

Concept Paper on Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education

Concept Coordinator: Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations

Contact person:

Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová

alzbeta.gregorova@umb.sk

0907130817

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1. Introduction and Summary of the Concept

Volunteering has a direct influence on the formation of children and youth and their values, increasing their interest in the environment and society in which they live. Volunteering also promotes active civic duties. It is a valuable addition for school and family activities, a means of personal development of a child and a young person and their social participation. Children and young people are provided the space for self-realization and the opportunity to discover their own potential through specific ideas and projects, combined with useful feedback and the evaluation of their activities. Volunteering is an experience in the form of searching and discovering for oneself what one truly enjoys and to what one wants to dedicate oneself. It is a tool for the acquisition and development of skills that contribute to increasing the employability of young people and the development of their competitiveness. When volunteering, children and young people learn new skills, develop their talents or discover skills they do not know about yet. Simultaneously, volunteering meets current societal needs and benefits all the parties involved.

Volunteering is one of the paths of informal education and informal learning, which occurs primarily outside the school environment, but it is necessary to connect it to the formal education system in all school grades, i.e. from primary and elementary schools through secondary to higher education. The experience of volunteer organizations demonstrates that children at pre-school age engaged in activities for the benefit of their community or the benefit of others are prepared as pupils and primary school pupils for the further dimension of activity, which is initiative. Several studies implemented abroad (e.g. Hall, Lasby, Ayer, Gibbons, 2009) demonstrate that when children and young people gain volunteering experience in elementary or secondary school, they are also more involved in volunteering activities at later ages.

The European Parliament Resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion also emphasizes the connection between volunteering and formal education, through which the European Parliament “calls on the Commission, the Member States as well as regional and local authorities to support volunteering through education at all levels, creating opportunities for volunteering activities in the first grades in the education system so that they are perceived as a normal contribution to community life, to continue supporting these activities for older students as well, in order to support service learning, encourage the creation of bonds between the voluntary sector and the education sector at all levels in order to promote volunteering and recognize learning within volunteering as a part of lifelong learning.”

Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on schooling and education (hereinafter referred to as the “Education Act”) and on the amendment to certain acts, as amended, lays down several objectives of formal education, whose achievement can be supported through the development of volunteering for children and young people. We will select a few from all of them:

- acquisition of social and civic competences;
- learning how to properly identify and analyze problems and propose their solutions and know how to solve them;
- acquisition and the strengthening of respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms and principles laid down in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- preparation for a responsible life in a free society, in a spirit of understanding and tolerance, equality among men and women, friendship among peoples, national and ethnic groups, and religious tolerance;
- learning to develop and cultivate their personality and have lifelong education, working in a group and taking responsibility for themselves;
- learning to respect all human ethical values.

The philosophy of volunteering is also contained in state education programs – generally in educational objectives and graduate profiles – and it is immediately formulated within the content and performance standards of subjects and cross-sectional themes. The space for the application of volunteering training and education is also provided outside education in school facilities. (A detailed analysis is available in Appendix 2.)

Universities play a special role in the process of schooling and educating young people about volunteering. In spite of these being autonomous and self-governing entities, we consider it important to include them in the concept since this role is part of the so-called third mission of universities, which should be, in addition to education and science, the leading key role of universities in Slovakia, as it is worldwide. The concept of the third mission generally includes many of the newly emerging requirements in relation to universities, mainly the requirement to play a more prominent role in stimulating the use of knowledge to achieve social, cultural and economic development.

The goal of the concept is to create prerequisites for the implementation of volunteering training and education at all levels of education in schools and schooling and educational facilities, to define the objectives and principles of volunteering training and education and set up measures for their implementation.

The concept and its introduction into practice should contribute so as to make volunteering a natural part of people’s lifestyles and the lives of communities in Slovakia, which will connect school with real life.

2. The Starting Point of the Concept

The concept of volunteering training and education is founded on strategic and conceptual documents at the European and national levels, research findings in the field of youth volunteering and the current practice.

2.1. Strategic and Conceptual Documents

The 2010–2018 EU Youth Strategy – Investing and Empowering Youth states the following: “...demonstrating social solidarity through volunteering is important for young people and is a means of personal development, education mobility, competitiveness, social cohesion and civic duty. Youth volunteering also strongly contributes to intergenerational solidarity.” The objective in this area is to promote youth volunteering by creating more extensive volunteer opportunities for young people, facilitating volunteering through the removal of obstacles, raising awareness of the value of volunteering, recognizing volunteering as an important form of informal education, and strengthening the cross-border mobility of young volunteers.

The 2014–2020 Youth Strategy 2014–2020 also pays attention to volunteering which considers the following to be a strategic goal in the area of volunteering: “to involve as many young people as possible from different groups into volunteering through the creation of diverse volunteer opportunities responding to the current needs of young people and volunteering trends; to ensure the sustainability of young people in volunteering.” One of the measures is to connect volunteering to formal education.

The support program for volunteering and volunteer centers elaborated following the

Government of the Slovak Republic Resolution No. 68/2012, Point C.15. and approved by the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for non-governmental, non-profit organizations through Resolution No. 22/2013 highlights and justifies the significance of volunteering, the urgency of its support, and the need to educate volunteers in lifelong learning. In accordance with the proposed measures of the program, the role of the action plan of the Civil Society Development Concept for the years 2017 and 2018 was the following: to prepare the concept of children and youth volunteering training and education. On the principle of volunteering as a cross-sectional theme and on the principle of experiential learning based on the reflection of experience, children and young people should be led by educators toward active participation, a proactive approach to solving societal problems and helping through volunteer activities, inclusive behaviors and pro-social attitudes and values.

2.2. Research

Volunteering has many benefits for all interested parties. The preamble to the Universal Declaration on Volunteering adopted by the International Association for Volunteer Effort at the 11th World Conference in Paris in 1990 states that “volunteers regard their work as a tool contributing to social, economic and environmental development.” The declaration also says that volunteering “increases human potential and the quality of everyday life, strengthens human solidarity, provides answers to the important challenges of our time and strives to contribute to the creation of a better and more peaceful world” and “contributes to the vitality of economic life and the creation of job vacancies and new professions.”

The analysis of the benefits of volunteering for young people in a 2015 survey (Brozman, Gregorová, Šavrnichová, Šolcová, 2016) states that the benefits of volunteering for young people have manifested themselves in the emotional, cognitive and creative areas. Volunteering is a source of social interactions, positive experiences and feelings, providing room for developing key competencies as well as other specific knowledge, skills and abilities. Thanks to volunteering, young people may change their attitudes, values, the direction of values, life views and their lifestyle. Volunteering opens up new possibilities, is a kind of diversification, enrichment, it offers a sense of meaning, necessity, utility and self-realization. It allows to try new things, encounter unknown people or overcome one’s own limits as well as travel and learn about new countries. In the area of social life, volunteering can be seen as a way of developing the personal and social responsibility, engagement and participation of young people. The benefits of volunteering for young people are closely connected to the world of study and work. Due to volunteer activities, young people gain valuable experience and practice along with the knowledge and skills they use in their professional lives. Several young people have found work because of volunteering or have decided to study or work. Student volunteers allow the better connection of theory and practice. The benefits of volunteering are interconnected for the personal, professional and social life of young people. Social contacts and key competences are particularly useful in the sphere of personal, social and professional life, which young people develop or acquire through volunteering. Volunteering is also a way of discovering and developing the talents of young people through performing specific activities and working with experts who provide leadership and support to young people.

The benefits of volunteering are also evidence of young people’s expectations in the engaging of volunteer activities, discovered as part of a quality standards survey for volunteer management (Table No. 1).

Table No. 1: Expectations of Young People from Volunteering

The expectation of respondents from volunteer experience demonstrate that young people want to learn through volunteering, develop new skills, learn about themselves and gain new experience that they will use in their personal and professional life. There is also an important social dimension of volunteering for them in terms of new friendships and contacts, and informality in the form of events connected to the performance of volunteering. On the other hand, a sense of usefulness and reciprocity are also important for them.

Other research on youth volunteering performed in 2017 as a part of the project on the concept of the children and youth volunteering training and education (Brozmanová Gregorová, Siekelová, Šoková, 2018) presents the following key findings on the participation of young people (15 to 30 years of age) in volunteering:

- 50 % of young people have been involved in formal volunteering, 47.5 % have provided help without the participation of an organization (informal volunteering);
- Engagement in formal and informal volunteering is closely related. Young people active in formal volunteering are also active in informal volunteering and vice versa.

