

# PERSONALITY OF AN EFFICIENT VOLUNTEER WORKING WITH ORPHANED TEENAGERS

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## Abstract

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, all volunteering issues have elevated to a higher level, cite one example: the percentage of people in our society involved in volunteering has grown significantly. However, it is worth noting that the fundamental difference between volunteering in general and the one associated with the pandemic makes the latter one depended on its limited time-period. When it comes to long-term projects, we are dealing with the matter of the volunteers' evaluation in terms of predicting their success in this sort of activity, estimating their ability to participate in long-term projects, together with taking into account the young age of some volunteers joining the project as well as the possible risk of change of circumstances in volunteers' life. The study group consisted of 100 volunteers who worked with children at first hand: (11 men and 89 women), average age 29 years  $\pm$  6 years. The control group consisted of students and working people whose professional occupations had no relation to the project field and who had no previous volunteering experience: 68 people (18 men and 50 women), average age 29  $\pm$  4.3 years. To study respondents we had used the following methods: 1. Schwartz Value Survey. 2 The Existence Scale, ESK by A. Langle. 3. Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20). 4. 5FPQ (short version). 5. Methods of diagnosis of empathy (I. M. Yusupov). As a result of the data analysis, there were the most important characteristics for an efficient volunteer determined: empathy; work ethics; the high level of the freedom of choice ensures the equally high level of the volunteers' self-actualization and efficiency; the core values for an efficient volunteer are as following: multitasking ability, high reputational standards, generosity, caregiving behavior and the disregard for supremacy and domination. As a result of the combined factor analysis there were four trait profiles for the volunteers participating in the project identified: a successful volunteer; a self-motivated volunteer; an independent volunteer, a newcomer.

Keywords: efficient volunteer, volunteer's personality, long-term volunteers' project.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, there are more than 200 public organizations in Russia, whose activities are partially or fully supported by volunteers. The Universal Declaration [1] defines volunteerism "as the foundation of civil society." Here, the main idea of volunteerism as an individual or group action is highlighted, which is to promote and maintain universal values, strengthen social ties. The potential of volunteerism for personal development is also indicated. This Declaration has been admitted in more than 80 countries, including Russia.

In our work we adhere to definition of volunteering from the point of view of system approach [2]: volunteerism is functioning in the broad context of social, economic, political relations is a social system of interacting voluntary agencies (subject to volunteering), based on the principles of integrity, solidarity, combination of objective and subjective and characterized by the following features:

- implementation of volunteerism as a form of social interaction of its national and international manifestations;
- use of social, economic, political, and cultural resources;
- the presence of common values, interests, and attitudes that form a voluntary social identity.

In the same paper, the goals of volunteerism are considered from the point of view of internal and external orientation. Internal goals include the reproduction and development of volunteerism, and external goals include obtaining real results and practical benefits.

In connection with the pandemic in 2020, volunteering and volunteering have moved to another level, the percentage of people in society employed in it has increased significantly. However, it is worth noting that the fundamental difference between volunteering associated with the pandemic is its short–

term nature. We do not know how much people who have gained experience in volunteering will want to continue it and will continue to work in this area.

When it comes to long-term projects, we face the question of evaluation and predicting the success of the volunteer in this type of activity, predicting the possibility of long-term participation in the project, taking into account the young age of entry into the project and the impact of life changes.

In addition, in long-term projects based on the help of volunteers, the direction of activity becomes particularly important. Traditionally, it is possible to divide the areas of activity of volunteers on several grounds

- emergency assistance or long-term assistance and support;
- the age of those who are being helped (children, adults and the elderly);
- primary focus of assistance: social, educational or psychological one.

For volunteers involved in long-term projects, the motivation to participate in the project and the questions of how to maintain it in the long term play a special role.

Despite the fact that volunteering does not imply any material reward, the volunteers who take part in it, of course, receive an emotional return, which ensures the energetic involvement of a person in the project.

