



CONTRIBUTION OF NON-PROGRAMME COUNTRIES TO EU YOUTH WIKI

UKRAINE CHAPTER II: VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

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2.1 General context

Historical developments

Volunteering in Ukraine does not have very deep traditions. The beginning of the volunteer movement can be considered to be the emergence of the Red Cross Societies during the First World War. At that time Ukraine was divided between the warring parties, but the Red Cross Societies existed both in the Austrian-Hungarian (later Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Romanian) and the Russian parts. First volunteers dealt with the issues relating to the consequences of the war: assistance to veterans, wounded people, refugees, people with disabilities, orphans, the homeless and poor people. They managed hospitals and medical aid points, nutrition deliveries, and spaces for social aid for extremely poor people.

In the interwar years, when contemporary Ukraine was part of Russia/Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, social life and social activities were different. The Ukrainians in Eastern European countries developed national movements and social organisations, including church, took care of education, cultural life, medicine and charity, and supported national political, paramilitary and social movements. At that time the meaning of “volunteering” was still linked to the war and rebellion and as an activity to preserve national identity. The Soviet developments in the eastern, largest part of Ukraine gradually eliminated volunteering as an individual and social activity and completely integrated it into the state system. Before the Second World War almost all territories of contemporary Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union.

The Red Cross Society was the only international charity organisation which remained legally in the Soviet Union, with the incorporation of Muslim societies renamed as Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent, and became a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent. The Ukrainian branch kept its identity as Red Cross Ukraine. During the Second World War the Red Cross worked with medical aid and medical volunteering, training for field medicine, and prepared people to go into military medicine service. Women were the big target group for these activities.

During the Second World War the Red Cross and Red Crescent was already a quasi-state organisation, connected to the international community and partly keeping the culture of “traditional” volunteering. Blood donations had been acquired. Blood donors were recruited at work and places of study and they could automatically gain membership of the organisation. The importance of Red Cross Ukraine emerged during the Chernobyl disaster, when the network of the organisation was used for evacuation, social and medical care for victims and displaced people. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and Ukrainian independence in 1991, the Ukrainian branch was reorganised as an independent organisation keeping its membership and its system of regional branches.

During the Maidan protests in 2013-2014 and afterwards in the Anti-Terrorist Operation, Red Cross Ukraine was an important actor having developed a structure for mobile medical groups and medical volunteers. Nevertheless, due to administrative conservatism, this organisation was not unique, and new initiatives have appeared and have become stronger.

Another interpretation of volunteering with significant impact for current developments is the incorporation of volunteering into political state ideology relating to the role of young people and children in strengthening the Soviet regime. The new system of social activity of children and youth has been developed around the *Timurovtsy* movement. The movement itself had been inspired by the popular novel by Arkady Gaidar, *Timur and his team*, which explored

the private initiative of a group of young people motivated to do some volunteer work for the families of the soldiers. The novel became very popular and many informal youth volunteering groups emerged around the country. After some time, the Communist Party authorities identified some threats from having grass-roots informal movements like this and decided to incorporate the *Timurovtsy* movement into the Youth Pioneer Organisation – the formal political organisation as a preface to the Communist Party and its youth movement, named *Komsomol*. The Pioneer Organisation gained stronger formalisation after the Second World War and by the 1970s included all children aged 10-14 years (after the age of 14, young people entered the *Komsomol* youth movement). The social service and political activities were the core element of the ideology, while remaining at the same time an obligation.

Later, after the collapse of the Soviet system in 1991, the activities of the *Timurovtsy* movement were often promoted as volunteering. An attempt was made to present this approach in line with European approaches relating to this. In several local educational plans, there were references to “*Timurovtsy* movements”, presented in line with volunteering. For example, even in 2010 the Department of education, science, youth and sports of Kyiv city reported that volunteering units are organised in all educational institutions of the city and it was [a sign of revival of the “*Timurovtsy* movement”](#).

