

VOLUNTARY DEVELOPMENT IN THE ROMANIAN AMBULANCE SERVICES

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The history of volunteering

"If we want to live in a better world, we have to contribute to its creation."

Mahatma Gandhi

Do voluntary work involves theoretically perform work without the one who performs follow a reward of any kind as it would be. Volunteering is primarily an interest in society's problems. Doing something as a volunteer means that you care about a problem that others are facing. Volunteer work means the desire to help, to do something for society, to support it. To do so is equivalent to abandoning traditional passivity. [2]

The origins of volunteer work are mainly found in religion, this was the main source of individual and intimate motivation of the volunteer. One of the religious and moral duties of the citizen is to help their peers, the religious tradition of volunteering existed in all countries. [4] The volunteer service is very diverse. In any field is someone who needs the help of a volunteer.

The Universal Declaration on Volunteering highlights the fact that this is a fundamental component of civil society. It inspires the most noble aspirations of mankind - peace, freedom, opportunity, safety and justice for all people. Volunteering turns into action the United Nations statement that "we humans have the power to change the world." [3]

The rights of volunteers are stipulated in the Charter of Rights and Obligations, developed by the National Volunteer Center in Paris, France. These include: the right to be treated as a colleague with equal rights and not as a cheap labor force, the right to be taken into account for personal preferences, temperament, life experience, studies and professional experience in the assignment of tasks, the right to participate in training sessions in the field in which he / she pursues his / her activity both at the beginning of the activity and in the course of his / her life, the right to a place where to work, the right to be heard and to play a role in the planning of the activities, to feel free to make suggestions and to follow his / her views. [3]

The term volunteering was used for the first time in the 17th century in the military field. Persons who were enrolled in the emergency military service were called volunteers because they were not rewarded or paid for their services.

Voluntary services spread throughout the world in the 1920s and 1930s, especially during the economic crisis of 1929, when volunteering was a way to help young people without jobs, in the sense that for the social activities they

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The article aims to analyze the development of volunteer activity in Romania in general and for ambulance services in particular.

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Involvement in volunteering can be an important means of acquiring the necessary skills in the labor market as well as the chance to occupy important social positions within the community. Volunteer internship ensures the development of key skills necessary for the new career development trends

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were offered accommodation and food. In the late 1940s and during the 1950s, young volunteers were the ones who helped rebuild a part of Europe and established friendship relations that crossed the borders of the countries. [4]

2011 was declared the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship by Decision of the Council of the European Union no. 15658/09 of 24 November 2009 on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship; 2011, at a glance The European Year of Volunteering 2011 (AEV 2011) and was run under the slogan: " Offer yourself as volunteer! Change something!

The general aim of the European Year is to encourage and support - in particular through exchanges of experience and good practice - the efforts made by the Community, Member States, local and regional authorities to create favorable conditions for volunteering in the European Union and to increase the visibility of volunteering in the EU. [3]

The existing European volunteering policies can be summarized as follows:

1. Encouraging active citizenship is a key element for strengthening cohesion and for the development of democracy;
2. Volunteering is one of the essential components of active citizenship and democracy, which conveys European values such as solidarity and non-discrimination, and thus contributes to the harmonious development of European societies;
3. Volunteering is a rich learning experience, facilitates the development of social skills and competences and contributes to solidarity;
4. Volunteer activities are beneficial to the volunteer as an individual, for communities and society as a

whole, and are a way to address the human, social, inter-generational and environmental needs and challenges. [3]

Volunteering in Romania. Legislative and organizational aspects

In Romania, Law No.339 of 17 July 2006 gives volunteering the following definition:

"Volunteering is the activity of public interest, carried out on its own initiative, by any person for the benefit of others, without receiving any material consideration; the activity of public interest is the activity carried out in such areas as: assistance and social services, protection of human rights, medical, cultural, artistic, educational, educational, scientific, humanitarian, religious, philanthropic, sporting, environmental, social and community protection and the like. "

Volunteering in Romania is an increasingly well-known and practiced activity. Perhaps not at the level of Western countries because they have not had nearly five decades of communism.

Eurobarometer 75.2 "Volunteering and Intergenerational Solidarity" made in 2011 on the occasion of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 - shows that 16% of Romanians, ie about 4,000,000 inhabitants, engage in volunteering, while the Dutch participate in such activities in the proportion of 57%, the Danes in the proportion of 43%, and in Austria the involvement reaches 39%. In Norway, 80% of the population takes part in community activities, including volunteering. [5]

Although there are some issues to be solved, financially, legally and institutionally, we are moving in the right direction and, over time, through positive work and examples, we will have a strong civil society, a higher percentage of people involved in volunteering, institutions prone to financially and administratively helping NGOs and of course a European legal framework.

