too. A 'proof for myself' is in second-to-last place with an average of 2.56. The expectation of the neighbourhood closes the row here, as well (2.44). It is identical in both samples that '*earning special knowledge through voluntary work*' does not motivate the students (in the college sample it is the 13th in the list of 22 features, in the high school sample it is the 16th.) It is an important difference between the answers of the two questionnaires that college students gave higher points to the motivation factors (the average point considering all options is 3.2 for college students, while it is 2.9 for high school students). Furthermore, the variance of the average points given to

motivation factors is higher in the case of college students, which means that *college students gave a much more differentiated assessment*.

The biggest difference comes from the motivation 'volunteering resulting from the joy of activity' between the two samples (c: 4.84; h: 2.64). It can be related to the fact that the compulsory nature of *community service* has an effect on the judgement of volunteering in the case of high school students, which may result in a less favourable assessment of volunteering. Another reason can be that high school students have less work practice, thus they can not recall a previous positive experience connected to voluntary work that could be a motivation. When comparing the questionnaires it can be highlighted that the role of the '*expectation of others*' is higher in the case of high school students. (c:1.94; h: 2.44), which can be associated with compulsory community service, as well.

Figure 8. The average scores of volunteer motivations (Likert scale 1-5)



Voluntary work experience

The questionnaire for college students involved questions about the voluntary work experience (5-point Likert scale was applied). The highest average point was given to 'experiences gained through volunteering' (3.9) (Table 2). The youth enjoyed team work (3.86) and proved their self-maintenance (3.71). The youth found voluntary work easy and it met their expectations (3.65-3.65). If we have a look at the end of the row, it can be seen that college students do not link voluntary work with the improvement of the employer's opinion. *Since Zala county students do not perform volunteer work abroad, it is obvious that getting to know other cultures (1.85), and improving language skills got lower scores (1.79). It is not typical that permanent job was found through volunteering (1.76).*

Table 2. The average scores of voluntary work experience according to the answers of the college students (Likert scale 1-5)

I am satisfied with the experiences through volunteering	3,90
I enjoy team work	3,86
I proved my self-maintenance	3,71
It was easy for me	3,65
voluntary work meets my expectations	3,65
I earned new knowledge	3,61
It was good to help others	3,49
I am also a useful member of the society and community	3,47
I had a quick decision if it was necessary	3,39
I became more independent and more confident	3,37
I can solve problems better	3,35
I made new friends	3,35
it was good to see that my work is appreciated	3,33
I adapted myself fast and I could solve troubles	3,27
I can better understand people' situation	3,24
even my work is valuable in my close environment	3,22
It is a proof for myself	3,19
I realised that with cooperation we can do more	3,16
my communication skills have become better	3,00
I think in a more responsible way	3,00
I got useful connections	2,92
I have more sympathy and I am more tolerant	2,90
moral aspects motivated me	2,76
I handle conflicts better	2,75
I recognised my limitations	2,73
I realised that I can rely on others too	2,65
I have a feeling of being connected	2,63
I learned more about myself, too	2,58
my neighbourhood, family look up to me	2,53
I will be honored for my good deeds	2,53
my faith became stronger through volunteering	2,49
I became more experienced in many aspects	2,43
the change of scene was useful	2,43
nothing extra, only good passtime	2,29
I am more aware of my professional work options	2,22
I became more valuable for the employers	2,06
I got to know other interesting cultures	1,85
my language skills improved	1,79
I found a permanent job through voluntteering	1,76
my children will respect me for this	1,16

The analysis of opinions about compulsory community service

The positive experience gained through community service may foster the attitude of the age group to volunteering, however negative impressions can inhibit it. Therefore, it is *highly important that high school students should be engaged in activities through community service they enjoy*. Community service is a 'compulsory option', since the youth have to do it, however, they can choose the place of service and the nature of activity offered by school. The majority of the questioned Zala county students (63.0%) *agrees with the aim of compulsory community service*. 64.8% of the 311 answering students were given suitable information about compulsory community service. According to most answers (161 people, i.e. 51.8% of the answering students) *1-3 community service options* were provided for them by school (Table 3). 25.4% of the answers showed that the students could choose from 4-5 options, while 22.8% of the students had more than 5 possibilities. The majority of the students, that is 66.9%, is satisfied with the number of options offered by schools. If the relationship between the number of options and the satisfaction it caused is analysed, it can be stated that 4-5 options led to the highest satisfaction. It is interesting that more than 5 options resulted in lower satisfaction.