At the beginning of 1990s the volunteering movement in Ukraine started to be developed as a symbiosis of Soviet traditions and new trends. Beside the narratives of the *Timurovtsy* movement, the second form of volunteering was the creation of “volunteer units” based in secondary, professional and high schools, like the *Komsomol* structures. The “volunteering” itself was still under administrative pressure and in many cases obligatory for students.

After 2014 the policy of decommunisation started and the old Soviet narratives were eliminated. On the one hand, there is a need to fill the gaps with new content. On the other hand, Soviet relics can still be seen in the organisation of youth work and volunteering and often also replaced by the narrative of “national-patriotic education”.

Main concepts

As the old Soviet approach still exists in working with young people, the idea of having volunteering units or organisations inside education establishments is still being developed. The volunteering units or single volunteering activities are mostly focused on activities relating to cleaning the environment or organising assistance to the people in need. In some cases, these activities are not independent and/or voluntary based.

In 1992 the Social Youth Services were created and started to train volunteers and manage volunteers’ units. The volunteering covered the most problematic spheres of social care in Ukraine, such as AIDS prevention, homelessness, working with children at risk, drug prevention and help lines for young people. The Social Youth Service was reformed many times and transformed to the State Social Youth Service in 2002, the State Social Service for Youth, Children and Family in 2004 and finally was reorganised as the Social Service Centre for Children, Youth and Families in 2011. Since the last reorganisation these structures lost their functions in managing the volunteering activities of young people. The volunteer units still exist in some educational establishments as independent groups or organisations. These developments have inspired an understanding of volunteering as a field linked to social service and social care.

In the NGO sector, organisations that identify themselves with volunteering began to emerge at the beginning of the years 2000. There are organisations working on specific social issues or service organisations for managing volunteering activity. The promotion of the UN-Volunteers and European Volunteer Services in Ukraine also set the ground for developing cross-border and international volunteering. The developments in the NGO sector set the grounds for understanding volunteering as an individual activity aimed at the common good and the possibility of achieving competences and qualifications.

The most popular field for volunteering activities since the end of 2013 is linked to Euromaidan and the Anti-Terrorist Operation. The form this takes is that of non-profit work on any logistical, technical, legal, medical, social or other support to help protesters and the army, including their families, also through fundraising. These movements started as individual or small group activities; some of them have been reorganised into non-profit organisations or charity foundations. There were very few linkages to the volunteering approaches before 2013, as most volunteers came from activists' environments. The next meaning of volunteering is also military volunteering and applies to people who joined the army or paramilitary units on a voluntary basis since spring 2014.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

According to the [Law on Volunteering Activity](#), the Government of Ukraine (Cabinet of Ministers) is the main responsible body for the implementation of policy in the field of volunteering, the development of State Target Programmes on volunteering and for the co-ordination of the responsible ministries in the field of volunteering (Article 3, p. 2). There are no special regulations regarding which ministries should implement this policy or about how they should do this, as no strategic document has been adopted. According to the Law, by implementing volunteering policy the central executive body should secure, promote, inform and support non-government and charity organisations in volunteering (Article 3, p. 3). The same relates to the regional administrations and local self-governments.

Nowadays volunteering activities are identified as part of the policy of various executive bodies. The beginning of hostilities and the increase in volunteering movements in 2014 forced various authorities to respond to the needs of volunteers and to recognise that it is difficult to manage some situations without involving volunteers. Young people have been a significant part of the volunteer movement; nevertheless, at that time the responsible Ministry of Youth and Sports did not intervene in the developments. The facilitation of various initiatives was under the responsibility of the presidential administration and the government. As a result, besides the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Social Policy, which were partly responsible for volunteering issues before 2014, four other ministries developed their own frameworks and regulations as a response to the new situation: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance.

