

LIDIA PIETRUSZKA

POTENTIAL IS WITHIN US  
– ON THE ISSUE OF VOLUNTARISM

From the very beginning of mankind history, we encounter the activities, which aim at helping other people. The meaning of the term, however, used to differ from the one, which functions nowadays. Primarily, *volunteer* was a trainee, who worked without payment, in order to get acquainted with the job. The term referred also to the members of volunteer army. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that their fundamental goal was not actually helping others, which is the essence of contemporary voluntary service, but first of all making ones own profits.

Nowadays, there is devoted a lot of attention to the discussed issue. Most of the definitions, which attempt to describe the phenomenon, indicate its broader, social context and highlight the element of consciousness and work for the sake of others. Voluntary service (lat. *voluntarius*) is defined, in that way, as “non-profit, conscious and voluntary action for the benefit of other people, societies and organisations”<sup>1</sup>, not to mention a family or friends, who help each other and the fact of the existence of some special “inter-human” bond, such activities are not voluntary. Nevertheless, the thing which is very important is also some kind of ideology, the motivation that underlies commitment. It is impossible to become the true volunteer because of boredom or just for fun. The foundations should stem from the deep conviction

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LIDIA PIETRUSZKA – Assistant Institute of Education, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland; e-mail: lidiapietruszk@kul.lublin.pl

<sup>1</sup> *Nowa Encyklopedia podręczna PWN*, red. B. Kaczorowski, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PAN 2006, p. 1099.

about the necessity of such activity<sup>2</sup>. The above designations present the idea, as well as, the main indicators of voluntary service.

In that way, each voluntary activity should be, first of all, freewill and gratuitous. It is being driven by goodwill, the willingness to have somebody experience the positive impressions<sup>3</sup>. Another characteristic is the consciousness. In that way, it is such an activity where the subject knows exactly what he or she wants to achieve. Moreover, such person notices the needs of the other people. Through the awareness of ones abilities he or she can organise the action which helps the person in need to solve his or her difficult situation. The conscious decision entails, at the same time, the necessity of regularity and responsibility. Another indicator of voluntary service is its 'free of charge' character – the financial selflessness, which means not receiving any financial payment. This, however, does not exactly mean what assert numerous authors<sup>4</sup>, – namely that a volunteer does not benefit from his or her work (The author of the following paper is going refers to this issue in the next parts of article).

There can be found loads of examples of activities, which correspond to all of the conditions mentioned above, for instance, philanthropy or works of mercy. In that way, voluntary service is often associated with charity, or in other words, philanthropy (gr. *philanthrōpía* – “love of humanity”). Contemporary philanthropy is, however, more commonly connected with help and financial support, while the voluntary service is mainly giving a concrete help by the actions which do not assume any financial contribution<sup>5</sup>.

Another word commonly associated with voluntarism is mercy (lat. *miseri-cordia* – *miseri cor dare* – give heart to the poor), which is often defined as a form of brotherly love expressed by compassion, solidarity and willingness

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<sup>2</sup> T. K a m i ń s k i, *Praca socjalna i charytatywna*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW 2004, p. 66-67.

<sup>3</sup> A. K o t l a r s k a - M i c h a l s k a, *Dobrowolność w działaniu jako forma zachowań prospołecznych*, w: *Wolontariat w obszarze humanistycznych wyzwań opiekuńczych*, red. B. Kromolicka, Toruń: Akapit 2005, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Zob. M. K o s t e k, *Wolontariat w hospicjum impulsem do zmiany w człowieku?*, Lublin: TN KUL 2010, p. 74; B. K r z e s i ń s k a - Ż a c h, *Wolontariat w służbie osób terminalnie chorych na przykładzie Hospicjum „Dom Opatrzności Bożej” w Białymstoku*, w: *Pomoc jako zachowanie prospołeczne*, red. T. Zbyrad, B. Krempa, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2012, p. 348.

<sup>5</sup> K. B r a u n, *Wolontariat – młodzież – wychowanie*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2012, p. 18.

to helping those in need, who are not able to deal with it themselves. In practice, it is about the support with satisfying human's basic existential and development needs<sup>6</sup>.

