

Volunteering and Inclusion in Schools

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Abstract

This contribution addresses the importance of volunteering in the integration of migrants into schools. Volunteering is something that has been gaining the recognition and value over the last decade. It is recognized as one of the positive tools for the integration of migrants into schools, as it works well for people who need help, as well as for those who provide assistance, because of the feeling that they have done a good job. Volunteers are perceived as an important actor in inclusion when institutions cannot take this role by themselves. First, we defined the basic concepts and research in volunteering based on the relevant literature. The purpose of the contribution was to explore the importance of volunteering. We pay particular attention to the results of the RoMigSc project. In the survey conducted in Slovenia, Italy, Spain and Northern Macedonia in 2019, we wanted to gather opinions on volunteering. We were interested in assessing the importance of volunteering and the need for volunteering. We found that the majority of respondents believe that volunteering enables them to acquire new skills and abilities, demonstrate their humanitarian values, enable them to develop their careers, develop and strengthen social bonds, learn through direct experience and personal growth. Only the small share of respondents thought, that volunteering allows them protection. Respondents' views showed that volunteering in schools is an effective way of showing all students that they need to care for others and that more volunteering will be needed for vulnerable groups in the future. Also in the CiSoTRA project (which addresses the support system for unaccompanied migrant minors and the competence of professionals to work) we came to the similar findings regarding the positive effects of volunteering in schools on young migrants, educational institutions and volunteers. In doing so, the importance of involving young migrants in volunteering at schools should be emphasized, as migrant pupils are more likely to trust someone with migrant background; this is also good opportunity for enhancement of social inclusion of young migrant volunteers.

Keywords: Volunteering, youth, project RoMigSc, inclusion, migrants