Nowadays [the Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) is the only executive body at the national level related to the issue of volunteering of young people. The ministry is also the main responsible body for implementation of the [State Target Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2016-2020"](#). The specific volunteering issues are not included in any operational plans of the ministry. Nevertheless, the Concept and the State Target Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2016-2020"

provides a framework for implementing non-formal education and volunteering activities and for involving volunteers in youth policy.

[The Ministry of Social Policy](#) according to the [Law on Volunteering Activity](#) and the [Law on Humanitarian Assistance](#) co-ordinates the international charity activity and provides a database and certification of NGOs working in humanitarian aid (cargo) and international volunteering. The ministry manages the process of humanitarian cargo and works with the non-state actors in the issues of non-taxation and customs clearance. There are no specific regulations for young volunteers or youth volunteering within social policy issues.

[The Ministry of Health](#) communicates with medical volunteers in a non-formal way and formally within the Civil Society Consultative Council. The co-ordination with volunteers covers the issues of military medicine, paramedics, medical rehabilitation, paramedical training and other specific issues not related to the military. The ministry has a new background in involving volunteers into internal management and in promoting medical reform, and the minister is a former volunteer in the Euromaidan protests.

[The Ministry of Defence](#) manages the volunteering issues relevant to the Anti-Terrorist Operation / Joint Forces Operation and set up the Volunteers Council in 2016 to co-ordinate the work and provide better monitoring and needs assessment. The council is not fully formalised and acts rather as a tool for non-formal consultations.

[The Ministry of the Interior](#) initiated some regulation on preferences for military and field volunteers in 2015-2016 and communicated with the military volunteers' units. Up to the end of 2014 the ministry successfully integrated the independent paramilitary volunteers into the system of the Police and National Guard.

In 2014 [The Ministry of Finance](#) issued a special regulation on financial reporting and taxation for volunteers active in relation to the Anti-Terrorist Operation.

At the regional and local levels, the departments responsible for regional administrations and self-government can manage their own policy on volunteering. In most cases the volunteers' organisations are involved in the consultations or civic councils as civil society stakeholders.

The non-state sector partly co-operates with the governmental bodies and does not have a unified co-ordination system. In recent years there have been some attempts to co-ordinate the volunteers' movement and to set up the dialogue with the government.

Cross-sectoral approach

There is no particular nationwide managed volunteering system in general and youth volunteering. There is no data on how many young people participate in military volunteering and volunteering for ATO (even in this regard, there is no co-ordination between the ministries). Therefore, there is no co-ordinated division of responsibility and co-operation either at the national level, or between the national, regional and local levels. Such a co-ordination role should be performed by the government.

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Existence of national strategy

There is no strategy on youth volunteering or on volunteering in general. However, the [Concept of the State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2016-2020"](#) as the main

strategic document for the [State Target Social Programme “Youth of Ukraine 2016-2020”](#) recognises volunteering as a key tool to promote non-formal learning, active citizenship and youth participation, this being one of the most beneficial and efficient directions of youth-related activities at the local level and as a tool for secondary employment. Nevertheless, there are no specific measures planned within the programme and volunteering is still covered under other issues.

The establishment of a National Volunteer Service is one of the key priorities of the [Road Map of reforming youth policy](#) adopted in 2015 and is still under debate.

Scope and context

The attempts to implement the provision of volunteering into legal acts were unsuccessful for a long time. The first time this succeeded was in 2012, when the [Law on Volunteering Activity](#) was approved. The adoption of the Law was caused by the European Football Championship, held in Poland and Ukraine in 2012. The aim of this legal act was to regulate the situations in which volunteers should only help in organising cultural or sporting events. In fact, the law was intended to organise activities carried out by people who helped in stadiums or worked with foreign guests. Volunteering is defined by the Law as “voluntary, social, non-profit activities undertaken by volunteers through volunteering assistance”, and volunteering itself is recognised as charity (Art. 1). The Law also provides a list of typical spheres of volunteers’ activities.