Table 3. The relationship between the number of voluntary work options and its satisfaction in the questionnaire of high school students (person)

Question		Are you satisfied with the number of options?			Rate of satisfaction (%)
		Yes	No	Total	
How many community service options were offered at school?	1-3	82	79	161	50,9
	4-5	68	11	79	86,1
	more than 5	58	13	71	81,7
Total		208	103	311	66,9

A great portion of students (58.3%) think that there is a field of community service activity that is not included in the list of options offered by school, however they feel like getting involved in it. Consequently, it is proper to make the offered compulsory community service options wider and more colourful, considering the students' field of interests. The *duration of community service* is found by nearly equal proportions suitable (47.7%), and too long (48%). Only 1.7% of the students stated that 50 hours is not enough for community service. The majority of college students (63.7%) has not been involved in compulsory community service before, which is not surprising, since the law regulating compulsory community service was effective for 1 year before this survey started. In the questionnaire made for high school students the Zala county organizations admitting volunteers are listed. The students were asked to select activities they are interested in from the list of organizations that admit volunteers

on the website of Zala County Volunteer Centre¹⁷ in order to measure which fields of volunteering activities are attractive to them. The 5 most charming – based on the high school students' opinion – voluntary activities offered by Zala county organizations are as follows:

1. Bogánacs Animal Shelter Zalaegerszeg (nature conservation, animal protection)
2. Hevesi Sándor Theatre Zalaegerszeg (cloak-room service, checking tickets, showing people to their seats)
3. Zala County Hospital (physical, spiritual aid)
4. Living Space Animal and Nature Protection Association (event and program management, veterinary care, etc.)
5. Deák Ferenc County Library (administration, intellectual work, moving library job)

The attraction of animal protection, nature conservation, social and cultural tasks are obvious according to the survey. The list is recommended to colleagues who organize high school community service. The compulsory community service is an administrative directive, high schools and high school students are obliged to implement this measure. However, it makes a difference which 'experiences' are gained by students during community service. This research is expected to shed light on community service activities preferred by students based on their interests, to give useful ideas for colleagues in high schools organizing community service. If high school students achieve positive experiences through community service, hopefully, they might perform volunteer work in the future.

Conclusion

It is no doubt that voluntary activity affects volunteers positively. Luckily, a portion of young people is open to voluntary work, many of them have practice in this field. Most of the volunteers give voice to their satisfaction, which is promising. In this research two samples were compared to investigate if there is a significant difference between the answers of two age groups. A difference was expected by the author because the 'compulsory' nature of high school community service might lead to a less favourable assessment of voluntary work than in the case of college students. For the latter group volunteering is considered as an activity performed purely from inner inspiration (without outer influence), since 'compulsory' community service did not apply to them. *In contrast to the author's hypothesis, this expected difference did not appear significantly in the answers of the samples, that is, apart from some smaller variations, nearly identical attitude and motivations were revealed in connection with volunteer work.*

As a result some characteristics were explored that contradict some features of generation theories. For instance, the twenty-year-olds are said to be afraid of getting adults, however, the *relatively high voluntary activity shows the way of becoming adults* (helping others without

¹⁷ <https://www.onkenteszala.hu/index.php?cid=142> Downloaded: April 28, 2013

expecting anything in return). In the high school group the rate of volunteering is higher than the country average, the positive attitude to voluntary work is contrary to the stereotype adults say about the youth that success and money interest them only. Volunteering is a good example of *unselfishness*, the altruistic behaviour. The survey has proved that a dominant group of young people are motivated *other than financial interests*. The desire to help others is very high on the motivation list of both samples.

Considering voluntary work and its future the most important factor is personal example to show our children that parents, teachers and their most immediate surrounding can help others without pay. The research reveals that voluntary work has a future in the 21st century, and the present teenage and twenty-year-old generation can be active part of it. The state is unable to solve every problem, thus the society has to cooperate to build a better future...

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