Source: Brozmanová Gregorová, A. et al., 2014

Expectation	%
it allows me to learn through direct experience	69
it offers me the opportunity to create new friendships	68
I'm looking forward to the events associated with it	65
it will teach me how to deal with different types of people	61
it offers me the opportunity to develop work skills	56
I can identify my strengths through volunteering	52
I often use the experience of volunteering in my personal life	51
I feel important and/or useful due to volunteering.	48
I believe that what I do for others/the world returns to me	43
I create contacts and connections important for work through volunteer activities	38
thanks to these activities I feel that I'm a good person	30
I would like to help someone because I myself was/am in a difficult situation	28
it gives me an escape from my own problems	12
I feel less lonely because of thanks to volunteering	10

- Approximately 80 % of young people have been involved in volunteer activities for more than 12 months.
- Volunteer activities within organizations was performed by 62.7 % of young volunteers at least once a month, while others help more irregularly. About a third is involved in volunteering at least once a week. It is also the case with informal volunteering – 63.7 % of volunteers help at least once a month.
- The most frequent areas of young people's application in volunteering are the environment, sport, health, social services and children and youth organizations. More than half of the volunteer's help is provided in non-governmental, non-profit organizations, 12.2 % are engaged in volunteer activities within school.
- Differences in engaging in formal volunteering in terms of
 - gender (women engage significantly more in formal and informal volunteering);
 - the level of education attained (the differences are mainly due to the significantly lower

- participation of the group with secondary education without school-leaving exams and the significantly higher participation of young people with university education in both types of volunteering);
- the place of residence (young people in towns significantly more involved in formal volunteering than those in the countryside, no differences in the case of informal volunteering);
 - the socio-economic status (in formal volunteering, there is significantly more involvement by secondary-school and university students. On the other hand, there is significantly less involvement by unemployed young people and people on maternity/parental leave; in the case of informal volunteering, the differences are due to the significantly lower participation of unemployed young people);
 - with regard to the marital status, single young people are more involved only in the case of formal volunteerism;
 - membership in an organization (significantly more young people who are also members of an organization are engaged in both types of volunteering);
- Differences in participation in formal volunteering have not been recorded in terms of the young people's age and religion.
 - For young people aged 15 to 30 who became volunteers, educators were the source of information on volunteering in only 16 % of cases.
 - More than 60 % of the survey's respondents think that a school should motivate young people and connect them to volunteer activities.

2.3. Practice

Several organizations in Slovakia have started organizing recruitment of volunteers in schools, and organizing their own volunteer program for their own recruited people. Schools are mostly inclined toward this cooperation, but volunteering is also perceived in this case as an extracurricular activity and a part of informal education. In primary and secondary schools and universities, we also encounter active educators who inspire children and young people to engage in voluntary activities and organize these activities, i.e. they actively search for opportunities or plan them together with pupils and students. Volunteering in the school environment is also supported by several non-governmental organizations within their programs, e.g. the Institute for Active Citizenship, the Green Foundation, some regional volunteer centers or the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica is a university involved in the development of volunteering with close connections to education (more about examples of volunteering in a school environment can be read in the publication *Youth Volunteering in Slovakia* (2018), which arose as part of the concept-creation project). In schools, however, it is often the case that the good intention of being an active school, being "in", leads to pupils being engaged in volunteering without their free choice, which results in a negative attitude on the part of the pupils. Connecting volunteer experience with the schooling and educational process and their reflection is instead a rather clear exception, and many volunteering activities of pupils and students remain "only" an experience without explicitly specified schooling and educational goals.

3. Objectives of Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education

By means of actual volunteer experience, the objective of volunteering training and education is

to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable children and young people to actively engage in volunteering throughout their lives.

The children and youth volunteering training and education should fulfill the following partial objectives:

- to form the perception of volunteering as an activity on the basis of one's own decision, free-of-charge and for the benefit of other people and society;
- to promote the perception of volunteering benefits and its values for society and for volunteers;
- to develop the perception and sensitivity of children and youth towards their surroundings and towards the needs and problems of the narrower or wider community in which they live;
- to lead children and youth toward co-responsibility for what is happening in their surroundings and to develop their self-confidence as the bearers of change in society;
- to promote the interconnection of volunteering and gained competencies with the personal and future professional life of children and young people.

4. Principles of Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education

The children and youth volunteering training and education should be based on the following principles:

Cross-sectioning

The basic principles of volunteering include diversity. The children and youth volunteering training and education can thus overlap with education areas as a cross-sectional theme. The children and young people volunteering training and education can be implemented as part of the educational content of individual areas of education and schooling subjects using interdisciplinary relationships or as a separate educational subject within electives.

The Clear Connection of Volunteer Experience to the Objectives and Content of Education

The volunteer experience of children and young people must be explicitly connected to the objectives and content of education. When planning activities, it is the role of the educator to plan what specific knowledge and skills can be developed by children and young people by engaging in the activities. The objectives should be connected not only to the objectives of the children and youth volunteering training and education, but also to the objectives of training and education of any other themes or subjects.

Balance of Benefits

Each volunteer activity has benefits for many interested parties. In children and youth volunteering training and education, it is necessary to reflect that through voluntary activities, children and young people influence the society, help solve problems or fulfill diverse needs and promote the building of solidarity. On the other hand, it is also worth pointing out the benefits of implementing activities for young people themselves. Volunteering allows young people to learn through direct experience and benefit from volunteering for their further personal and professional development.

Adult Model

Adults should be an active model in the process of volunteering training and education; volunteer activities are to be implemented together with children and youth. If the educators are not active, they cannot require a high level of activity from their pupils. They should not be in the role of a "superior" but, instead, of a "facilitator/guide" and help their pupils and students to participate in volunteering. His/her objective is to create interest, which is one of the keys to success.

“Pro-volunteering” Atmosphere

One of the basic prerequisites and principles of introducing volunteering training and education in a school environment or school facility is the so-called pro-volunteering atmosphere. Volunteering should be supported and valued by school leadership, the group of educators and the non-teaching staff.

Learning from One’s Own Experience

Activity, i.e. one’s own experience, plays the primary role in the learning process and the creation of positive habits – theory being secondary – mainly in the context of building a long-term and lasting relationship with volunteering. Learning from one’s own experience plays an indispensable role in the process of volunteering training and education.

Reflection of Experience

Reflection in the processes of volunteering training can be imagined as the processing of experience from a concrete activity and its implementation into experience applicable in the future. In this context the reflection of experience is a necessary condition so that children and young people develop and form their attitudes. The reflection serves as a retrospective look at volunteer work as both in terms of the scope of work and the personal experience. It is important to reflect together with children and young people on a continuous basis, in the case of one-off events after they end, and not to forget about it.

Flexibility, Diversity and Possibility of Choice

It is necessary to maintain diversity and flexibility in the type of voluntary activities as well as in the “depth” of the commitment, the level of responsibility, the time scale or the preference of the individual or group form of volunteering. Children and young people should have the opportunity to contribute with their ideas while having the possibility of selection and freedom of choice.

Entertainment

Volunteering has to bring joy, fulfillment and satisfaction to the engaged children and young people. Volunteering offers space to solve an interesting task that has an individual meaning and social reach. Energy spent on a challenge where a child or a young person is able to apply their own abilities for the benefit of another individual or group of people brings about inner fulfillment.

Recognition

If the objective of volunteering is the long-term help to others and the community, then the reward is the most powerful satisfaction and motivation for future work and social engagement. The acquired experience, which is recognized by the community, is reflected in future deeds and relationships. It helps build self-awareness and self-confidence. Last but not least, recognition helps educate children and young people to be enthusiastic, initiative citizens as well as conscious and creative personalities.

Priority of Needs before the Idea

Before initiating the planning and implementation of volunteer activity by educators, children and young people, it is necessary to critically assess whether the activity is currently appropriate, necessary and useful in terms of the needs of the society, the community or other circumstances in which they want to implement the activity and whether its implementation is a priority over other ideas or potentially necessary activities. The current need clearly prevails over the idea, however good it may be. It is not appropriate to perform volunteer activities without considering their suitability only so that some are implemented, but on the contrary, it is advisable to carry out those that are actually beneficial in the given context.

Work with Community/People, not for Community/People

When planning and implementing volunteer activities, we need to build on a horizontal model of delivering help, in which we teach children and young people not only to provide help, but to respect

the fact that both parties in the process of help should be active bearers of change. Target groups involved in volunteering should be involved as much as possible within their capabilities and possibilities in planning and delivering help.

Leadership of Children and Young People

Children and young people should be involved as much as possible in the planning, implementation and evaluation of volunteer activities. They should feel ownership of the volunteer project/activity and be leaders of activities, not only their implementers. This requires creating space and motivating lead educators to respect ideas and intentions of children and young people.

The Long-term Principle

The children and youth volunteering training and education can be implemented through different types of activities, but should provide space for a transition from short-term activities to longer-term and more systematic volunteering service. Through volunteering training and education, children and young people should be encouraged to continue in their activities even beyond guidance on the part of the school. For the purpose of achieving the actual training and educational impact of the activities, it is necessary for them to take place in schools on a long-term and regular basis throughout the school year (i.e. not regularly once a year).

Growing Demands

Engaging in volunteering provides young people with the opportunity to continuously grow and make progress. In the implementation of volunteering education and training, this creates the space for the gradual increase of demands in the field of volunteer activities with the focus of developing a wider range of knowledge, skills and attitudes of children and youth.

Inspiration by the Examples of Good Practice

For the purpose of a good functioning and support of volunteering in the formal and informal education system, there is a need for an environment permitting a wide range of good and successful examples of volunteer projects and activities. It is important for these examples to be highly accessible to both educators and children and young people and to use them in the implementation of projects. The system should also inspire different forms of volunteering, from one-off activities through various forms of short-term activities to long-term forms of volunteering.