The Law has been constantly criticised for bureaucratic restrictions and uncertain regulation for volunteers who perform socially useful work. The main restriction of the Law was the requirement for NGOs to be obligatorily registered by the Law as “volunteering organisations” and its collision with the status of non-profit public organisations. The Law also did not contain any clarification about which authority is responsible for policy framework, or how the contracting procedure, insurance and reimbursement of volunteers should be managed. The Law also declared that volunteers should be prioritised when entering employment and higher education establishments. However, there is no system of recognition of the competences they developed. The Law also declared that volunteering is an activity for persons older than 16 years.

Several amendments to the Law on Volunteering Activity and relative legal acts were made in 2014-2016 as a request to secure and legitimise volunteering activities relating to the Anti-Terrorist Operation/Joined Forces Operation in Ukraine which was started in 2014. The amendments cancelled the obligatory certification of volunteering organisations and volunteers by the Ministry of Social Policy, provided recognition of volunteering for the needs of the Anti-Terrorist Operation and other emergency situations, and cancelled the obligation for volunteers to have a formal membership in an organisation. At the same time, if one is a member in an organisation, this gives the individual volunteer the right to participate in training, for example, and the right to obtain the reimbursement of expenses relating to volunteering. The amendments have set the lowest age for volunteering at 14 years (instead of 16), but with parental consent. To protect the life and health of children, the new law limits the scope of their activities: young people under 18 years cannot be volunteers in hospitals, the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military units, neither in activities relating to law enforcement, to public authorities during the special period, and to the legal regime of emergency or martial law, or the anti-terrorist operations.

Nowadays the Law on Volunteering Activity provides a list of spheres of activity which can be carried out by volunteers (Art. 1, p. 3):

- provision of volunteers' assistance to support people suffering from poverty, unemployment, homelessness, families with many children and people in need of social rehabilitation;
- caring for patients, persons with disabilities, socially isolated people, elderly people and other persons who, because of their physical, material or other characteristics, need support and assistance;
- assistance to citizens affected by an emergency of an anthropogenic or natural nature, actions of a special period, legal regimes of emergency or martial law, conduct of anti-terrorist operations, because of social conflicts, accidents, as well as victims of crimes, refugees, internally displaced persons;
- assistance to persons who, due to their physical or other defects, are limited in the exercise of their rights and legal interests;
- carrying out activities relating to the protection of the environment, preservation of cultural heritage, historical and cultural environment, historical and cultural monuments and memorials;
- assistance in carrying out activities at national and international level relating to the organisation of sports, cultural and other entertainment and social events;
- provision of volunteer assistance for the elimination of the consequences of man-made or natural emergencies;
- provision of volunteer assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other military formations, law enforcement agencies, state authorities during the special period, legal regimes of emergency or martial law, conduct of anti-terrorist operation;
- assistance to the authorised body on probation in carrying out supervision of convicts and carrying out social and educational work with them;
- provision of volunteer assistance in other areas not prohibited by law.

Youth volunteering is reflected in the [Concept of the State Target Social Programme “Youth of Ukraine 2016-2020”](#) from two perspectives: as a tool for non-formal education (Priority 3) and as secondary employment (Priority 4). Priority 3 covers the issues of non-formal learning through the implementation of measures aimed at the acquisition of knowledge, skills and other competences outside the education system, through participation in volunteering activities. This covers the following tools: Youth Worker Programme, development of youth centres, youth camps, youth information and e-learning platforms, youth passport (as a tool for recognition). Priority 4 covers the creation of conditions and activities aimed at youth employment (provision of primary and secondary employment and self-employment of youth). Volunteering is reflected as one of the tools for secondary employment. The measures taken in the frame of “Youth of Ukraine 2016-2020” are not evaluated, so there are no reliable data for measuring results and effects.

Responsible authorities

The lack of responsible authority is the weakest point in the development of volunteering. Since the law does not define a specific responsible institution, volunteering appears as a topic in different interpretations. That's why the civil society organisations insist on revising the law and defining the responsible authority.