In the work of E. S. Azarova [3], the following psychological determinants of voluntary activity are identified:

- a) personal (system of motives, need for care, empathy, value-semantic system, emotional characteristics, propensity to activity, orientation, personality traits, self-esteem);
- b) communicative (success of activity, communication style, content and learning process, strategic planning and management);
- c) socio-psychological (the system of encouragement, the influence of public attention, public recognition, the content of voluntary activity, the socio-psychological climate of the volunteer organization).

In other words, the determining factor for participation in volunteer activities is the desire to help, provided with opportunities and supported by the feedback received.

In our opinion, for participation in a long-term project on interaction with grown-up children with orphan experience, the most adequate is a complex motivation based on the motives of personal growth, altruism and social contact. For our work, it is important not only the motivation itself to participate in a volunteer project, but also its dynamics.

Let's move on to empathy. It refers to the properties of the individual required for the formation of needs and the implementation of helping behavior. In the work [4] which studies the dynamics of personal development of volunteers during participation in the project, it is shown that "student volunteers with more than 2 years of experience, who plan to continue to carry out the mission in question, are distinguished by well-developed empathy, communication skills, and motivation to provide assistance. Key personality characteristics of student volunteers: understanding the feelings of other people, the ability to empathize with others, orientation to humanistic values, willingness to help those in need, sociability.

Summarizing the scientific data and our practical experience of working with the project, the procedural model of personal development in a long-term functioning volunteer project can be presented as follows.

In order to better recruit volunteers and transfer the accumulated experience of long-term volunteering, it was necessary to conduct a study of the personal qualities of the volunteer who is most suitable for this role. It was important to describe the core values, motivations, and strategies of such people so that they could be more easily found and followed. Supporting volunteers is important, because friendship relationships develop gradually and not always easy, especially with a child who has already been let down by adults once or several times.

Volunteers need to be prepared for the potential for crises in the process of forming close, important, consistent, and honest relationships – difficult turning points in border checks. Often they are of a conflicting nature, but only they allow the teenager to begin to trust his friend: "a friend is known in

trouble." Such crises help to form clear roles and develop an understanding of their actions through the ability to understand conflicts and resolve them.

Relationships develop in different ways, analyzing the results of activities and observing the development of the volunteer-teenager relationship, we came to the conclusion that it would be useful to study and create a portrait of a successful volunteer, share this experience with other interested persons and organizations.

This process is extremely complex, because the effectiveness of volunteer activities directly depends on how much everyone has the same ideas about the success of the volunteer. Therefore, it was decided to study the personal characteristics of volunteers, project participants. At the same time, it is also important to analyze errors in the implementation of volunteer activities within the project, so as not to cause additional experiences to either children or adults.

The project that is presented in our work is a long-term one, so we are faced with the task of not only selecting the most suitable young people for it, but also supporting them in the project. Support is focused on continuing work, which also implies initial stability on the part of volunteers. In accordance with the goals and objectives of the project, methods were selected that answer the question about the personal profile of volunteers, allowing them to predict the possibility of successful long-term participation in the project.

Based on the analysis of modern research in the field of psychology of volunteerism and the experience of the project for 7 years, we presented the proposed model of the volunteer's personality, which determines the successful participation in a long-term project to support adolescents with experience of orphanhood.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Respondents**

Volunteers working directly with children: 100 people (11 men and 89 women), average age 29 years  $\pm$  6 years.

The control group consisted of students and professional people who have no experience of volunteering: 68 people (18 men and 50 women), average age 29  $\pm$  4.3 years.

To study respondents we had used the following methods:

- 1 Schwartz Value Survey [5].
- 2 The Existence Scale, ESK by A. Langle [6].
- 3 Toronto Alexithymia scale (TAS-20).
- 4 5FPQ (short version).
- 5 Methods of diagnosis of empathy (I. M. Yusupov) [7]

In addition, experts working in the project with volunteers rated them on the scale of effective volunteer (it had been created by experts).

### **2.2 Statistics**

Descriptive statistics (mean, variance, minimum and maximum) were used for the initial analysis of empirical data.