Targeted Motivation

Children and young people may lose their motivation, so it is advisable to regularly encourage them, be more in contact with them as well as offer the informal and formal recognition of the benefits of their volunteer activity, affirmation, certificates or employment recommendations.

Respect for Specific Needs

In case children and young people with special needs are involved in school or schooling, their needs and social situation need to be taken into consideration (demands on time, attendance, accessibility, or need for assistance) when engaging in volunteering.

5. Models of Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education

In practice, it is possible to identify several models of children and youth volunteering training and education. The models differ in the extent to which the school and its teachers are involved in the organization or coordination of voluntary activities of students and to which the volunteering is connected with the schooling and educational process of the school (Brozmanová Gregorová, Kurpielová, Šoková, Bielešová, 2013) .

The first model is individual volunteering. It is the volunteering of young people developed by independent volunteer centers or organizations. In this case, there is no school directly involved in the organization of volunteer activities. The connection between the participation of pupils in volunteer activities and the process of their education in the school environment is usually not analyzed. Volunteering is performed on an individual basis. Pupils or students are addressed so as to engage in the activities of organizations in different ways. They engage in one-off but also regular volunteer activities. They help with the organization of events, administrative work as well as direct work with clients. Volunteers conclude a contract on the volunteering activity according to the nature of the activity, their preparation for the performance of the activity is implemented, or they are provided with support. The quality of work with young volunteers within organizations can vary greatly. In ideal cases the organization has a designated coordinator of volunteers, a planned system of work with volunteers, i.e. the determination of what they will do, when, where, what kind of volunteers they need, and what their schooling, motivation and support system will be.

The second model is to address pupils and students and to engage them subsequently in the volunteer activities of specific organizations in cooperation with school representatives. For example, the school will provide space for the presentation of organizations and their volunteer offers (through posters, information materials, website links, discussions, lectures, etc.). Subsequently, the school does not cooperate with the organization and with volunteers in the work itself anymore. This volunteering model has also been used here in Slovakia in recent years. Pupils and students are most often engaged in helping with public collections as well as activities in direct work with different target groups. Moreover, our experience in organizing activities within the Volunteer Days and the Volunteer Week demonstrates that schools are inclined toward this kind of cooperation, but a volunteering activity is also seen in this case as an extracurricular activity.

The third model presents teachers acting as volunteer coordinators or even volunteer centers themselves operating directly in schools, their management being shared among the school staff, external staff as well as pupils and students themselves. Their aim is the promotion of volunteering among students, mediating contact between them and the organizations in need of volunteers, or developing their own volunteer programs and projects involving pupils or whoever the projects' creators are. In the case of involvement of school teachers in the management of volunteer activities, this model also provides space for the reflection of the voluntary experience in relation to education or allows mutual cooperation with organizations – for example, in the field of preparing schooling of volunteers or their supervision. In Slovakia this volunteer model in the individual grades of schools has only started. However, we begin to encounter active educators who lead pupils to engage in volunteer activities and organize this activity too. However, the initiative also comes from the environment of organizations making an effort to establish long-term partnerships with schools to acquire pupils or an entire school for their activities and projects.

The development of a specific model of volunteering for pupils and students of all school grades closely connected to education systems has been occurring in recent years abroad, and the first examples already exist in Slovakia (**Model 4**). Volunteering has been incorporated into the academic curriculum as a form of experimental learning. The common designation for this volunteering model is **service learning**. Within this concept the volunteer experience is incorporated into subjects that can have different objectives (math, geography, history or any other subject). The methodology of teaching all or a part of a subject is based on service for the benefit of others in the community and its reflection in relation to the learning objectives. In the foreign specialist literature we find not only a few definitions of service learning, but also paradigms and perspectives of looking at this strategy. Service learning is currently consensually defined through three key characteristics:

- it is a preconceived and organized experience of students acquired through a service that responds to the authentic needs of the community,
- it is performed through the cooperation of students with members of the community, while

students are involved in the planning, preparation and evaluation of the service learning activity itself,

- the service learning is incorporated into the academic curriculum and the research context¹.

This model represents the ideal concept of implementing volunteering education and training in the environment of all school grades and different school facilities. All the above-mentioned principles of volunteering training and education are respected.

6. Draft Measures and Recommendations for the Implementation of the Concept Paper on Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education in Practice

6.1 Measures:

1. Elaborate a methodology for implementing volunteering training and education at each level of education

Sponsor: The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, OM

Cooperating entities: SRS, OCV, SVŠ, SŠ, SNIV, UMB, MPC, ŠPÚ, Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations, NGOs

Deadline: 2018

2. Elaborate an assessment system for schools and school facilities in relation to the implementation of volunteering training and education in schools and school facilities

Sponsor: Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, OM

Cooperating entities: SRS, SNIV, ŠPÚ, ŠŠI, DoFE, Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for the Development of Civil Society, Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations

Deadline: 2019

3. Elaborating a continuing education program for pedagogical staff and professional staff in the field of volunteering training and education and a program for their further support

Sponsor: MPC

Cooperating entities: UMB, Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations, NGOs

Deadline: 2018

4. Perform a calculation to fulfill the measures of the Concept Paper on Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education for the years 2018-2019, including a proposal for its possible updating

Sponsor: The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, OM

Cooperating entities: SRŠ, OCV, SVŠ, SŠ, SNIV, ŠPÚ

Deadline: March 2020

6.2 Recommendations:

1. Incorporate schooling in the field of volunteering training and education into the preparation of future pedagogical staff

¹ Regina, Carla

Service-learning in Central and Eastern Europe handbook for engaged teachers and students / Carla Regina; Candelaria Ferrara; coordinación general de Luz Mariela Avruj; María Nieves Tapia. - 1a ed. - Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: CLAYSS, 2017. ISBN 978-987-46321-9-7

Recipients: universities and secondary schools preparing future pedagogical staff

2. Create a system for cooperation between schools and volunteer organizations and volunteer centers and their networking in the field of volunteering training and education

Recipients: schools, Platform for Volunteer Centers and Organizations, regional volunteer centers, NGOs

3. Use existing programs (DofE, RmS, Green Foundation, the European Solidarity Corps EU initiative and other) in the application of training and education of children and youth in volunteering

Recipients: IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute, Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations, schools, NGOs

4. Introduce the position of a volunteer activity coordinator in school

Recipients: primary schools and secondary schools

Appendix 1

Definition of basic concepts related to the topic of children and youth volunteering training and education

Volunteering

Volunteering is a consciously unpaid activity or work performed on the basis of free will for the benefit of other people, the society or the environment outside family members and the volunteer's household. Voluntary activity can be performed or may be mediated within different types of organizations; in this case we are talking about formal volunteering. However, volunteering also occurs outside the context of organizations (such as neighborhood assistance, community work, etc.). We talk about this type of volunteering as informal volunteering. (Brozmanová Gregorová et al., 2012). The basic legal framework for formal volunteering is provided by Act No. 406/2011 Coll. on Volunteering and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended.

Volunteer

According to Act No. 406/2011 Coll. on Volunteering, a volunteer is a natural person (older than 15 years) who, on the basis of his/her free decision without remuneration, performs for another person, with his or her consent, for their benefit or the public benefit, a volunteer activity based on his/her abilities, skills or knowledge and fulfills the conditions laid down by this act. The Volunteer Act is not applicable for those who have not reached the age of 15, so when they engage in volunteer activities, we talk about volunteering training and education. In common communication, however, they are designated as volunteers.

Volunteering Activity

A volunteering activity according to Act No. 406/2011 Coll. on Volunteering is an activity performed on the basis of a free decision without remuneration, for another person with his or her consent, for their benefit or the benefit of the public. The following are not volunteering activities according to this Act:

- an activity performed between spouses or between close relatives;
- an activity performed within business or other gainful activity;
- an activity performed in an employment relationship, in a state employment relationship, in employment or an activity performed in the course of study obligations;
- mutual civic or neighborly assistance;
- an activity performed by people who have not reached 15 years of age.

The volunteer performs the volunteering activity on the basis of a contract on volunteering activity with the recipient of the volunteering activity or the sending organization.

Volunteer Organization

Under the term "volunteer organization", we mean an organization that needs and uses volunteering to achieve its objective. It can be a non-governmental non-profit organization as well as a public organization that works with volunteers toward its objective. Volunteer organizations may have paid employees, but they do not have to (Brozmanová Gregorová, Bielešová, Kurpielová, 2013).

Recipient of the Volunteering Activity

The recipient of the volunteering activity may be a natural person or legal entity (other than a commercial company), for whom the volunteer performs volunteer work on the basis of a contract on volunteering activity. Within his/her activity, the recipient of the volunteering work selects, usually records and prepares volunteers to perform volunteer activities and concludes with them a contract on volunteering activity (Act No. 406/2011 Coll., on Volunteering).

Sending Organization

Within its activities the deployment organization selects, records, prepares and sends volunteers to

perform the volunteering activity and concludes a contract on volunteering activity with them. According to the Act on Volunteering, a sending organization may be the following:

- a civic association;
- a non-profit organization providing generally beneficial services;
- a church or religious society, or a legal entity deriving its legal personality from a church or a religious society;
- school or school facility;

state authorities, higher territorial units, municipalities and legal entities constituted or incorporated by a legal person (Act No. 406/2011 Coll. on Volunteering).