Since 2012 some amendments and regulations have been made under the responsibilities of the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Finance and the Cabinet of Ministers.

In 2012 the provision to involve volunteers in social work was made by amendments to the [Law on Social Service](#) as the right of state institutions to involve volunteers without any tools for implementation.

In 2014 the Ministry of Finance issued a special [regulation on database of volunteers active in relation to Counter-Terrorist Operation](#), which allows tax deduction to volunteers on costs related to such activities.

In order to regulate volunteering during big national and international cultural, public and sporting events and in the situation of *force majeure* in 2015 the government issued the special [Approval of the Procedure for Providing Volunteer Assistance in Certain Areas of Volunteer Activity](#), which legitimised the involvement of volunteers for public authorities.

The next document from 2015 regulated some issues of [financial payment in case of death or disability of a volunteer as a result of injury received during the provision of volunteer assistance in the area of counter-terrorist operations, military actions and armed conflicts](#). According to these regulations, the volunteers or their families can claim financial compensation, like the soldiers and officers of regular armed units.

Revision/Updates

There were no significant updates on youth volunteering since the Adoption of “Youth of Ukraine” Programme. Since 2018 youth volunteering is one of the priorities of the [Youth Worker Programme](#) and proposes specific training for youth workers, developed by [UN Volunteers in Ukraine](#). The topic was included into the training programme after consultation with stakeholders and target groups. The main purpose of the training is to train trainers for further training of youth workers on theoretical background and practical skills necessary to effectively engage young people in volunteering. After passing the training course, participants are expected to have information on the nature, role and forms of youth volunteering, global and local approaches to engaging and co-ordinating volunteers; understand the principles of engaging, co-ordinating, motivating, communicating and rewarding volunteers, get acquainted with burn-out prevention tools and methods for evaluating volunteers; have information on best world and national practices, tools, approaches to working with volunteers; have the necessary knowledge and competence to train youth workers.

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National programme on youth volunteering

There is no separate programme in Ukraine regarding youth volunteering. Some themes regarding youth volunteering are contained in the [State Target Social Programme “Youth of Ukraine”](#) mentioned above. The lack of strategy and nationwide programme results in local initiatives and civil society organisations, which try to develop their own approaches and methodologies.

Funding

Since there is no strategy or programme, no budget has been allocated for the development of youth volunteering. There are some projects or local programmes which contain a volunteering component, but the volunteering itself is not a criterion for obtaining funding.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

Until 2014 volunteering in Ukraine was not particularly popular among young people and the population. Nearly 15% of the population of different categories were involved in volunteering activities. The volunteer movement that offered support to the Euromaidan protests and to the Anti-Terrorist Operation became an unprecedented expression of social self-organisation of society in 2014.

[According to the survey “Youth of Ukraine” \(2015\)](#), one third of young people (36%) aged 14-34 noted that they had volunteering experience, 10% of whom volunteered during the 12 months preceding the poll and had such experience previously, 12% were engaged in the last 12 months, but did not engage in the past, 14% did not engage in volunteering during the last 12 months but have been doing this before.

Among young people, the most popular spheres of volunteering were: fundraising for ATO participants (46%), participation in cleaning the environment different areas and territories (41%), assisting the needy, orphans and the disabled (33%), participating in cleaning the environment in own community (27%), fundraising for other charitable purposes (25%), help in kindergartens, schools (19%), organisation of leisure activities and recreation for youth (18%), etc., but 25% of young people did not see a possibility of participating in volunteering activities.

Young people determined the motivational factors of engagement in volunteering activity as a desire to help to certain people (53%), and to be useful to society (43%). Also, they mentioned the feeling of being connected to a common cause (21%). In some cases, motivation to volunteer responds to their principles and worldview (18%). Volunteering helps young people acquire useful professional skills (14%). They also see volunteering as a social activity being together with other people (12%).