On the other hand, voluntary service can be characterized as the activities of organisations, social groups, and people, which aim at taking actions to help people, who because of different reasons, are at a disadvantage. What is more, they distinguish themselves with quick reaction, while the help is, at the same time, connected with displaying the problem to broader social groups and public institutions. Furthermore, voluntary is not only the eliminating the results, but it is also solving the problems through reaching their causes and affecting them. Moreover, such actions are taken consciously, freely, and gratuitously and are driven on behalf of one's good<sup>7</sup>.

The essence of voluntary is based on exceeding one's own Self, in order to help the others, in a way that does not incapacitate or make somebody depended on him or her. In that way, it is important to balance the extent to which we help other person, so that the one who receives it is able to maintain the sense of his or her autonomy, perpetration and independence<sup>8</sup>.

The main aim of the following paper is to draw the particular attention to voluntary, as a chance for restoration of social bounds and rebuilding moral foundations in contemporary societies. That gives also the volunteers the opportunity for self-realization. The author attempts to indicate the factors, which are connected with time management of volunteer's work and, at the same time, determine its right proceeding and success.

## 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE IN A PUBLIC LIFE

Voluntary service has recently become an important tool to bring help to everybody in need-to begin with children, ending with the sick, old and disabled people. The area of voluntary activities is so wide that it almost coincides with areas of social life. In that way, most of the volunteers can

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<sup>6</sup> J. W a l, *Miłosierdzie chrześcijańskie*, w: *Leksykon teologii pastoralnej*, red. R. Kamiński, Lublin: TN KUL 2006, p. 486.

<sup>7</sup> B r a u n, *Wolontariat – młodzież – wychowanie*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>8</sup> A. B ł a c h n i o, *Starość non profit. Wolontariat na Uniwersytetach Trzeciego Wieku w Polsce i na świecie*, Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo UKW 2012, p. 130.

be encountered in the areas such as: education (kindergartens, social therapeutic centres, orphanages); social assistance and social work (social Assistance Centres); healthcare (hospices, hospitals). We can also consider the topic from the perspective of, so called, sectors. Sector 1 – commercial institutions – which is not suitable for recruiting the volunteers. Sector 2 – the public one – in spite of numerous attempts, it is still reluctant to open up to volunteers (sometimes the fact of their presence in the institution is considered as a sign of its inefficiency or that it poses a threat to the number of jobs). Thus, remains the sector 3 – the non-governmental organisations. There is about 30 000 such organisations out of which more than 60% do not employ personnel – their functioning is based on work of fully devoted volunteers. It is estimated that there work about 3 millions of Poles work as a volunteers for the non-governmental organisations<sup>9</sup>.

The research data of Klon/Jawor Association, published in December 2010, indicate that one in six people (16%) selflessly and voluntary take their free time for sake of others. The activeness in this area is usually connected with one-time or cyclical social and charitable events<sup>10</sup>.

The largest group involved in voluntary service are young people and students, who are getting prepared for their professional career. Such volunteering complements their knowledge and gives them the possibility to bring the acquired skills to needs and requirements of the employer, in practice. Moreover, it is also a great opportunity to establish new relations or friendships, as well as, to gain an experience and recognition.

They are often highly qualified people, who apart from their career, want to serve people in need. Others are not professionally active anymore and have free time to devote themselves to those in difficult situation.

The necessity of volunteering, which is a “supporting pillar” of our society, seems to be stemmed (as it is emphasized by S. Gawroński) from the values that come with it. These are: placing the man in the center of interest, respect towards others, selflessness in taking actions, drawing particular attention to those weakest and suffering, social responsibility, and showing

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<sup>9</sup> E. W o j n o w s k a, *Wybrane aspekty prawne wolontariatu*, w: *Wolontariat w obszarze humanistycznych wyzwań opiekuńczych*, p. 147.

<sup>10</sup> M. A r c z e w s k a, G. C a ł e k, E. G l i w i c k a, F. P a z d e r s k i, W. R u s t e c k i, K. B o b e k, *Długofalowa polityka rozwoju wolontariatu w Polsce*, Warszawa 2011, p. 9. [http://erw2011.gov.pl/static/upload/dugofalowa-polityka\\_300811\\_fin.pdf](http://erw2011.gov.pl/static/upload/dugofalowa-polityka_300811_fin.pdf) [dostęp: 27 sierpnia 2013].

the sense of service<sup>11</sup>. Special task, which is carried out by volunteers, is to stimulate the public institutions. Through seeking the rights of those most vulnerable, they become a sign of protest against: the lack of sensitivity to the needs of others, blind and unlimited consumption, selfishness, and selling time to earn money. Thus, they are bearers of the values which are actually cheapen in nowadays world<sup>12</sup>.