The context in which volunteering is taking place in Romania:

- *Legal*: there is a law, but voluntary work is not recognized as work experience, sponsorship law does not encourage companies to provide substantial financial support.

- *The media* talks about volunteering and volunteering actions just from press releases, and this is more online. Although there are some programs that offer positive examples of volunteer actions and volunteers.

- *Partnership with Local Public Authorities* is insignificant. Although there are examples of viable and mature partnerships, it takes a lot of work, perseverance and persuasion to get some citizens to understand that NGOs do not exist just for the vote but can be a hopeful partner, even necessary.

- *directing 2% of the profit tax* - is one of the best decisions the Romanian State has taken in support of volunteering.

- *Corporate volunteering*. Some corporations are much involved in civil society, probably if legislation would be more favorable to corporations and firms (lower taxes and imposts), they would get much more involved. Although some laws need to be amended, although government and local government funding is low, although some officials have to be taught to respect and treat NGOs

and volunteers respectfully and as real and trustworthy partners, volunteering is on its way, since we had almost five decades of communism, where forced labor (patriotic work) was called propaganda as voluntary work

Impact of volunteering generally has three dimensions:
- the impact of volunteers on the community (final beneficiaries) - social and economic

- the impact of volunteers on the organization - social and economic

- the impact of volunteering on volunteers - personal, social and economic

Volunteering as mean of educating the population for the preservation of health and for adopting a correct attitude in case of medical emergencies

Volunteering is a key aspect of active citizenship and democracy as well as personal development, embodying values such as solidarity and non-discrimination, and it also contributes to the development of participatory democracy and the promotion of human rights. The contribution of volunteering to community development is reflected in solving local problems by complementing financial contributions to volunteer work, facilitating social cohesion by bringing people together for a common purpose, facilitating social integration and combating the risk of social exclusion of vulnerable social categories. [2]

There are various programs in the direction of education and involvement of citizens in prevention and resolving medical emergencies.

On July 27, 2011, the cardiorespiratory resuscitation course was held with most participants. In number 7,402, they simultaneously learned how to resuscitate and give first aid. The record was recorded at Dinamo Bucharest stadium and was titled "Save lives and enter in the Guinness Book of Records". The initiators of this effort were the Bucharest Ambulance Society and the Bucharest-Ilfov Ambulance Service. The participants had 700 mannequins on which they practiced and demonstrated, and 700 instructors who explained the maneuvers.

The action took place on the occasion of the 105th anniversary in July 2011, of the functioning of the Bucharest-Ilfov Ambulance Service. The development of the event was supervised by the University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila".

Following this event, the body of volunteers working at the Bucharest-Ilfov Ambulance Service performed a retrospective study that aimed to analyze the impact of the cardiorespiratory resuscitation course on such dimensions on the number of unnecessary calls and the rate survival in cardiac arrest.

Considering an ambulance has an average time to reach a red code emergency of 11 minutes, 40 seconds, it was considered that the 7,402 people involved in the CPR session are an important resource for help during cardiac arrest situations.

Volunteering as support for Ambulance Services
Volunteering helps the emergency system - two extra hands can save more lives.

The Ambulance Society in Bucharest runs the program "There is a hero in each of you", it already has 2,700 people enrolled. Anyone who is at least 14 years of age can save a life and become a hero by joining this program. In any grade 0 or 1 emergency, intervening in the first seven minutes of collapse makes the difference between life and death. Although a heart can be restarted and after 30 minutes of cardio-respiratory arrest, brain injuries are irreversible. Through this project, volunteers enrolled in the program, who are within a maximum of 1,000 meters of the victim, are alerted immediately, receive an SMS with name, age, location, description. Situated very close to the victim, they arrive within five minutes in time to carry out first-aid maneuvers until the arrival specialized first aid crew

It was appreciated that thanks to volunteers, the success rate of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation grew by almost 4% in Bucharest and Ilfov in 2016.