Volunteer Coordinator

The volunteer coordinator is a key figure in the management of the volunteer program in the organization. He/she is responsible for managing the program and the volunteers (Brozmanová Gregorová, Bielešová, Kurpielová, 2013).

Volunteer Center

The Volunteer Center (VC) is a service organization for the public and organization working with volunteers, interested in volunteering, volunteers and organizations/projects that are in need of the help of volunteers. The mission of a VC is to support the development of volunteering and to build civil society and improve the quality of life through it.

Volunteer centers mainly perform the following activities:

- promotion and education in the field of volunteering;
- education in the field of volunteering;
- maintaining a database of organizations and databases of volunteers and their interconnection;
- networking of organizations in regions;
- mediation of volunteer opportunities;
- consultation in the preparation of volunteer programs, improvement of volunteer management in organizations;
- raising awareness of the social value of volunteering through social events focused on evaluating volunteers in individual regions;
- research activity in the field of volunteering (Brozmanová Gregorová et al., 2012)

Training is an intentional, purposeful action having impact on the processes of human learning and socialization with the objective of transforming humans in all aspects – the physical one and the mental one; in order to transform a human from a social being to a cultural being. Training means the mediation of the abilities, skills and attitudes that exist in society and which, , are considered important for its duration and further development of future generations (Kováčiková, Sámelová, 2016).

Education is the process of acquiring education. Education is a purposefully organized and implemented process of schooling, educational action and learning focused on the development of a child or pupil in accordance with his/her expectations and incentives that stimulate his/her own efforts to become a harmonious personality (the Act on Schooling).

Formal education is official education provided by qualified lecturers, teachers or schools. It is completed by some form of certificate or certification (Nemcová, Rovňanová, 2016; Průcha, Walterová, Mareš, 2008).

Informal education occurs alongside mainstream education, professional preparation and courses, and no official documents are usually issued upon its completion. Informal education can be provided at the workplace and within the activities of civic associations and organizations (e.g. youth organizations, unions and political parties). It can also be provided through organizations created to complement formal education systems (e.g. art, music, after-school sports, private lessons such as exam preparation) (Fudaly, Lenčo, 2008).

A child is, according to the Convention on the Rights of a Child, any human being under the age of eighteen, provided that is not reached earlier according to the law applicable to the child. The reaching of majority in the legislation of the Slovak Republic is governed by the Civil Code. According to the Civil Code, majority is reached at the age of eighteen. Before reaching this age, majority is reached only through marriage.

Youth is, according to Act No. 282/2008 Coll. on Support of Work with Youth and on amendments to Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education Institutions and on amendments to certain Acts, as amended, a group of at least three youths. A youth is a person who is less than 30, i.e. pursuant to law we consider younger people to be from 0 to 30 years of age.

School educational and schooling facilities follow the activities of schools and develop the interest of children and pupils. According to the School Act we find the following among school educational facilities: the children's school club, the leisure center and the school dormitories.

Extracurricular schooling presents a specific set of schooling and educational activities with pupils at a time outside schooling, which seeks to deepen and systematically develop the individual aspects of the pupil's personality on which the school has focused in the schooling process. In terms of the continuity of extracurricular schooling, we also understand it as a system supporting the development of those aspects of the personality of children significant for schooling toward independence, the development of self-realization, the acquisition of good habits in terms of effective use of leisure time, not only during school attendance, but also at further stages of life. Extracurricular education can be understood as an integral part of the pedagogical influence of the leisure time pupils have during their extracurricular time, outside of families in a public environment under the guidance of the school facility staff. According to European documents, extracurricular schooling includes informal education. (Creation of Schooling Programs in School Facilities, 2009, available at <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/4107.pdf>; Kouteková et al., 2013; Act No. 245/2008 on Upbringing and Education).

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Act No. 282/2008 Coll. on Support of Work with Youth and on amendments to Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education and on amendments to certain Acts, as amended

Appendix 2

The theme of volunteering in state educational and schooling programs (SEP)

Volunteering is one of the most prolific forms of prosocial, altruistic action in the human society. It is the manifestation of responsibility for ourselves, for others, for our world. Besides an economic asset in the contemporary society, volunteering has an invaluable significance for its emphasis on positive human values, being a counterbalance to the materialism and consumption of the contemporary society. The philosophy of volunteering is also contained in state education programs (SEP) – generally in educational objectives and graduate profiles – and immediately formulated within the content and performance standards of subjects and cross-sectional themes. This mainly includes *civic education*, *ethics education*, and the cross-sectional themes are mainly environmental education and personal and social development.

Pre-Primary Education (Preschool)

In the *SEP for pre-primary education in preschools* (2016), it is possible to implicitly deduce the theme of the volunteering from the objectives of the education area of *Man and Society*. Through the below-mentioned content of education, considering the basic framework of the key competences of a child in preschool, the child gains the **elementary foundations of civic, social, personal competences and competencies to learn, solve problems and think creatively and critically**.

The educational area of *Man and Society* is oriented toward **recognition of the social environment and prosocial education**. The part of **prosocial education** is oriented toward developing the desired personality characteristics of the child. In the educational standards of the sub-area *People in the Near and Wider Surroundings*, an emphasis is placed on creating the child's identity, especially on the basis of family ties, and on **acquiring elementary social skills** important for his/her **social communication** between peers and for the functioning of the child among people in the wider social environment in the context of multiculturalism and inclusion.

The sub-area *Basics of Etiquette* focuses on learning cultivated behavior while respecting the basic rules of decency. The sub-area of *Human Attributes and Emotions* focuses on perceiving and recognizing positive and negative emotions and attributes in themselves and others (both children and adults), promoting the tactful guidance of the child leading him/her to elementary self-reflection. The sub-area of *Prosocial Behavior* focuses on **creating the assumptions for the prosocial feelings and behavior of children**, e.g. for the application of **gratitude, help, donation, sharing**, etc.

In two educational sub-areas one can particularly find a relation to the idea of volunteering through education to pro-social behavior – explicitly expressed in the form of several performance and content standards (Table No. 2).

Table No. 2

<i>Education sub-area</i>	<i>Performance standard</i>	<i>Content standard</i>
Human attributes and emotions	Identifying positive and negative human attributes.	The teacher creates opportunities for children to identify positive and negative attributes... Children are also given the opportunity to evaluate negative attributes through the image of the inappropriate behavior of negative heroes from different media – children's literature, film, television...

Prosocial Behavior	Distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.	Creating situations for mutual active listening, e.g. conversational experiences, leading children to listen to one another. Leading children to understand appropriate and inappropriate behavior through stories and fairy tales in various media - children's literature, film, television ... Presenting fairy tales and stories to children where the heroes help each other.
	Providing others with help. Asking for help when the situation requires it and being thankful for help from others.	Achieving that children help each other in various situations and appreciating this help with a positive evaluation.
	Sharing things.	Thus directing children toward mutual sharing of toys or things and evaluating this action positively.
	Appreciating good deeds.	The teacher expresses the appreciation for good deeds toward the child. Encouraging children to express a particular appreciation for the good deed of another child or adult.

Volunteering, although not being a part of SEPs explicitly as a term, it is present in the SEPs through a variety of topics related to the life of preschool age children. It can be included **within issues such as family, respect for the elderly, a relationship to socially and health-wise disadvantaged people, care for their surroundings, the surroundings of the school, the environment (topics covered by environmental education)** and others. Concepts like *willingness, enthusiasm, patience, will, honesty* and *reliability* are abstract terms (they are attributes) that relate to specific manifestations of thought or behavior (characters, people, animal heroes, etc.). For a preschool child, a link to specific situations is typical, so the achievement of these performance standards mentioned is connected to different contexts – **in real situations, in stories** (with a child hero, animal hero, etc.) and **fairy tales** through a **character's behavior**, which are part of stories suitable for children of preschool age. In relation to the development of understanding and using these abstract concepts, the teacher helps children to connect concrete behavior to the abstract concept – attribute of the person/character/hero – and allow its identification in the future as well.

In the field of prosocial education, there are a number of professional publications in Slovakia in which there are detailed elaborated objectives, methods and strategies for the development of prosocial behavior and emotional intelligence in preschool children (the selected titles are summarized and recommended, for example, in the Metodická príručka k vzdelávacej oblasti Človek a spoločnosť, Višňovská, M., ŠÚP, 2016).

Primary Education – First Grade of Primary School

As in pre-primary education or in primary education, the concept of volunteering itself is not part of the SEPs. The theme of volunteering is implemented through several subjects and cross-sectional themes. Within the mandatory elective subject of ethics education, prosocial behavior, value orientation and the cultivation of interpersonal relations occupy a significant place. Supported topics include the development of attitudes, human dignity, the positive assessment of others, initiatives, empathy, conflict resolution, assistance, donation and sharing, solidarity and human qualities that can be used for the common good.

Ethics Education

The **objective** of ethics education as a mandatory elective subject (in alternation with religious education) is **education toward pro-social behavior**. The definition of pro-social behavior presents four features: altruism, selflessness, balance and stability, on which volunteering is also founded.