Volunteer's social activity can be perceived as an evident sign of citizenship awareness. The aware citizens are those who are indifferent to needs and problems of others. They are people who never wait for directives and are not just passive performers of others' conceptions, contrarily, they feel responsible for the common good and show this through actual action. Seeing the imperfections of public institutions volunteers, as much as it is possible, to act on their own. Due to the fact that they are so close to people and their worries, they are able to recognize them and find the best possible solution to solve the problem<sup>13</sup>. The attitudes associated with a preference for humanistic values which argues for treating this specific group of volunteers as those who share the responsibility for building the new world.

Voluntary appears also in the area of interest of catholic social teaching, which emphasizes its Christian aspect. In that way, John Paul II many times used to mention the great value of volunteers work and their contribution to social assistance. Moreover, he wrote in his encyclical *Centesimus annus* that the phenomenon of volunteering deserves the particular remembrance, while the Church promotes the idea and strongly encourage everybody to support its initiatives<sup>14</sup>. There is no doubt that volunteering helps to build civil society, supports the progress through humanization, sensitizes to the problem of human dignity, promotes social capital, and fosters intercultural dialogue. Another asset that should not be ignore is the educational one. Volunteering has also a contribution in propagating education in the spirit of solidarity and openness. In order to fully use the potential inherent in the idea of volunteering, it is essential to introduce specific actions which lead to creation of its positive image. In that way, the structural element of building the culture

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<sup>11</sup> Za: K o s t e k, *Wolontariat w hospicjum impulsem do zmiany w człowieku?*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>12</sup> T. K a m i ń s k i, *Praca socjalna i charytatywna*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW 2004, p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, pp. 74-75.

<sup>14</sup> J a n P a w e ł II, Encyklika *Centesimus annus*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej 2000, p. 100.

of volunteering is also the promotion of the idea, which is particularly important because of the low level of knowledge, concerning this area, among the society. According to some studies, many respondents tend to confuse the involvement in voluntary service with other forms of social activities, for instance, donating donations in the offertory baskets or charity boxes. The data of Klon/Jawor Association, as well as the data of CBOS reveal that a large percentage of Poles do not understand properly the concept of volunteering. Among those who were questioned directly, whether they took any voluntary action during the previous 12 months, 11% declared that they had never encountered the term of voluntary before<sup>15</sup>.

Therefore, promoting the various forms of voluntary service (capital, short-term, long-term), volunteering in different age groups (children and young people, professionally active people, seniors), as well as propagating the issue in various social activity areas, altogether are the top priority. Taking into consideration the scale and the perspective of voluntary service development, it is essential to aspire to building and promoting the model of long-term volunteering<sup>16</sup>, which should be considered as long term, regular engagement (at least couple of months) in one of organisations and areas<sup>17</sup>.

Furthermore, to increase the importance of issues related to the topic of volunteering is very important also in structures and educational system. This can be achieved through educating teachers in the field of children and young people social competence development, which as a result, would help to broaden their knowledge about the functioning of voluntary service, both in Poland and abroad.

In that way, we shall take a notice of how undertaking voluntary activities may affect the education and development of younger generation.

## 2. VOLUNTARY AND SEARCHING FOR TRUE SELF

Making the decision about the involvement is a matter of free choice, which is dictated by person's value hierarchy. Thus, such decision mirrors the psycho-physical condition and actual maturity of the candidate. For this

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<sup>15</sup> Arczewska, Całek, Gliwicka, Pazderski, Rustecki, Bobek, *Długofalowa polityka rozwoju wolontariatu w Polsce*, pp. 10, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, pp. 10-18.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 6.

reason, it has a deep and personal motivation that allows to fully involve, continue the undertaken activities, hence in a way gives a sense to one's life. This is possible thanks to the reference of a volunteer to other person and his or her needs. Next to making the decision itself, it is also very important to remain continuing once initiated action<sup>18</sup>. If the strength of one's beliefs together with the sense of meaningfulness of the activities are strongly "embedded" in his or her system of values, the volunteer will not resign from the action despite experiencing difficulties and moments of doubts.

