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The difference in life values and the importance of their forming during volunteering

Problem. The existence of life and core values in personal world outlook is necessary and should be essential in the forming and functioning of any group, organization or institution. There are many difficulties, though, in society that arise from misconceptions of values of another because of age-related, cultural, traditional, racial and mental differences.

Literary review. Professor of cross-cultural psychology Geert Hofstede conducted one of the most comprehensive studies on national values. Milton Rokeach studied the nature of human values. Victoria Braithwaite studied the structure of human values:

Body paragraphs. We have an ancient philosophical discussion: does a person define their core values according to their character, or is it core values form the person's nature, or maybe a person's core values are what they are because of the hardships in their life? Is "doing good" (which is a basis and motivation of many types of volunteering) a result of a well-formed character or the involvement of (young) people in positive and creative "helping others" activities forming their life views and set of core values? Probably, there is some truth in every argument.

"Sow an act and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny." [1] It is a deeply interesting thought, which is still accepted and discussed today, many years later. Many choices we make early in life affect our future in one way or another.

Mahatma Gandhi, Indian lawyer, politician, social activist, and writer said: "Beliefs become thoughts. Thoughts become words. Words become actions. Actions become habits. Habits become values. Your values become your destiny" (Mahatma Gandhi, n.d.).

If we believe that we have to care deeply about our youth, what types of activities they choose, and what we actually can offer them to do during their free time.

We have much scientific research, numerous statistics, psychological observations, and thousands of years of edifying literature discusses the issues of forming of a character, what helps a person to be noble, successful, and useful for society, and what gives a person power to influence others positively. We are deeply convinced of the negative influence of and sincerely concerned about materialistic and self-centred tendencies in modern world society. The slogan "What in it for me" is opposite to "Love your neighbour as yourself". From our personal experience, even in volunteering and in Christian circles unselfish giving and care for the needy, as eternal noble life values, are not always the norm.

Every culture, every era, every nationality, institution, family and person has their core values, things they treasure, make choices according to, measure their decisions with, and strive to live by. A country, company, or family is successful if they have and follow their core values. We recognize people or organizations as "good" or "bad," cooperate with them or keep our distance from them according to the set of their life values.

Volumes could be written about what a good country is. We want safety, stability, freedom of thought and speech, opportunities for education, self-development, and self-realization; we demand rights for education, labour, recreation, marriage, parenting, entertainment, and more. Unfortunately, the wide-spread opinion about "high living standard" is based on materialistic or egocentric values. According to our informal research that was conducted in July 2016 in a small Christian youth group in Eastern Ukraine, 5% of volunteers as a main reason for their volunteering stated "personal development" (Govorukha, 2017, p. 64).

We are bombarded by media persuading us that a successful citizen has a well-paid job or a thriving business with the ownership of spacious living quarters, a car, modern gadgets, etc. Through movies, advertising and the Internet this opinion is prevailing, but could be erroneous. Though many countries in Europe are ahead of the rest of the world economically, the European Region had the highest suicide rate in 2015. According to the results of the research of the World Health Organization, out of 50 European countries France is on the 14th place, Lithuania is on the first. Talking about Americas, out of 29 countries the USA is on the 6th place by numbers of those who took their life, Canada is on the 9th (World Health Statistics, n.d.). On the other hand, Pilipino and Indian people from the slums, according to a social survey conducted in 32 countries, are quite satisfied with their life and count themselves as happy nations. Filipinos have a happiness level of 83%. India is next with 81%, followed by China (80%), Thailand (78%), Malaysia (77%) and Singapore (69%). (Lozada, 2013).

Having very similar mentality in one part of the world we are convinced that our values are the “normal” ones, explainable and complete. There is so-called “culture shock” one could go through when visiting another continent: suddenly many of the standards and values are mixed up. European feminism taught us that a woman is free when she can work and have the same pay and responsibility as men do. During the six-year stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina our opinion changed after meeting many Muslim women who were very happy, satisfied and proud taking care of the family and their home, being fully financially supported and provided for by their husbands or relatives. They are, feeling protected and taken care by men; sincerely pity European women, who often have to raise children, pay bills and manage daily routine single-handedly, in their free from full-time work time. Recently, after a half- year involvement in volunteer activities for Syrian refugees in Iraq, alongside with other European and American volunteers, we learned that many Muslim women see older teen girls’ demand of independence and attempts of self-sustainability as a threat to family core values.