The level of awareness of Ukrainian youth about volunteering opportunities in Ukraine and abroad remains low. Answering the question in the [survey “Youth of Ukraine-2015”](#) about who involved them in volunteering, 54% of young people indicated that it was their personal initiative. Another 30% were involved by friends, 18% by colleagues, 12% by the internet, 9% by relatives, and only 8% by members of youth NGOs. The level of awareness of Ukrainian youth about volunteering opportunities abroad is about 1%.

There are thousands of volunteer organisations and initiatives that have emerged since 2014, and it is impossible to determine the number: it is constantly changing, and many volunteers do not advertise their activities. Preferably, these are small associations of young people in local communities and the volunteering is explained as individual social activity or the common action of a small group of people. There are networking practices between various volunteering groups at regional and local level; nevertheless, conflicts and antagonisms are also present.

It should be noted that, according to [surveys conducted by sociological organisations in 2014-2016](#), volunteers enjoy the greatest confidence of the population among all public and state institutions: 60-70% of the polled Ukrainians trust them.

Support to young volunteers

The provisions of the [Law on Volunteering Activity](#) indicate that an institution using the work of a volunteer should be non-profit-making. The volunteer has the right to receive reimbursement of travel expenses, accommodation and subsistence expenses. The volunteers also have the right for personal protection, professional training and personal accident insurance if they are involved in volunteering in the situation of natural disasters, regulated by [Approval of the Procedure for Providing Volunteer Assistance in Certain Areas of Volunteer Activity](#) relevant to the Code of Civil Protection Measures. Nevertheless, there are no concrete tools or guidelines on the practical implementation of these regulations.

Quality assurance

There are no regulations for quality assurance of youth volunteering or volunteering in general and no national database of organisations that offer volunteering opportunities. Therefore, national and local NGOs provide their own standards and regulations for volunteers. The lack of networking among these entities leads to a situation where we cannot speak about a general approach to this topic. Only one quality control is possible by organisations working with cross-border and international volunteering, as they are obliged to keep common standards (Freedom Corp Volunteers, UN-Volunteers or European Voluntary Service).

Target groups

There are no specific target groups mentioned in the Law of Volunteering Activity or in any of the relevant documents regarding volunteering. In some local initiatives, volunteers are secondary school students or high school students; these initiatives may run inside educational establishments.

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU Programmes

International mobility has become one of the key features of youth volunteer engagement with organisations based in Ukraine.

One of the most utilised opportunities is the [European Voluntary Service \(EVS\)](#), which sends Ukrainian youth between 16 and 30 years old to volunteering projects around Europe and brings young Europeans as volunteers to help civil society projects in Ukraine. As of October 2017, there were 47 organisations accredited in Ukraine to provide EVS opportunities and 77 EVS projects abroad accepting Ukrainian citizens.

Other programmes

Another option is exchanges engaging university students to work with civil society and businesses that are organised by [AIESEC](#), the world's largest non-profit youth-run organisation, dealing with cross-cultural global internships and volunteer exchanges. In 2016, AIESEC recorded 256 Ukrainians who went abroad under their Global Volunteer Programme and 672 foreigners coming to Ukraine as Global Volunteers.

Ukraine is also supported by more than 210 [Peace Corps Volunteers](#) who work with their communities on projects in youth development, education, and community economic

development. This constitutes the biggest country presence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and one of the top 10 biggest country representations globally.

Ukrainian youth volunteers also help engaging volunteers from other countries, as was the case of the [Go Camps project](#), which engaged over 70 youth Ukrainian volunteers to mobilise over 500 international volunteers who helped over 70 000 children in 720 schools all over Ukraine.

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

Organisations and institutions that involve in volunteering activities foreigners and stateless persons within five working days after such involvement should inform the Ministry of Social Policy in writing. The ministry provides a database of organisations hosting foreign volunteers. Each volunteer should obtain a special type of visa before coming to Ukraine and get a temporary residence permit within 90 days by contacting the State Migration Service.