For the parameters measured in the metric scale, after checking the samples for homogeneity of variance, the following analysis methods were selected:

- comparison of samples according to the t-Student criteria; U-Mann-Whitney;
- multivariate analysis of variance;
- correlation analysis of relationships within samples (using the r-Pearson criterion, Spearman's rank criterion);
- factor analysis

Data processing was carried out using MS Excel, SPSS Statistics 20 application programs.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Portrait of an effective volunteer

As a result of the assessment in the portrait of an effective volunteer, the following indicators are most important.

- 1 Age of the volunteer - for effective work in the project with children, the age that is stated in the project (from 18 to 32 years) is preferable, because life experience allows you to react to events that occur during participation in the project in a different way.
- 2 Personal qualities.
  - Empathy. A high level of empathy is key to working on this project. Communication capabilities, understanding of oneself and others ensure openness and development of mutual partner relations. Empathy provides the ability to accept the dynamics of building relationships, discuss possible mistakes, and advance. All this develops the project and deepens the understanding of the process by volunteers, and leads to their personal growth and development.
  - Integrity allows you to build trust and distribute responsibility.
  - A high level of freedom of choice ensures a high level of performance of effective volunteers. Freedom means the ability to decide, to find real possibilities of action, to create a hierarchy according to the internal value, and thereby make a decision. Thus, this factor indicates the ability of the individual to make a decision based on external circumstances.

The leading values for an effective volunteer are: universalism, high reputation value, benevolence, caring, and low value of power and dominance.

### 3.2 Factor analysis

As a result of the factor analysis, four personal profiles of volunteers participating in the project were identified: a Successful volunteers, Self-motivated volunteers, independent volunteers, and newcomer.

#### 3.2.1 *The first profile is a «Successful volunteers»*

They are characterized by:

- A high rate of perceived choice (such volunteers make conscious choices and understand what they have chosen, are ready to implement and accept the result of their actions).
- A high level of self-awareness-helps them understand and accept themselves and enable others to manifest in their presence. They are ready for interaction and make it understandable – this helps to build relationships, arousing interest in themselves and others.
- Low level of neuroticism (neuroticism – emotional instability, instability, hypersensitivity, nervousness, irritability). Volunteers with a low level of neuroticism have emotional stability, are not prone to resentment and irritation, accept real assessments of themselves from the outside, which ensures the stability of their personal resource and the distribution of forces.
- A low rate of "extraversion" means that they tend to communicate consciously, which is closer to introversion, and allows you to build high-quality communication with the circle in which the volunteers feel involved. The boundaries of the individual are clear and this helps others to build a clear relationship with them.
- A high indicator of cooperation – the desire for society, the ability to sympathize with others, empathy. Such qualities allow you to understand and understand your place and role in society, planning the result and achieving it in an optimal way, building understandable interactions.
- High integrity score – such volunteers understand their capabilities and take responsibility, and fulfill their obligations in good faith
- A high indicator of fulfillment – a person lives his life, realizing that it is quite successful, freely implements his goals and plans.

All expert ratings are high, because volunteers always keep their finger on the pulse of building relationships and know how to be good partners. The expertise of the work in the project was

evaluated by experts (project specialists according to specially developed parameters in the course of work).

The values that are identified in this group of volunteers allow them to implement their own even the most daring plans; it helps children to follow their example. The leading values that help to preserve the integrity of the individual and develop it are:

- the high level of the value of public safety (since they understand themselves, they are well aware that in society you can always occupy your own niche), this is helped by the expressed value of independence in thinking;
- the high level of the value of personal security determines the formation of boundaries and real expectations, taking into account their capabilities;
- a high level of the value of commitment to traditions allows you to form your own supportive environment of people who are close in values;
- the low level of the value of dominance and power allows you to focus on the implementation of goals and plans, without wasting energy on solving issues of power;
- the low level of the value of conformity to the rules.

Such volunteers come to the project with an understanding of their desires. They often have experience in volunteering, are active throughout the interaction process, and are constantly ready to participate dynamically in any project activity.

During training such volunteers are extremely conscientious about studying themselves and materials, they manage to relate what the child feels to their feelings, and they help based on the real needs of the child, trying to accept him as he is. With all their readiness for acceptance, understanding and developed tolerance, they clearly and consistently build their relationships, sincerely informing teenagers and all participants of the process about what is happening. Their feedback becomes a very valuable and effective message for the teenager – over time, he is guided by an example of such behavior, and this brings him great benefits in shaping his approach to life. Children with such adults feel good and calm, they can successfully relive their traumatic experience, knowing that no one will offend them.