Relevant Subject Objectives:

Pupils will learn **to participate in the life of the society** (classes, schools, regions); acquire the elements of pro-social behavior in the family, in the group of pupils; acquire the basics of a positive attitude toward disabled, sick and elderly people. The above-mentioned objectives are projected **in themes**, e.g. trying to identify with the feelings of others: empathy; help, donation, sharing; elements of pro-social behavior and others.

Environmental education leads pupils toward a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between humans, organisms and the environment. The theme of volunteering as support for the improvement of human life also relates to nature conservation activities, to improving the environment, to contributing to the development of the environment and economical behavior toward natural resources. These themes are included in the subjects of elementary and natural sciences.

Lower Secondary Education – Second Level of Primary School

Civic Education

The subject is characterized in the SEP as follows: *“The subject contributes to the creation and development of the social and civic awareness of pupils. Through defined concepts and performances, the subject provides the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to enable pupils to orient themselves in the social environment and in normal life situations. It allows pupils to understand themselves and help them in their socialization process.”*

Relevant Subject Objectives:

Pupils should learn the rules and standards of social co-existence; learn about active citizenship and personal involvement.

This also includes volunteering as a manifestation of positive social coexistence and personal involvement. The subject specifically refers to the thematic unit entitled *Social Relationships in Society*, where part of the performance standard is a requirement for **proposing specific forms of assistance for the disabled and the elderly in the surroundings**. The content standard directly lists the term **volunteering**, which is supplemented by the term **charitable activity**.

The textbook for the 7th year reflects the SEP standards, and the thematic unit *Civil Life as a Process of Forming Democracy* contains an article entitled: **Participation in a wider social environment – volunteering**.

Volunteering is defined as a civic activity in which a citizen provides his/her own free time and work without remuneration for the benefit of society. The textbook also mentions what forms of volunteering we know about, for whom the volunteer activity is provided, and there are also suggestions for pupils on how they can help themselves, even if they are not yet at the statutory age to perform an official volunteer activity. A key term linking individual information is **pro-social behavior**. Finally, pupils learn that helping people and alleviating their misery is the performance of a **charitable activity**. The most important words include a reference to UNICEF. Moreover, logos of the organizations League against Cancer, Strom života (Tree of Life) and Sloboda zvierat (Freedom for Animals) are listed.

For informative purposes the textbook also presents a comparison of volunteering laws in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Italy in the form of a table. Tasks for pupils follow below the table.

Ethics Education

Relevant Subject Objectives:

Pupils can **actively participate in the life of the society** (class, school, region, club, city); assess the importance of pro-social behavior in the family, pupils and other social groups; adopt a positive attitude

toward the disabled, sick and other people who need increased understanding and aid.

The objectives are projected in concrete themes: prosocial behavior and its types (assistance, donation, division, cooperation), physical and psychological assistance, empathy in pro-social behavior, cooperation in social projects; **relationship to the sick, old, health-wise and socially disadvantaged people**, understanding for the elderly and the sick, the need to communicate with them, a project proposal for personal assistance to help dependent people; **economic values and ethics** – consumer society, social inequality, economic virtues, solidarity, volunteering, charity.

Higher Secondary Education – Grammar School

Civic Education

The SEP for gymnasiums with a four-year and five-year education programs characterizes civic education as follows: *“The subject familiarizes students with family and school relationships, with the activities of important political institutions and authorities, and with possible ways of involving individuals in civic life. Develops the civic and legal awareness of pupils, strengthens an individual’s sense of personal and civic responsibility and motivates pupils to actively participate in the life of a democratic society.”*

The thematic unit *Humans and Society* contains a performance standard as follows: **The pupil knows how to illustrate examples of involvement in the school environment.** This standard would complement involvement across all society, having a direct connection to the content standard, where concepts like **socialization, charity and volunteering** appear.

In the textbook for the 3rd year the theme of volunteering is related to the aforementioned civic associations and organizations. Within the tasks, suggestions and incentives, pupils are encouraged to provide information on what activities these organizations offer. In general volunteering is also presented as a suitable form of leisure time.

Ethics Education

Relevant Subject Objectives:

Obtain assumptions about moral judgment and a sense of responsibility; acquire basic ethical concepts, a relationship between values and norms; obtain key attitudes and competencies related to these values and standards.

The objective is achieved **through** several **themes, e.g. communication** – manifest empathy toward classmates, justify the principles of assertive behavior, evaluate prosocial expressions in class; **ethics of work, ethics and economics** – the significance of solidarity, fair trade, the pros and cons of globalization.

Processed by: ŠPÚ, 02.02.2018

The theme of volunteering in state education programs in the field of vocational education

PhDr. Ľ. Biziková, PhDr. D. Vargová, CSc., Mgr. M. Bubeník, Mgr. J. Kovaľová, PhD.,
Mgr. M. Višňovská, PhD.

The issue of youth volunteering training and education is not explicitly defined in the vast majority of state education programs for Vocational Schooling and Education (hereinafter referred to as “SEP”), in the wider context integrated in the following two levels of competencies.

1. Competencies relating to volunteering activities in general in the SEP for all groups of education departments, requirements that are a prerequisite for volunteering defined at the level of key competencies. In relation to acquiring the ability to work in diverse groups, there are mainly the following requirements:

- showing empathy and self-reflection,
- expressing of feelings and correcting negativity,
- positively motivating oneself and others,
- influencing people (urging, persuasion);

- setting priority goals,
- cooperating to solve problems with other people,
- contributing to creating interpersonal relationships, preventing personal conflicts, avoiding prejudice and stereotypes in approaching others.

2. Professional competencies usable in specific fields of volunteering activities, in education standards for professional education and preparation of issues related to volunteering are integrated to varying degrees in terms of the specificities of the individual education departments. Professional competencies are a prerequisite for a potential connection between a professional career and volunteering in specific fields of volunteer work (e.g. work with children, seniors, disadvantaged groups of the population, culture, environmental protection, etc.). The most important issue is represented in the SEP for the groups of the following education departments: 68 Legal Sciences, 75 Pedagogical Sciences and 76 Pedagogical Sciences, which prepare specialists in the field of social and educational work with various groups of the population: children, seniors and disadvantaged people. In the meaning of the required personal prerequisites, characteristics and abilities stated in the SEP, the graduates of these education departments are characterized by:

- friendliness,
- pro-social behavior,
- humaneness,
- empathy,
- tolerance,
- emotional stability,
- altruism,
- initiative,
- creativity.

The content of education in SEP for the group of education departments 68 Legal Sciences focuses on the use of tools and forms of aid mainly for families with children, citizens in crisis, senior citizens and disadvantaged citizens as well as forms of aid for non-state subjects. The thematic areas related to social work, social policy, social and legal protection cover themes like employment and the labor market, disabled citizens, volunteering, human rights, third world countries, and humanitarian aid.

The SEP for groups of department 75 Pedagogical Sciences and 76 Teaching contain, for individual study departments, educational standards allowing a qualified training of a graduate for professions and job positions in pre-primary education, in the schooling of children and youth during leisure time, in hosting activities, nursing and social care for various age categories of clients. An important part of the education content is the support and advocacy of human rights in professional and civic life, knowledge of the management system and institutions acting in the area of government, self-government, the third sector in Slovakia and the European Union.

Educational standards for enabling the acquisition of professional competences applicable to volunteering activities in the field of environmental protection are contained in the SEP for groups of education departments 28 Technical and Applied Chemistry, 29 Food, 42, 45 Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development I, II and 39 Special Technical Departments.

Content of Education in the SEP 82 Arts and Crafts Production I, 85 Arts and Crafts Production II and SEP for conservatories create prerequisites for linking vocational training and volunteering in the field of culture and preservation of cultural heritage.

In connection with the subject matter, it is possible to state also the inclusion of a separate content standard focused on philanthropy in the SEP for groups of education departments 62 Economic sciences,

Professional education for other specific areas of volunteering is provided by a number of groups of education departments. We mention the following departments as examples: the 3964 M Protection of Persons and Property Against Fire and 9245 M Protection of Persons and Property.

Within the two-level model of education, the issue of volunteering is reflected in the state educational programs of secondary vocational schools and conservatories in the curricula of particular subjects as well as in the implementation of voluntary and beneficial events in cooperation with civic associations, foundations and other non-profit organizations.

Elaborated by: RNDr. Mária Hrušovská

Bratislava, 24. 01. 2018

The theme of volunteering in documents relating to educational activities in school educational and schooling facilities (the children's school club, the leisure center, the school dormitories)

All three facilities create conditions for satisfaction of individual needs and interests of pupils through extra-curricular activities during time outside of teaching time and school holidays. Individual school educational and schooling facilities will elaborate their own curricula at least to the extent set forth by the educational standard. According to the regulations of the individual facilities, the schooling and educational activities are provided by the educators according to the educational program of the school dormitories during time outside of teaching time, appropriate to the age, interests, needs and abilities of children and pupils.

Schooling and educational activity focuses, among other things, on shaping the active attitude of children and pupils to self-schooling and self-education, to meet individual needs and interests, to develop talents, specific abilities and creativity, to actively use leisure time, rest and relaxation.