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

The plan for the implementation of [the State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine" for 2016-2020](#) includes running information campaigns on the promotion of volunteering among young people. The state and local budgets provide the finance for such events. It is worth noting that such an approach is not systemic and does not include quality performance indicators.

In Ukraine, the process of developing a network of youth centres continues. Currently, there are about 200 youth centres under different forms of ownership (youth centres are created by local municipalities or based on public platforms). The [All-Ukrainian Association of Youth Centres](#) has also been established. In 2017 the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved [the Model Regulations of the Youth Centre and the Expert Board](#) supervising it. According to the regulations, one of the tasks of the youth centre is to provide civic education and volunteering for young people in the community. It is anticipated that youth centres will be key institutions that will provide young people with information and opportunities for volunteering in communities.

There are currently several organisations in Ukraine focusing on volunteer training. By turning to these organisations, young people can be trained as a future volunteer and receive useful advice on possible volunteer initiatives. Organisations actively involved in the training of volunteers include: [All-Ukrainian](#), [All Volunteer](#), [Ukrainian Volunteer Service](#), [Volunteer Camps "Build Ukraine Together"](#).

Key initiatives

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine jointly with [the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency \(ERYICA\)](#), the All-Ukrainian Association of Youth Centres, youth organisations and youth workers aims to develop a strategy of information youth policy. For this purpose, it planned to hold [a national workshop in June 2018](#), during which there will be a strategy for the development of quality youth information policy in Ukraine to meet the information needs of young people and applying the principles of [the European Youth](#)

[Information Charter](#). It is planned to provide trainings for youth workers to organise information points for youth in communities.

In 2017, an [official information centre ERASMUS+ Youth](#) was opened in Ukraine by [NGO “Centre for European Initiatives”](#) with the support of [SALTO EECA](#). The main objectives of the Information Centre are to inform about opportunities for young people and youth organisations within the framework of the Erasmus + programme, as well as to support organisations in the implementation of projects under this programme.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy framework

Existing legal forms of youth volunteering: volunteers providing volunteer assistance individually (legal grounds: there are no legal requirements in this case), volunteers providing volunteer assistance in the framework of an organisation (legal grounds: an agreement on conducting a volunteer activity, concluded with such an organisation or institution, or without such an agreement), volunteering for ATO (legal grounds: application for registration as volunteers for anti-terrorist operation).

According to the national law, volunteers’ “obligations” include performing voluntary work in line with the agreement entered into between the volunteer and the volunteering organisation, as well as responsibilities that include avoiding actions and deeds that could harm the organisation. This last provision includes the requirement that a volunteer “compensate moral and property damage, inflicted as a result of carrying out volunteering activities, according to the law”.

The Law on Volunteering Activity (amended in 2015) also contains provisions on the recognition of volunteering (e.g. recognition of volunteering experiences in public service and local government employment processes), which is a welcome development, as it allows young people to use volunteering experiences to improve their prospects in the job market, and thereby will likely encourage young people to volunteer.

At the same time, the Law on Volunteering Activity does not appear to focus on the quality of opportunities afforded to youth. This is inconsistent with EU standards, which provide that volunteering should not take the place of work that a person could be paid for. It appears that the volunteering laws in place at present refer to adults, rather than to all youth, and that they refer to the regulation of the relationship between entities and individuals more than they do to the expectations of the content of a volunteer opportunity, or, for example, what a volunteer should receive to enjoy the full benefit of volunteering as an opportunity to develop.

Existing arrangements

According to the Law on Volunteering Activities, Art. 7, the time spent doing volunteering activities can be included in the curricular practical training, if the nature of the two coincide.