The rescuers come from different backgrounds, have different ages, do not wear white gowns, did not graduated medical school, but have a common passion. That's to save lives. There are a handful of people spread across Bucharest, who, when they receive a cell phone alert, go out from a meeting with friends, work or even school to help those who have serious health problems, whether we are talking about cardiorespiratory people, those who faint or even those involved in road accidents. They are all part of the "There is a hero in each of you" program, and I confess, that they have a special feeling that is difficult to explain in words when they save a life. They are those who are sent to cases even by dispatchers from the Ilfov Ambulance Service in Bucharest. If they do not make resuscitation maneuvers, they offer psychological support to the victim and supervise it until the ambulance reaches the case.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- Ambulance watch
- Popularization activities
- Educational activities
- Heat tents
- Event

support

THE VOLUNTEER INTEGRATION PROGRAM

- Determining the need for volunteers
- Planning the volunteer integration program
- Development and design of volunteer posts
- Recruitment and selection of volunteers
- Their orientation and training
- Coordinating volunteer activity
- Evaluating the performance of volunteers
- Supporting and Recognizing Volunteers
- Keeping volunteers in the organization.

RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

The recruitment of volunteers takes into account their motivations for this type of activity: personal interest (moral, visibility, socializing), professional interest or other interests.

Recruitment methods

- Distribution of informative materials
- Public presentations
- Educational programs in schools
- Events
- Media use

RIGUROUS SELECTION

Human quality not quantity

In order to create a strong and trusted team, it is a need for dedicated, passionate, dynamic people with initiative, value-driven people.

The first objective of selecting volunteers is the availability to adhere to the values of the ambulance service, namely:

- *Respect for the exceptional tradition*
- *Accessibility:* Our services are and will remain accessible to anyone, anytime, as the founder of Salvation postulated: "Always and all ready for help";
- *Total responsibility for optimal time intervention;*
- *Incorruptibility and moral integrity towards the patient;*
- *Professionalism and medical ethics;*
- *Patient and employee safety è Quality of service;*
- *Teamwork, rescue mobilization, mutual respect;* the slogan inscribed on the frontispiece of the Samaritene School in 1931 still holds true today: "All for one and one for all";
- *Latest technology, harnessing intelligence and accuracy to improve health;;*
- *Dealing with love and devotion* of the people's health, especially those who need it - medical emergencies. Although they work with only half of the necessary staff, at the Bucharest- Ilfov Ambulance Service, the waiting lists for volunteers are long, and the selection is rigorous. More specifically, out of 100 people, only 18 have succeeded.

CONTINUOUS THEORETHICAL AND PRACTICAL TRAINING

The first stage of training are the BLS courses. Following these courses, there is a selection of those who will follow ALS (Advanced Life Support) courses consisting of primary evaluation, medical techniques, trauma. Practical training is done through emergency situations simulations.

1. Alert Simulations:

- Analysis of the average time of sending an alert message, through the coordination hierarchy, from manager to volunteer.
- Understanding and preparing cascade alert phases by all stakeholders.
- Awareness of the impact of the response time of each person in the alert distribution chain.

2. Trip simulations "RED CODE"

- Analysis of the reaction time from the departure of the alert to the presentation in the ambulance micro-station of the volunteers.
- Understand the possible resources available for a real Red Code alert.
- Preparing volunteers for search and rescue operations, using medical equipment, and knowing protocols in emergency situations.

Cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death, affecting annually some 700,000 individuals in Europe [13] and approximately 460,000 individuals in the United States (American Heart Association, Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics 2005).

The "Chain of Survival" concept is the vital steps need to follow for a successful resuscitation:

1. Immediate Recognition of Emergency and Call for Qualified Aid (Calling 112)
2. Start resuscitation maneuvers as quickly as possible; immediate resuscitation may double or triple survival after a ventricular fibrillation episode
3. Fastest defibrillation: Immediate resuscitation and defibrillation can result in a survival rate of 49-75%. Each minute of delay leads to a decrease in survival by 10-15%.
4. Provide adequate advanced vital support. Victims of cardio-respiratory arrest need resuscitation maneuvers in the shortest possible time. Resuscitation provides a small but essential heart rate to the heart and brain. This increases the probability of transforming ventricular fibrillation into sinus rhythm. Chest compressions are particularly important if a shock can not be applied within the first 5 minutes after stopping. Defibrillation interrupts abnormal depolarization-repolarisation that occurs during ventricular fibrillation. In the first few minutes after successful defibrillation, heart rate may be decreased and contractions may be ineffective, so chest compressions are still needed. [11]

Approximately 2,750 cases of cardio-respiratory arrest were reported in 2015 by the Bucharest-Ilfov Ambulance Service, compared to 2,692 in 2014. The fact that 2015 demonstrates almost a doubling of the lives saved in cardio-respiratory response is largely due to the "There is a Hero in Each of You" program that encourages ordinary people to learn first aid techniques to deal with red and yellow code emergencies near them.