A person can dedicate time to volunteer activities both during the school year (extra-school time) and during holidays in regular, occasional and even one-time forms. They should be related to the development of interests, the satisfaction of needs, the abilities and opportunities of children and youth (always depending on the school facility).

The content of education is divided into thematic areas of education in school educational and schooling facilities. According to the target focus of these thematic areas of education, it is possible to state on the basis of the analysis that the subject of volunteering is explicitly stated in the selected thematic areas only in the school dormitories. This is a thematic area of **working education and intellectual education** (e.g. to obtain information on alternative work skills, such as project creation, volunteering, streetwork) and the **social education** thematic area (where topics such as volunteering, interculturality, civic associations, informal groups, participation are proposed in the content standards, while the main objective is to focus on the principles of active citizenship).

The content of education in relation to volunteering can also be perceived in broader contexts; other thematic areas of education in the context of all schooling and educational facilities are:

- socio-scientific field (the objective is to learn to co-decide on the life of the group, to show tactfulness, to understand the importance of respecting human rights and fundamental rights, to provide aid or to call for help);
- working-technical field (the objective is, for example, to acquire basic skills in the creation of simple projects as well as to develop the basics of skills necessary for practical life);
- natural-environmental/ecological field (the objective is, for example, to develop skills in the creation and protection of the environment);

- aesthetic-educational field (the objective is, for example, to show a positive attitude towards simple treatment of the environment, to participate in cultural events).

The specific thematic areas where it is possible to develop the personality of pupils in school dormitories through voluntary experience are:

- moral education and education in values (the objective is, for example, to orient themselves in all human values, to understand the meaning of positive values, such as responsibility, cooperation, tolerance ...);
- family education and education in marriage and parenthood (the objective is, for example, to develop practical skills related to family life).

Summary: Volunteering education can be implemented in almost all thematic fields of education.

Volunteering as a means of development, as a method: Heuristic, problem, demonstration, production methods, methods with an emphasis on active participation are preferred in schooling and educational activities outside of teaching time in school facilities.

In schooling and educational activities, it is recommended to carry out, among other activities, meetings with representatives of children and youth organizations within the third sector oriented toward the possibility of participation of young people in life in order to, for example, develop the *“ability to participate in positive changes in the life of school facilities”*; further it may be work on a common project of school facilities and organizations at the location, related to the processing of questions concerning the quality of life of children and pupils. Using experiential methods and forms of work, e.g. brainstorming, argumentation, discussion club, volunteering, is an important strategy.

Elaborated by: Lívia Nemcová
Banská Bystrica, 07. 02. 2018

Appendix 3

Examples of Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education at the Individual Levels of Education

3.1. Example of elementary school

Name of the volunteer activity: We Learn from History – Volunteering Education at Spojová Elementary School

Name of the Organization: Spojová Elementary School in Banská Bystrica

Address of the Organization: Elementary School, Spojová 14, Banská Bystrica

During 4 months 25 pupils tried to link help in community with what they learn at school. They have planned on their own where they want to help and what they want to learn, they have decided to spend their time in a retirement home, bring specific stories from history, and even create a learning aid for themselves and their future classmates – a brochure of stories for the lessons of History, the Slovak language and Ethics Education. This brochure carries the name invented by themselves: “We Learn from History”.

Duration of volunteer activity: September – December 2016

Place of implementation: Spojová Elementary School in Banská Bystrica and retirement home (RH) and Senium House of Services for Seniors (HSS) in Banská Bystrica

Number of teachers: 2

Number of pupils: 25

The project was carried out within school lessons of History classes.

Objective of the volunteer activity:

The main project’s objective was the positive interaction of pupils in the community through volunteer activities, while pupils were supposed to try out the gained knowledge in real life and deepen the learned curriculum by linking learning and practice – which is the essence of the service learning projects at schools.

The objective set by the pupils when creating their plan was to create a brochure containing stories and memories associated to the school days of the today’s seniors, which they and their future schoolmates could use at school in History and the Slovak language lessons, and be helpful to older people in a retirement home and make their time spent in the facilities more pleasant, to be closer to an older generation and experience intergenerational exchange of experiences. Learning through stories that are not so far from being familiar to us. Understanding the creation of specific learning aids.

Target group: seniors in RH and HSS Senium

Co-operation with partners and community: RH and Senium HSS and the Volunteer Center, Banská Bystrica (Know-how, workshop on service learning method, mentoring, funding through a grant from the Tatrabanka Foundation)

Course of the volunteer activity:

September – October 2016 – a preparatory meeting was held together with teachers – an educator (a pupil coordinator at the elementary school of Spojová) and a teacher of History and Geography at the elementary school where the personnel of the Volunteer Center made the service learning methodology more transparent. The teacher then approached the pupils of 6.D class and explained the nature of volunteering, service learning, and the goal of the project. 25 pupils from class 6.D were

involved, who decided to help seniors in RH and Senium HSS in Banská Bystrica to make their time more pleasant, which was highly appreciated by the director of this facility, and at the same time, they gained stories from history for their History lessons. During October, pupils worked on preparing questions for seniors, conducted interviews during History lessons concerning life in the past century, preparing a program for seniors in RH and Senium HSS. A meeting was held with RH and Senium HSS personnel in order to agree on the dates for student visits at the facilities to reflect the objective of pupils' visits and their project.

November 2016 – the visits of RH and Senium HSS took place as well as interviews of pupils with Senium retirement home residents, from which pupils prepared texts and drawings. Mentors, teachers discussed feedback with the children, conducted interviews about their impressions of the peoples' lives in the retirement home as well as their childhood, youth. Together, they have made a comparison of the conditions for a child's life back then and today.

December 2016 – the pupils jointly finished texts of the stories, a grammatical correction was performed, preparation for the launch ceremony of the brochure. The launch ceremony of the brochure took place on 21. 12. 2016 at the premises of Spojová Elementary School; the management of RH Senium, the Volunteer Center, the school and the classroom teacher of 6.D and 6.D were invited. The official launch ceremony was particularly important for pupils and their learning objectives – they organized the launch ceremony themselves, presented the project, its results, even the brochure, they presented stories, photographs and their impressions and paintings. A total of 120 brochures have been printed, which will be used for teaching this year and in upcoming years.

Knowledge and skills developed in case of children and youth through the experience from volunteering activity:

The benefits of the project are perceived by the teachers who worked with the pupils at both levels – in terms of results of volunteering training and education. The pupils perceived the history of the 20th century through the real stories of the people they met, thus “improving their ability to apply what they learned in the real world, and deeper understanding the complexities of people's lives in the seniors' home, they began to perceive that it might be them in the future who will find themselves in the today's seniors shoes. Through writing the stories, the pupils improved their Slovak language skills, especially in written and oral speech, since all the stories were processed by themselves, and the correction was carried out together with the teachers. Pupils have improved their skills and learned to collaborate as a team, present the results of their work, but also their subjective impressions of the social problem they encountered. They worked on building their communication and interpersonal skills, but also on their moral development. Mentors perceive a positive shift in the pupil's perception of stereotypes towards the elderly, in the perception of the need for social responsibility and active citizenship, and in particular the necessity, importance and benefits of volunteering. The project was also perceived positively by seniors from RH and Senium DSS as well as by its leaders. The volunteer activities of pupils and of this facility still continue. Parents of pupils, classmates and other teachers also expressed their positive feedback. Some parents have expressed interest in engaging in volunteering through the volunteer activities of their children in this project.

Other benefits of volunteer activity performed:

Using the brochure containing stories in the process of teaching in the following years: the brochure will be suitable and used for teaching purposes within lessons as well as outside the lessons:

- in history lessons for pupils of the 5th year, where they are introduced to the topic What is History and How Our Ancestors Lived;

- in the lessons of the Slovak language – the field of stylistic works;
- in the lessons of Ethics with the topic related to the respect for elders;
- furthermore in the school club, where the older pupils read to the younger ones.

The greatest benefit of performing the activity:

Encountering of pupils with the seniors' perception of life, life in the last century, the need to devote time to seniors at the facilities, plus they learned that not only textbooks contain history, and they learned how to present their acquired knowledge and impressions in written, drawn and oral form in front of the audience. They have learned to help not only one time.

3.2. Example of elementary school

Name of the volunteer activity: The Course in Increasing IT Skills of Seniors

Name of the Organization: 1st Private Grammar School in Bratislava

Address of the Organization: Bajkalská 20, Bratislava

The emergence of the course was based on the aims and values of the school – to open the school to a wider audience, to involve students in community life, to lead pupils to develop charity and volunteerism. The course was developed in cooperation with Ružinov Municipal Authority as a 5-hour training course for seniors in acquiring basic IT skills (working with computer, mobile, tablet). A single student individually pays attention to every single senior during the course. Courses cyclically repeat throughout the year. In 2017, we organized 3 cycles.