2.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

The Draft [Law on youth](#) has been debated since 2015. In the sphere of youth volunteering it should set up the National Volunteer Youth Platform as a national online platform that will open opportunities for volunteering in Ukraine and abroad for young people. The purpose of the platform is to provide information on existing volunteer projects and activities of non-formal education and conditions for youth participation in them; programmes of interregional and international exchanges and conditions for their participation in youth; organisations that carry out volunteering activities in Ukraine and abroad; young people who carry out volunteering activities; programmes of long-term volunteer activity of young people abroad and foreigners in Ukraine; exchange projects between youth public associations of Ukraine and youth associations of the Ukrainian diaspora. The Draft Law is still under consideration and there hasn't been any progress towards adoption since 2017.

Ongoing debates

There is still no common definition of volunteering. Nevertheless, the ongoing debates on military volunteering and volunteering for the army are still stronger than volunteering for social benefits in general. It should also be noted that since 2014, the general publication associates “volunteering” with military, civil protection and medical volunteering, and political activism.

In the last analytical report of the [UN Working Group on Youth](#) “State of Youth in Ukraine – 2017” it is recommended to improve the environment and to strengthen the organisational level, which includes support for common understanding of volunteering, encouraging substantial consultations with stakeholders and targeted public awareness campaigns, closer collaboration between various organisations and institutions, developing their capacities and create more volunteering possibilities. As the existing law has no institutional provision and no clear definition on strategic issues, the common understanding and policy frame are in great demand.

There is a request for the Ministry of Education / Ministry for Youth and Sport to develop a set of quality indicators for volunteering organisations and volunteers, to ensure that volunteering opportunities are meaningful and allow youth to develop essential skills and knowledge. There is also the need to facilitate dialogue between various organisations that provide opportunities for young people to volunteer abroad in one information platform, as the level of awareness of Ukrainian youth about volunteering opportunities abroad is about 1%.

There are also requests to amend the existing Law, so that young people under 14 years do not require parental permission to volunteer. Nevertheless, volunteering remains an activity that individuals and organisations choose to do autonomously and in a self-organised manner, as there are no practical tools for recognition of competences.

GLOSSARY

Anti-Terrorist Operation in Eastern Ukraine (ATO) – A wide range of military and special organisational and legal measures under Ukrainian security forces aimed at counteracting the activities of illegal intergovernmental military groups in eastern Ukraine. The operation lasted from 14 April 2014 to 30 April 2018. After the ATO in Eastern Ukraine, the Joint Forces Operation (JFO) was introduced in February 2018.

Military volunteering

- Assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other military formations, law enforcement agencies, state authorities during the special period, legal regimes of extraordinary military status, and the conduct of anti-terrorist operations.
- Joining paramilitary units in the first phase of ATO or regular military forces on a voluntary basis.

Volunteering for ATO participators (volunteering for ATO)

- Legal definition: a person (a citizen of Ukraine or a foreigner or stateless person residing in Ukraine on legal grounds) who has attained 18 years of age, provides volunteering activity on a voluntary and free of charge basis, entered into the Antiterrorist Operation Volunteer Register in accordance with the Tax Code of Ukraine and the Law on Volunteer Activities, provides charitable assistance in favour of servicemen who participate in the ATO, to persons living or who have lived on the territory of settlements or on territory where terrorist operations are underway, and/or forcibly left the place of residence in connection with the anti-terrorist operation in such settlements.
- Common understanding: person or group of persons who support military forces in the ATO zone through fundraising, logistics, delivering technical means, equipment, food, medical, social rehabilitation, legal assistance etc.

Volunteer activities – Voluntary, socially directed, non-profit activities carried out by volunteers through volunteering assistance.

Volunteer help – Works and services that are provided free of charge by volunteers.

Youth Worker Programme – An education training programme aimed at increasing the professional competence of youth workers. Training is organised in the form of joint learning aimed at facilitating dialogue and co-operation between state actors and civil society.

Youth centre – A non-profit institution that provides youth work through the youth workers with the purpose of implementing youth policy.

Youth camp – Vacation or summer residential camp for youth and children, supervised by pedagogical staff and providing an educational and leisure programme, usually for a fixed period of between 10 and 21 days. The distribution of participants in camps is organised by responsible authorities (usually educational and social departments).

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