In terms of service and support, volunteers "become" multidimensional and grow up, they realize the values of their choice, they head "for", and the subject of this direction is another needy person. Moreover, voluntary, in its essence, allows for fulfilling the values in three ways: by taking action, experiencing, and by suffering (which refers especially to the hospice volunteers). Hence, it is implementing the creative values, since it is work for the benefit of other people. Secondly, it accomplishes the feeling values, because it helps to open up to the needs of others, go through it together, show concern and compassion. Thirdly, it obliges often to confrontation with pain, loneliness, suffering or death, which is why it realizes the values of particular attitudes<sup>19</sup>.

Voluntary service in hospice – the type of care centre for terminally ill patients, where they can spend in dignity their last days, – so it is the special form of bringing help. Not everyone is able to accompany and support dying people to whom the modern medicine is helpless and family members, because of their careers, are not able to provide them a constant care. Such situation requires a specific vocation that helps to survive even the worst crisis. Taking into account also the specific nature of the service and constant contact with death, the volunteer is expected to be psychologically mature, calm and patient<sup>20</sup>.

In that way, the undertaken actions are connected with lots of challenges, however, at the same time they are source of great richness. Entering into such service a person archives a double success – first of all – by bringing

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<sup>18</sup> P. S t a w i a r s k a, *Wolontariat hospicyjny. Perspektywa interdyscyplinarna*, Warszawa: Difin 2011, pp. 31-32.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, pp. 32-33.

<sup>20</sup> K r z e s i ń s k a - Ż a c h, *Wolontariat w służbie osób terminalnie chorych*, pp. 341-342.

support to others, but also helping and getting to know better himself or herself<sup>21</sup>.

For the volunteers the largest source of job satisfaction is a person to whom they help and the positive change of his or her situation that they can observe. The happiness brings also the awareness that they are needed. They notice themselves some positive changes which occurred in their lives thanks to the involvement in helping others. Mostly, such alternations refer to sensitivity to other people needs, same as, the frequency and ways to support. The prove that young volunteers derive personal benefits can be observed in their subjective opinions: "I perceive and appreciate lots of values of which I've never cared about before", "the service triggers other than previously attitude towards suffering and pain". In a particular way that talk about voluntary in hospice, which according to them "strengthens the spirit", "makes sensitive", "gives the inner joy", "teaches humbleness, allows be there in the moment of the sacred death"<sup>22</sup>.

In addition, volunteering, in the context of its importance to health, for a long time, remains the topic of much research. At the same time, it has a dynamic character. Not only the value itself, but above all, the foundations of development, self-realizing, sense of well-being, adequate satisfying needs, including the need of sense of life. Contemporary the psychological science more and more often talk about distinguishing the fourth dimension of health (next to the physical, psychical and social ones) and it is namely spiritual dimension. In that way, feeling that life has meaning and actions we take are purposeful and significant should be considered as a factor beneficial to our health that determines it, but also as a sign of self-realization. In this way, the topic of voluntary service considered from such perspective seems to give live the specific dimension and divine all spheres of human's existence. The crucial here are: the sense of self-efficacy and competence, distance from problems through the the contact with another person's problems, involvement in social integration and social support, active lifestyle and experiencing the positive emotions. In this sense, volunteering strengthens the immune system and thereby, reduce the risk of disease. It is also proved that volunteers feel less aches and pains, mainly due to the previously mentioned abi-

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<sup>21</sup> A. M. S o b o l e w s k a - P o p k o, *Czy pomaganie mężczy? Jak skutecznie pomagać, nie tracąc siebie? (na podstawie pracy wolontariuszy)*, w: *Pomoc jako zachowanie prospołeczne*, p. 358.

<sup>22</sup> K r z e s i ń s k a - Ź a c h, *Wolontariat w służbie osób terminalnie chorych*, p. 348.



lity to distance themselves from their own feelings. They also have a stronger sense of well-being<sup>23</sup>.

The study indicate also that young volunteers can be characterized by unselfishness, responsibility, openness, sensitivity and creativity. Those are people who appreciate the most the values which are allocentric and pro-social, and those associated with family<sup>24</sup>.