Duration of volunteer activity/project: 3.3. 2017 - 31.3. 2017, 7. 4. 2017 - 12. 5. 2017, 3. 11. 2017 - 8. 12. 2017

Place of performance: school premises

Number of teachers involved: 1 teacher – supervisor and project author, 1 person who ensures contact with seniors

Number of pupils involved: 30

This activity is part of a complex of volunteer activities to which the school leads its students. The school education program includes volunteering education as a part of the Ethics Education, and at the same time, it constitutes its practical part. During one school year, students are supposed to dedicate 12 hours to charity activities through which they help others. The school has established co-operation with several organizations, offering students various types of charity activities (tutoring of special school students, playing chess with deaf children, Green Patrol (*civic association with objectives to maintain cleanliness and order in the city) and others). An IT course for seniors also emerged between them.

Objective of the volunteer activity: On the one hand, there is an objective to help seniors in orienting themselves in IT technologies. On the students' side, the project pursues the development of pro-social behavior – helping others without remuneration, contact with the older generation – the development of empathy, patience and involvement in solving problems and responding to needs in the immediate vicinity, the development of the organizational and communication skills of students.

Target group: seniors from the city district of Ružinov and the wider neighborhood

Collaboration with partners and the community: active cooperation with the Municipal Authority of Ružinov, Department of Social Affairs and Family.

Description/course of volunteer activity/project:

Preparation – motivation of students, provision of premises with school management, contacting the

Municipal Authority of Ružinov and establishment of cooperation, elaboration of promotional materials by students, promotion in regional media, arranging the premises with school management Course – course implementation (5 meetings on Fridays lasting for 60 minutes), an assistant paid attention to each senior – a student who responded to their individual needs.

Completion and evaluation – students, after completing their volunteering activities, reflected their experiences and experiences in the essay.

Knowledge and skills developed in case of children and youth through the experience from volunteering activity:

The students learn to see the problems of the elderly people from the community neighborhood, thus learn to help them. They develop empathy, responsibility, initiative, creativity, learn to positively evaluate others, create or deepen interpersonal relationships. Complex pro-social development is developed – to do good in order to help others and create benefit for another person.

Other benefits of the volunteer activity performed:

The school is involved in the life of the city district of Ružinov. Collaboration with the Municipal Authority deepens the realization of fundraising for a particular family from Ružinov, which suffers from existential problems (e.g. payment of rent debt and pre-payment of rent for a senior citizen having custody of his great-grandson, December 2017). These activities have an ethical and social dimension and represent the core values of the school.

The greatest benefit of performing the activity:

Intergenerational communication, involvement of the school in community life.

3.3. Example of a University

The name of the volunteer project: Service learning at UMB

Name of the institution/organization: Matej Bel University

Address of the organization: Národná 12, 974 01 Banská Bystrica

Student volunteering has been developed more systematically at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica for 20 years. The objective of introducing volunteering is to increase the involvement and social responsibility of our university students, thus increasing the assumption of transferring these characteristics into the self-learning process of students as well as their working and personal life. Another equally important objective of student volunteer activities is fulfilling the third mission of the university, connecting university activities to community life.

Volunteering at the UMB is coordinated by the Volunteer Center (at the UMB), and at the same time, volunteering has been part of the learning process through an active learning strategy and learning – service learning. The essence of service learning is the mutual collaboration of students and communities (it should not be activities for the community, but projects implemented with the community). Through the mapping of community needs, students are trying to respond to the real needs of the community with which they cooperate. The general objective of SL activities is to provide community service that leads to the improvement of status. Service learning programs engage students in community activities with the objective of showing them how the skills acquired at school can be used to solve real life problems or how they can learn the knowledge, skills and attitudes we expect in the school curriculum. Students engaged in a service learning activity are expected not only to provide direct community service but to recognize the context in which the service is provided. Students must be aware of the connection between the service and their study as well as reflect their civic role. All this is carried out by reflecting their activity, which is an obligatory part of the planning, implementation and evaluation of the SL activity, thus all phases of the activity.

Service learning at UMB in Banská Bystrica has been implemented for thirteen years in different models (professional practice, practical activities within different subjects, and a separate subject of service learning). Through service learning activities, the so-called “basic competencies” are developed, along with the learning of students, while learning is also related to the curriculum of their study program or the curriculum of a specific subject (depending on the specific model).

During the implementation of the separate subject of service learning, we prepared and implemented approximately 30 projects (together with the students) www.servicelearning.umb.sk/categorv/fotky-a-vidoa/ you can find all the implemented projects that have been assigned to different target groups. Moreover, we conduct ongoing research into student attitudes toward their key competences and research of selected personality traits.

Duration of the volunteer project:

For the period of the service learning subject (5 years), we have implemented projects of varying duration (most often the first suggestion to the implementation of the project and its evaluation takes one academic year). The activities themselves were carried out over various ranges of time – ranging from one-time activities (mostly performed over the course of a day) to regular and long-term activities (the duration of these activities varies, e.g. one-day but regular activities or activities still present in community life). Even a one-day activity in the SL project, however, required several weeks of preparation.

Place of implementation:

Voluntary projects based on the service learning strategy of UMB were implemented at schools (preschool, primary, secondary, university), social facilities (orphanages, crisis centers), health facilities (hospices, hospitals), in the city (destined for everyone without distinction).

Number of teachers involved in the project):

Each volunteer project based on a service learning strategy has been implemented in cooperation with at least one contact person from the institution (teacher, facility management...). Currently a team of 12 teachers work at UMB, representing different study departments and implementing service learning in education, which promotes the idea of volunteering and service learning activities within the circle of their colleagues, leading to the gradual growth of teachers who introduce a wide degree of volunteering and service learning activities into their subjects.

Number of students involved in the volunteer project:

Since the introduction of the service learning subject to UMB, approximately 200 UMB students participated in the planning and implementation of the projects. The projects were also implemented by individuals but mostly by groups.

One of the cores of service learning activities is the interconnection of volunteer experience with educational objectives, so all the implemented service learning projects were part of the subjects and coordinated by teachers as tutors to develop not only key competencies but also professional competencies connected to the study program. The current implementation of these projects is also based on UMB’s updated long-term focus in the field of the so-called third mission of universities, where one of the objectives is also to support activities for the benefit of the community and for the augmented interconnection of the university with the community.

The motivation for the implementation of a specific project is based on the mapping of needs in the community, which is implemented by the students. On the basis of the detected problems, following the objectives of self-education and in the ideal case, communicating with the target group in question, creating the idea of the project. Examples of specific motivations based on mapping community needs are following:

Personal and observed experiences of food waste by students at UMB, especially at university dormitories. The **Špajza food banks** project responding to the need to learn the right habits linked to food.

It has been discovered that long-term hospital stays affect patients in a negative manner and often lead to a decrease in energy, a decline in interest in the environment, hypersensitivity, boredom, loneliness, frustration, sometimes anger, depression or apathy. Such a stay in a hospital does not contribute to the treatment process, complicates the work of the medical personnel, reduces the sense of comfort from the other professionally offered services of the medical facility and may have more serious consequences for the later integration of patients into normal life. This initial situation indicates the need for long-term hospitalized patients to spend their leisure time meaningfully, to which the **Reading as Therapy** is a response.

The **University Literature Night** project also responds to the need for meaningful leisure time activities for the wider public, which promotes the art of books and reading through a series of readings in non-traditional public places, in this case the university campus. It also responds to separating the community of deaf people from the culture spread through words, the readings interpreted into the Slovak sign language. The project additionally responds to the low involvement of Banská Bystrica university students in the cultural life of the city.

Objective of the volunteer activity:

Like the motivation and objective of a particular project, it should be based on the penetration of mapping needs in the community, which the students implement together with the community, and the learning objectives – what the pupil/student wants to learn and what the teacher wants the pupil/student to learn.

Examples of specific project objectives for community needs may include:

The long-term objective of the **Špajza food banks** project is to reduce food waste at UMB and in university dormitories, to improve the eating habits of students and to show how they can be used efficiently (providing food banks). That is why the objective of this volunteer activity was to place refrigerators and food cabinets in the university dormitories and to promote this space and its purpose.

The objective of the **Reading as Therapy** project is to assist long-term hospitalized patients to fill the time spent in a hospital meaningfully by organizing a series of creative individual and group activities (reading, community, games, movement activities, creative workshops...). Through these activities and bibliotherapy, the objective is to help patients transform their negative emotions into positive ones, to divert their attention from sickness, to stimulate conversations based on reading texts, to practice their motor skills and create opportunities to have fun, play, laugh, meet others staying at the facilities or establish new contacts.

The objective of the **University Literature Night** project, which is organized once a year on a regular basis, is to bring contemporary literature to the public through a series of public readings, thus contributing to the preservation of cultural values and offering the public space this type of art, pointing to the fact that literature has no borders and is accessible to everyone. By cooperating with the deaf community, we support the idea of literature without barriers. In the selection of books we aim to introduce lesser-known, but high quality literary texts from smaller publishing houses to present Slovak and foreign authors, to promote the importance of translators' work in the Slovak language and to conduct a positive relationship with book art and culture.

Target group:

The selection of the target group is based on the mapping of needs, which can be determined by a tutor, but it is more often chosen by the student. Since it is a project implemented on a voluntary basis, and as one of the pillars of the service learning strategy is the leadership of the student, it is important that students identify with the selection of the target group.