There are more and more volunteers entering the program, receiving the alert of the near case and intervening, being a great help both for Ambulance crews and especially for the patient.

In 2015, 32,603 people in Bucharest requested the Bucharest-Ilfov Ambulance Service, 16,644 cases being classified under the red code category, ie life-threatening emergencies (cardio-respiratory stop, accidents, stroke, etc.). Cases of the yellow code category, ie emergencies that can easily become red, were 212,179. With this volume of work, the Bucharest-Ilfov Ambulance Service receives invaluable support from volunteers.

It is worth mentioning the evolution of volunteers' contribution to the ambulance service activity.

SAFETY OF VOLUNTEERS

It is provided by regular training in labor protection and occupational medicine.

COORDINATION OF VOLUNTEERS is done at the first level by a coordinating team of experienced volunteers. DOCUMENTS used to manage volunteers

- Voluntary written contract
- Insurance against the risk of accident / disease
- Competence certificate
- Activity reports

Volunteering as a stage in the formation of future health professionals

The contribution of volunteering to individual development is reflected in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities transferable to the labor market, in the potential of volunteering as an opportunity for lifelong learning, in cultivating social skills such as trust, tolerance, self-esteem, respect for diversity. [2]

Involvement in volunteering can be an important mean of gaining the necessary skills in the labor market as well as the chance to occupy important social positions within the community.

The volunteer internship provides the development of key skills needed for new career development trends [2]

the right attitude and personality

- social empathy: understanding the issues of the organization / beneficiaries
- communication skills
- compliance with the rules of behavior
- self-empowerment and solution-oriented performance
- continuous personal and professional development - adaptation and change
- entrepreneurial abilities - vision, responsibility, commitment, perseverance, respect, teamwork
- competencies specific to the organization
- intuition, passion, creativity, initiative, influence

Analysis of volunteer activity (SWOT)

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is considered professional and / or specialized experience according to the type of activity, only if it is done in the field of graduated studies (art.10 paragraph (2) of Law 78/2014) - Gaining experience through practice - Needs on the market - diverse domains, you can take courses of initiation / specialization and especially practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's not considered seniority in work - Influences inappropriate by the attitude of others - Lack of a "safe" material incentive - Lack of firm obligations from volunteer institutions / coordinators
Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is the signal given to a future employer, an impact recruitment - Career guidance, entrepreneurship - You can have meaningful mentors in the field - Flexibility in time usage - part-time activity - You are familiar with the local community - Training provided by the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient legislation - Existence of insufficient incentives to maintain motivation - Voluntary mission requires energy, intensity, intense concentration

Increasing interest in volunteering in ambulance services is attended by post high-school pupils, or medical students, all of them wanting to enrich their knowledge baggage, and here is the right place to learn a lot in a short time, because the cases are totally different between them, staff are willing to teach them, and hospital practice is totally different from volunteer guards.

Furthermore, Law no. 78 of June 24, 2014 regulating the volunteer activity in Romania, at art. 23 states that "In competitions organized for the occupation of positions, if two or more candidates obtain equal scores, public authorities and institutions and employers, natural or legal persons, may award additional mark to candidates who present one or more voluntary certificates from volunteer activities, issued in the conditions provided by the present law, provided they constitute selection criteria". [7]

Thus, volunteering is increasingly becoming an opportunity to learn and acquire "workplace" qualifications and skills.

Measures to create a favorable environment for volunteering

In order to create an enabling environment for volunteering in any field, including emergency medicine, the necessary measures are included in the European Commission's Report on the Conduct, Outcomes and Overall Assessment of the European Year of Volunteering [3]:

- the implementation of the International Labor Organization's Manual on Voluntary Activity Measurement in order to be able to collect a comparable set of data to provide a clear picture of the valuable contribution to society of this activity
- including the competences acquired by young people during voluntary activities in the European Passport and Europass, so that formal and non-formal learning are treated in the same way;
- adequate funding, simplification of administrative procedures and the provision of tax incentives to volunteer organizations and networks, especially those with small and scarce resources;
- encouraging volunteering as part of corporate social responsibility strategies of enterprises

- implement the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and to ensure before the 2018 deadline the application of formal structures for the validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through volunteering and leading to a recognized qualification which educational institutions, employers and other entities should consider.

Expected results

- creating a culture of volunteering in Romanian society;
- creating an environment favorable to voluntary activities;
- raising awareness of the importance of volunteering activities;
- reporting the added value that the volunteer activity brings to the Romanian society;
- increasing the financing of the infrastructure for volunteering;
- valorization of volunteer activity as a hiring experience

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