Voluntary action is freewill and selfless, but sometimes also difficult. It requires self-discipline and constant learning. Thus, a good organisation of volunteer work and preparation to the service is vital. In such a way, he or she takes satisfaction from what is doing and when the effects of the actions taken are not visible, the volunteer does not resign from helping there should be noticed several key factors.

### 3. PREPARATION AND ORGANIZATION THE VOLUNTEER'S WORK

Very often the difficulties with helping are connected with volunteer's experiencing of helplessness. To avoid such moments of discouragement or feeling the lack of effects, it is extremely important to select the right of volunteer's work. The appropriate choice should be suited to his or her knowledge, qualifications, abilities and the time available. An additional valuable practice that prepares to undertake the voluntary service would be organising the meeting in a place where a volunteer is going to serve help. It might certainly help to confront the expectations and needs of facility with the capabilities of the volunteer.

An important element is the preparation for work, which takes the form of both general and specialized training. The first block, discusses the general topics, such as characteristics, types, rules at work. After undergoing the training the candidate should be able to answer the question – who is a volunteer, and whether “I” am capable to cope with this challenges? The second block contains the socialistic training relevant to the specific work of volunteer. It can take the form of training which aims at expending knowledge of issues related to the abilities necessary in particular service. Thanks

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<sup>23</sup> S t a w i a r s k a, *Wolontariat hospicyjny. Perspektywa interdyscyplinarna*, pp. 48-56.

<sup>24</sup> B r a u n, *Wolontariat – młodzież – wychowanie*, pp. 239-243.

to such trainings young volunteer should feel more self-confident and confident of his or her abilities<sup>25</sup>.

When it comes to organisation and proper preparation of young people, another important element that should be noted is a volunteers tutor – “connector between two worlds”<sup>26</sup>. The person which is not only responsible for introducing into the specificity of work, controlling and monitoring<sup>27</sup>, but also shaping the attitudes and behaviours of young volunteers. Therefore, it is important to find a person involved in helping others, sensitive to human needs, responsible, reliable, someone who gives a good example by his or her behavior – according to the Latin maxim – *verba docent exempla trahunt*. Important is also the constant contact of the guardian with volunteers, to make them feel that in every situation they can rely on his or her support. Another worth noticing point is the necessity of guarding by such tutor whether the tasks given to volunteers are performed conscientiously. However, rather than checking their reliability the guardian should monitor their work – supporting and serving advice in difficult situations. Thanks to this continuous monitoring activities, the tutor can, for example, by expressing his or her recognition, strengthen the motivation and capture more difficult moments and temporary problems experienced by a volunteer.

If the assistance activities are well organized, it can contribute to improving the quality of life of people taking part in it. At the same time, the inadequate coordination and monitoring of activities at any of the described stages may give rise to adverse consequences for both the person who receives help and for the volunteer or the organizers of volunteering service. Such situation can lead to the misuse of personal competence of a volunteer, lowering his or her motivation, earlier quitting, and in extreme cases, to discourage social activities<sup>28</sup>.

All in all, the volunteers invited to cooperation should become an active participant in the ongoing activities, a member of the team who can influence decisions making.

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<sup>25</sup> Braun, *Wolontariat – młodzież – wychowanie*, pp. 231-232.

<sup>26</sup> K. Paduszyńska, E. Solecka-Florek, W. Wilimska, *Wolontariat w pomocy społecznej*, Kraków: Regionalny Ośrodek Polityki Społecznej 2011, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, pp. 13-14.

<sup>28</sup> Arczewska, Całek, Gliwicka, Pazderski, Rusteckii, Bobek, *Długofalowa polityka rozwoju wolontariatu w Polsce*, p. 20.

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B. Kromolicka defines volunteering as an act of accompanying, going along with the person in need together on his or her path, it is to dedicate one's time<sup>29</sup>. It is also the opportunity for self-realization<sup>30</sup>. Pope John Paul II used to say that it is a "school of life"<sup>31</sup>, especially for young people.

We can, therefore, conclude that volunteering is an opportunity for everybody: first of all a human in need – it is a chance for help the possibility to feel important and loved. In is also a chance for his or her family, since they also will not feel alone and lost in a difficult situation. It is finally an opportunity for the volunteers themselves, who realize that thanks to such help they can learn and develop themselves<sup>32</sup>.