The variability of the implemented projects indicates their focus on different target groups: children in preschools, pupils from elementary and secondary schools, university students, children from orphanages, crisis centers (children, single mothers, former children from orphanage...), day care centers and hospices, long-term hospitalized patients, the deaf, the homeless or the wider public. So far only one project has been aimed at a different target group – animals.

Cooperation with the community:

Many of the projects implemented, besides cooperating with the community-target group themselves, required cooperation with other partners, such as sponsors who supported the implementation of projects either materially or financially. The selection of the partners addressed depends on a specific need, such as the production and printing of promotional materials, the provision of premises for promotion, the rental of premises, the purchase of aids, etc. The partners addressed are mostly smaller or larger companies or organizations as well as individuals who contribute to the implementation of the project through gifts or services. Voluntary public collections (such as clothing, books, food, aids for dogs, etc.) also took place within some projects.

Course of the volunteer project:

The preparation for the volunteer activity based on the service learning strategy precedes the theoretical preparation in the service learning subject (1 semester). In this case a work team will be established through the targeted selected activities and create the main axis/idea of the future project; the student must implement the mapping of needs in the community, evaluate it and describe the starting point situation of the identified problem. The student then learns about the basics of project management and develops the competences needed for team work as well as communication skills. The output of this part of the subject is to create a plan of the future project with a time, financial, personnel, crisis and evaluation strategy. This part of the preparation for the implementation of the project is evaluated by a two-stage assessment – the self-assessment of the students and the assessment of the teachers.

In the next semester, the team works independently under the guidance of tutors (teachers), implementing the project plan in practice and responding to the problem situations that arise in order to fulfill the set objectives. It is important that the activity is implemented and evaluated in the given semester. The evaluation of the activity occurs at the summary joint meeting of all the teams involved in the service learning, to which other teachers and university leadership are invited. The evaluation of the project is two-stage, a self-evaluation of the student team, the project evaluated on the basis of a predetermined evaluation strategy toward the community and itself, the evaluation of the community being sometimes included in this evaluation. The implementation of the project is also evaluated by the teacher.

Knowledge and skills developed by children and young people through experience from a volunteer project:

Thanks to volunteer experience in service learning, students have been more positively evaluating and perceiving their own level of abilities; it was mainly about *social and personal competencies, occupational and business competences, problem-solving skills*. Our research has confirmed that service learning as a learning strategy connecting theoretical education with practical experience develops the skills of students often directly related to their service learning activity, such as *the ability*

to work in difficult and stressful situations, the ability to take responsibility for the assigned tasks, the ability to manage oneself, the ability to make decisions, the ability to set personal objectives, the ability to work with professionals, the ability to organize time, the ability to work according to the plan or planning skills (e.g. planning activities/events, implementing them, evaluating, planning a budget).

As for the development of knowledge and skills linked to the educational objectives, e.g. the **University Night of Literature** project, it is mostly organized by humanities students in the fields of languages, literature and culture. For example, they develop their interpretative skills, the ability to select the appropriate text depending on the target group and the objective they want to achieve through the text. The same skills are developed in the **Reading as Therapy** project, including the development of analytical work with the text, the ability to conduct a conversation on the text, or through wider life experience or emotion in view of the specifics of the target group and the planned objective. The **Reading as Therapy** and the **Špajza, food banks** projects involve Social Work students, who, thanks to the projects, develop abilities linked to their departments, choosing activities appropriate to identified specifics of the target groups.

Other benefits of the performed volunteer activity:

- experience in teamwork
- connecting school and community – theory and practice
- increasing the personal and social responsibility of students, becoming aware of their own responsibility for change in the community, increasing their sensitivity to their own needs and especially the needs of their surroundings, perceiving the meaningfulness of their studies
- creation of material aid (sports equipment)
- creating permanently used space (sports center)

The greatest benefit of performing the activity:

Generally, what we consider as the greatest benefit to the implemented activities is the ongoing interest of pupils and students in participating in volunteer or service learning activities. It is on the basis of their own motivation when they come to the subject with a specific idea or an interest in continuing in the long-term projects created by their classmates and developing them. The reactions of several organizations or bodies that enter into the cooperation repeatedly can be considered positive too, as well as the public, which regularly and extensively attends events destined to it.

Simultaneously, through student participation in organizing and implementing projects, we raise awareness of the university and the interest of its students in the life in the city/village and the lives of communities.

Appendix 4

The main purpose of the educational program for pedagogical and professional staff in the field of volunteering training and education

Name of the education program: Children and youth volunteering training and education at schools and school facilities through service learning strategy

Type of continuous education: updated education

Form of continuing education: combined – 30 hours, attendance – 20 hours, and distance – 10 hours

Conditions for the enlisting of applicants:

The Continuing Education Program is determined for the categories of educational staff who meet the qualification requirements in accordance with Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic No. 437/2009 Coll. as amended, and who have completed at least six months of educational activity (Section 35, Par. 10 of Act No. 317/2009 Coll. in the text of Act No. 390/2011 Coll.).

The Continuing Education Program is determined for categories of professional staff who meet the qualification requirements in accordance with Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic No. 437/2009 Coll., as amended, and who have completed at least six months of professional activity (Section 35, Par. 10 of Act No. 317/2009 Coll. in the text of Act No. 390/2011 Coll.) School subject: any

Proposed number of credits: 8 credits, out of which 6 credits for education, 2 credits for the way of completion

The main objective of the education program: to develop and expand the knowledge and skills of the educational and professional staff in the implementation of children and youth volunteering training and education through a service learning strategy in accordance with the Concept Paper on Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education.

Specific objectives: the graduate of the education program recognizes the Concept Paper on Children and Youth Volunteering Training and Education, being able to explain the key elements of service learning, distinguishing between different models of children and youth volunteering training and education, explaining the principles of children and youth volunteering training and education, being able to characterize individual steps in the implementation of service learning, recognizing the various possibilities of the implementation of service learning in practice, being able to recognize the potential and benefits of the service learning strategy in education for the individual participants and being able to create his/her own plan/project for the implementation of service learning within his/her subject/subjects and implementing it.

Content proposal:

Thematic units:

- A. Starting point of the children and youth volunteering training and education
- B. Principles of implementing the children and youth volunteering training and education
- C. Service learning – key characteristics and definition
- D. Models for implementing the children and youth volunteering training and education and service learning models
- E. Service learning process - preparation, planning, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, reflection, reporting
- F. Creating an implementation plan for service learning at school

Graduate profile: a graduate of the education program knows and can apply service learning in the process of children and youth volunteering training and education

Proposal of scope: 26 hours

Method of completing the education program: Verification of professional competence pursuant to Section 35 , Par. 6 of the Act 317/2009 Coll. is carried out by means of a final presentation of the project in front of the participants and the lecturer of education.

Requirements for completing the education program:

The following requirements are set in the case of graduating from the education program:

- at least 80 % participation in the attendance education form,
- processing and submission of 1 assigned task of the distance section of the education program,
- successful presentation of the project to participants and lecturers of education.

Guarantor: The guarantor fulfills the requirements of Section 43, Par. 3 and 4 of Act No. 317/2009 Coll. in the text of Act No. 390/2011 Coll., has experience with the implementation of the children and youth volunteering training and education through the service learning strategy.

Appendix 5

Used and recommended resources on the theme of children and youth volunteering training and education

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HATOKOVÁ, M. et al. 2009. Managing the sick and dying. Dobrovoľníctvo v nemocniciach a paliatívnych zariadeniach. Bratislava: IRIS.

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MCCURLY, S., LYNCH, R. 2000. Manažment dobrovoľníkov. Ako zmobilizovať všetky zdroje komunity. Vybrané kapitoly. Bratislava: SAIA.

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Appendix 6

List of members of the working group for the preparation of the concept

1. Babiaková, Lýdia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic
2. Bizíková, Ľubica, National Institute for Education
3. Bošňáková, Mária, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic
4. Brozmanová Gregorová, Alžbeta, Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations and Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica
5. Čavojska, Katarína, Youth Council of Slovakia
6. Deneš, Michal, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic
7. Dufeková, Miriam, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic
8. Feherpataky Kuzmová, Jana, Institute for Active Citizenship
9. Frimmerová, Alžbeta, Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations
10. Harváneková, Iveta, Secondary Vocational School of Pedagogy, Levice
11. Heinzová, Zuzana, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica
12. Hrušovská, Mária, State Vocational Education Institute
13. Kožuch, Branislav, V.I.A.C. – Institute for Youth Development
14. Kuciaková, Simona, Green Foundation
15. Kurpielová, Melania, Centrum Slniečko, n.o.
16. Lehoťanová, Brigita, IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute
17. Lučeničová, Katarína, IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute
18. Milková, Mária, Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for the Development of Civil Society
19. Nemcová, Lívia, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and Centrum dobrovoľníctva, n. o.
20. Ondrášik, Miloš, National Office of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation
21. Ondrášová, Katarína, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic
22. Peciarová, Terézia, Methodological and Pedagogical Center
23. Podmaková, Gabriela, Bratislava Volunteer Centre
24. Sabo, Robert, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica
25. Siekelová, Marika, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica
26. Šolcová, Jana, Pathfinder-Scout Club and Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica
27. Tomková, Ľuba, Spojová Primary School, Banská Bystrica