### 3.2.2 *The second profile «Self-motivated»*

Usually these are people who are leaders, confident, persistent and active, who are able to resolutely achieve their goals for the sake of a common cause. They are included in the process that they like to move forward, are loyal and reliable.

According to the results of the methods in this group, the following results were noted:

- High level of alexithymia (alexithymia - difficulty in transmitting, verbally describing, verbalizing your state, your emotions and the emotions of other people). This indicator was revealed in our opinion, because the volunteers belonging to this profile are adherents of determination, and may not always understand and hear others, often they need time for this. At the same time, everything that they plan – they implement in life, because they can and can.
- A high level of openness, cooperation and integrity. Such volunteers strive to make others do everything clearly and openly. They like to work together in the project - they are ready to show creativity, initiative, show the position of an adult.
- They are mature individuals; they have clearly formed boundaries.

The above-mentioned personality traits determine the presence of such expressed values as:

- the high level of the value of independent thinking; high value of interpersonal conformity (avoiding harming and hurting others);
- the high level of the value of humanism;
- the high level of the value of universalism in terms of tolerance and conformity in rules;
- the high level of the value of independence in actions;
- the high level of the value of traditions;

- the high level of the value of benevolence and sense of duty, the desire to be reliable and important in the group;
- the low level of the reputation value;
- the low level of the value of power and resources;
- the low level of the achievement value.

Volunteers of this profile are dedicative, and if they are able to act decisively, they are ready to change something if the case requires it. They can fearlessly bring to an end any planned business, but if necessary, they can also give in. They are patient and active people, strong and courageous, who can lead and take responsibility for the group. They can also actively help in crisis situations, focusing on the fact that the quality of human life should not suffer.

Children with such adults are happy, they are happy to take an example of determination and attempts to start a new one. If something does not work out, they can ask such an adult, because he will always be on the side of the child. Honesty and openness of feedback allows children to see themselves from the outside.

### 3.2.3 *The third profile is an «Independent»*

The following profile of volunteers shows us mature independent, very strong, charismatic, ideological people.

They quickly come up with ideas about how to change the world, or do something meaningful with stunning results. In the wake of their passion, they often begin to implement their ideas, but they can quickly leave what they started, because they have low indicators of fulfillment and conscientiousness, low levels of empathy and extroversion. They cannot explain their ideas long and patiently to others in order to have colleagues, and if they do not understand themselves, they will not try to explain something to them-they will do what they have planned themselves. They are not ready to wait for anyone, because they are passionate about the idea.

Volunteers of this profile have the following value indicators:

- the high level of the value of hedonism;
- the high level of reputation value;
- the high level of the value of universalism;
- the high level of the value of independent thinking;
- the high level of the value of actions and achievements;
- the high level of the value of public safety;
- the low level of the value of personal security stimulation;
- the low level of the value of traditions.

Such volunteers often have experienced difficult situations themselves, have developed many personal and individual strategies for helping themselves, and are willing to use them to help others. They often have an education that allows them to implement professional activities in the field of helping professions related to the possibility of transferring experience and mentoring. In the project, they often try to be friends and "on equal terms", but this is often a difficult task for them, since they tend to focus on the global, without having time to delve deeply.

But if they receive support and find a vector of harmonious movement, they manage to acquire a balance of harmony and move steadily towards the goal, deepening the inner meaning of actions.

Sometimes they react impulsively to failures, but this also has its own advantage, because it helps them to indicate their position, and therefore achieve the goal. This can be an example for a teenager and serves as a good job of preventing fears about their emotions and feelings. Such people are able to spontaneously show creativity and be in the moment, actively living emotions-this allows you to understand that you are alive.

### 3.2.4 *The fourth profile is «Newcomers»*

This profile represents a person starting out in a project who has a great desire to help and support, but has not yet fully explored their resources (neither the personality nor the vector of understanding

their relationship strategies has yet developed). These volunteers are involved in the project for a short time, they are only at the beginning of their journey.