Finding the essence of voluntary work inevitably draws out attention toward the biblical sources of theological reflection. When Jesus was asked by one of the scribes which is the most important commandment, He answered: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Mt 22,37-39). Hence, any type of activity for the benefit of another person must be at the same time the act of Love, understood in accordance with the evangelic view<sup>33</sup>, which should be always considered in relation to other person, especially the needy man.

In the education of young people it seems vitally important, to build the appropriate – based on respect and responsibility – relations. Together with the positive examples, they will constitute the supportive tool in the process of developing an attitude of openness to other people. Therefore, a lot

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<sup>29</sup> B. K r o m o l i c k a, *Wolontariusz w służbie człowiekowi umierającemu*, Szczecin: Wydawnictwo OR TWP 2000, pp. 46-47, 85.

<sup>30</sup> B. K r o m o l i c k a, *Działalność Koła Wolontariatu Studenckiego na rzecz dzieci potrzebujących pomocy*, w: *W służbie dziecku*, red. J. Wilk, t. III, Lublin: Poligrafia Inspektoratu Towarzystwa Salezjańskiego 2001, p. 164.

<sup>31</sup> J a n P a w e ł I I, *Miłość najwspanialszą formą ewangelizacji. Przesłanie na zakończenie międzynarodowego Roku Wolontariatu*, Watykan 5.12.2001. [http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan\\_pawel\\_ii/przemowienia/wolontariat\\_05122001.html](http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/wolontariat_05122001.html) [dostęp: 26 sierpnia 2013].

<sup>32</sup> K r o m o l i c k a, *Wolontariusz w służbie człowiekowi umierającemu*, p. 47.

<sup>33</sup> K a m i ń s k i, *Praca socjalna i charytatywna*, pp. 52-56.

depends on parents and teachers who create the everyday of youth and from an early age, they should shape the selfless actions for the environment. This allows young people have a chance to get some sensitivity and awareness in relation to the surrounding world.

To sum up, volunteering constitutes an important form of civic activity, which is a response to social needs. We should hope that it will become even more developed and involve a growing number of people. As a phenomenon, by all means positive, voluntary gives hope for the restoration of human solidarity and expands into the new areas and as a result proves its timeless relevance.

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POTENTIAL IS WITHIN US  
– ON THE ISSUE OF VOLUNTARISM

S u m m a r y

The author of the article characterizes the idea of voluntary service, its basic indicators, its essence and importance in the social life, emphasizing, at the same time, its Christian aspect.

The general objective of the present paper is to draw particular attention to the issue of voluntary service as a chance for restoration of social bounds and rebuilding moral foundations in contemporary societies, as well as to present it as a place of volunteers' self-realization. At the same time, the author indicates the factors, which are connected with the time management of a volunteer's work, determine its correct proceeding, and finally success.

The analysis leads to defining volunteering as an opportunity for everybody: above all for a man in need, for his family, but also for the volunteers themselves, who thanks to such help get a chance to learn more about themselves and to develop.

**Key words:** voluntary service, voluntariness, selflessness, help, support, service, self-realization.

POTENCJAŁ JEST W NAS  
– WOKÓŁ PROBLEMATYKI WOLONTARIATU

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Autor artykułu charakteryzuje wolontariat, jego ideę, podstawowe wyznaczniki, istotę oraz znaczenie w życiu społecznym, podkreślając zarazem jego chrześcijański aspekt.

Głównym celem niniejszego opracowania jest jednak zwrócenie uwagi na wolontariat jako działania dające możliwość restytucji więzi społecznych i odbudowywania fundamentów moralnych we współczesnych społeczeństwach, a także jako miejsce pozwalające na samorealizację wolontariusza. Autor wskazuje jednocześnie czynniki, które związane są z organizacją pracy wolontariusza oraz warunkują jej właściwy przebieg i pomyślność.

Dokonane analizy prowadzą do określenia wolontariatu jako szansy dla wszystkich: nade wszystko dla człowieka potrzebującego, dla jego bliskich, ale także dla samych wolontariuszy, którzy dzięki niemu mogą poznawać i rozwijać siebie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wolontariat, dobrowolność, bezinteresowność, pomoc, wsparcie, posługa, samorealizacja.