Volunteers of the fourth profile have the following characteristics:

- low level of self-awareness;
- increased response to external evaluations;
- high level of neuroticism;
- high openness due to curiosity about the world and the desire to find your opportunity with frequent misunderstanding of your desires.

Despite the fact that such volunteers are participants in the project for a short period of time, they have opportunities to form their place, there is a resource for development, because they note •

- the high level of the value of hedonism;
- the high level of the reputation value;
- the high level of the value of benevolence and care
- the high level of the level of personal security value;
- the high level of the level of universalism and tolerance;
- the high level of the level of achievement value;
- the high level of the value of conformity to the rules;
- the low level of the level of power and resources, allowing you to create a space to explore yourself and others;

There is no anger and irritation, and there is a chance that by developing values with high expression, they will form their position as a volunteer and will actively develop in the project.

### **3.3 Comparison of the group of volunteers with the control group**

The comparison was carried out by the Mann-Whitney. Significant differences were found between the volunteer group and the control group (people not engaged in volunteer activities).

The following parameters were significantly higher in the group of volunteers:

- awareness of choice;
- self-awareness;
- openness;
- cooperation;
- self-monitoring;
- freedom;
- fulfillment.

The following parameters were significantly lower in the group of volunteers:

- alexithymia (difficulties in communicating, verbally describing one's emotional state);
- neuroticism (emotional instability, instability, hypersensitivity, nervousness, irritability).

There were also differences in the number of values and in the degree of importance of such values.

In the group of volunteers significantly lower level of values:

- hedonism;
- power-dominance;
- reputation;
- power-resources.

The value of universalism is significantly higher.

Thus, we can say that there are significant differences in personal and value indicators between volunteers participating in a long-term project and people who are not related to volunteer activities, which simultaneously raises the question of how much this is related to the training and support of volunteers, or to a greater extent to the fact that interested and selected participants immediately have different characteristics from the control group.

Next, we made a comparison within a group of volunteers, dividing them into groups based on experience:

- 1 up to 1.5 years of participation in the project;
- 2 from 1.5 to 3 years;
- 3 more than 3 years.

The analysis revealed differences in the indicators of alexithymia and openness, of the first group from the other two.

It is interesting to note that in these three groups of volunteers there are no differences in values, which indicates that they come to the project with a certain experience, and largely thanks to it, they remain stable throughout their participation in the project. Changes in the index of alexithymia, in our opinion, are associated with the training and support of volunteers, which allows them to better understand their own and other people's emotions.

Combining the data obtained with the help of expert assessments and comparison data with the control group (people who do not participate in volunteer activities), we can assume that our sample of volunteers, due to serious selection for the project, already has pronounced personal qualities necessary for successful self-realization in such a project.

Absolute indications for participation in the project (necessary for building an effective relationship with a teenager)

- high level of empathy;
- high level of openness, integrity;
- high level of existential fulfillment (with high scores on the "freedom" and "self-regulation" scales»);
- high level of values of universalism, benevolence-care

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The study allows us to make the following conclusions:

The most crucial indicators for an efficient volunteers working with orphanage teenagers are age and personal characteristics such as empathy, integrity and freedom of choice; the core values for an efficient volunteer are as following: multitasking ability, high reputational standards, generosity, caregiving behaviour and the disregard for supremacy and domination. In our opinion, such personal traits allow them to make choice to be a volunteer in so complicated area. The work on identifying criteria for the effectiveness of a volunteer is necessary for further discussion and dissemination of the data obtained among professionals working in the field of adaptation of children left without parental care, employees of state centers for the promotion of family education, volunteers and organizations whose activities include the development of volunteerism in the Russian Federation. This contributes to the formation of an understanding of the need for such projects, an increase in the number of adolescents who will be assisted.

As a result of the combined factor analysis there were found four profiles for the volunteers participating in the project identified: a successful volunteer; a self-motivated volunteer; an independent volunteer, a newcomer. These results show us that there are four different types of volunteers that need different supporting during taking them part in the project. We think it needs longitudinal study to understand it better.

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