There were chances for the author to learn a lot about other peoples and cultures and their priorities. Living in Humid Continental climate we must have a roof over our head, because of the cold temperatures, strong winds, continuous rains and snow for a few months. We have limitations and deadlines because of that. Our ancestors had to plant and harvest for 4 to 8 months a year to survive the winter. Of course it is not the same

in modern society, but Slavic languages still have sayings like: “prepare a cart in winter and a sled in summer.” There is a similar meaning in the English saying “While it is fine weather mend your sails.” Planning, hard work, preparation and storing process are ingrained in our minds. Helping relatives, neighbours and upholding the community historically were an essential part of it.

Involved in a missionary project in the Philippines for a year, the author learned many aspects of the local life, extravagancies of the culture and in some instances—opposite opinions about dealing with daily problems. There is no winter in Tropical Wet climate, with the lowest above +20 degrees Celsius. There is no natural pressure to prepare for the cold season when there will be no food growing, to have a source of warmth, to keep deadlines. The main necessity on the remote coral islands is the provision of drinkable water. The ownership of a boat is vital for living (fishing, bringing water, transportation of people and cargo, trading, gathering pearls, or in some cases providing services for tourists, etc.). Owning a boat seems more important than having an education. Only 6 grades of free governmental education is available; further studies are very expensive, only small percentage can afford it. So many parents do not see the need of sending their children to school,—in their view it is more useful to send them to collect coconuts (that are very nutritious and used for food, drink and shells for cooking fish on fire), to dig out ocean worms that are edible after low tide, to teach them fishing or sorting rare sea-shells that could be sold. In that daily fight for basics, volunteering is often visualised as a “noble hobby for white people” and not as a way to better or civilise life of a tribe or a village.

Another issue that is very difficult for acceptance for a modern European are myriad servants: cooks, drivers, nannies, gardeners, guards, rickshaws, and porters. It is a side effect of 400 years of slavery in the country colonized by the Spanish and later for 100 years by the Americans. If a local couple “belongs” to a “white” person it is almost a guarantee for the life of accommodation for the whole family, a job for both adults and their teenage children, daily rice (usually eaten three or more times a day), and also gives a certain social status. Having maids and helpers is a must for a white person. This custom is seen by locals as a good way to share one's wealth. The “white” person with many servants or with a business that employs many locals is perceived as a benefactor, if they regularly pay on time what they have promised. It is a simple measure for surviving, in unbelievable state of poverty and absence of

welfare. In some scenarios it is wiser for the Western volunteers to hire helpers (a cook, a cleaner or a gardener) and to help in that way financially as well, than to do everything by own hands as it is done in Europe. The difference in income and living standard is indescribable, and makes it very difficult for a foreigner to believe or understand. A survey by the independent Manila polling group Social Weather Stations carried out in the Philippines in 2013 found that 19.2 percent of the survey respondents, about 3.9 million families, reported going hungry (Whaley, 2013). The families are large, usually 5 to 10 children, who are obligated to provide for their aging parents. Despite all the negative aura of “whites” because of their snobbism and even discrimination, the biggest luck for a family is to marry one of the teens to a foreigner, despite the age difference, which will provide lifelong income to the majority of family members. The fortunate one was fortunate feels obliged to help relatives financially according to local traditions and understanding of family values.

In Ukraine marrying a person from Western Europe or the USA often would be seen as a good deal. But many Ukrainians will be surprised when faced with a wedding contract because feelings of being in love and emotions of attraction for Slavic youth often prevail. Because of that, arranged marriage would not be well accepted by European or American youngsters. But it is still preferred by many Hindu, Arab or Pakistani families, where the opinion of the father is the very last word. We will be horrified to hear about harems, polygamy (one husband, few wives), though it is allowed by the legal law in Arab countries to have even four of them. There is also such a type of marriage as polyandry (one wife, few husbands) in Tibet. Another practice unacceptable for the first world countries and still quite common in rural areas of some Asian countries, such as Japan, China, India, and Pakistan is to give in marriage very young girls, even at nine years old, betrothing them at their birth, for a good bride price or bride service, to be able to feed the rest of the children. A citizen of a first world country would see it as bad as trafficking or prostitution. We should not accept it as a solution, but international volunteers that are going to help in those areas, especially if in remote and rural areas, should be trained specifically and prepared mentally to the differences of traditions, cultural settings and social norm.

All of the abovementioned types of “recognized” social relations are impossible to understand or comprehend for any Christian in the world, because for over 2000 years the New Testament teaches principles of love, respect, care and faithfulness to your spouse, recorded by Apostle Paul.

He gave us many important core values, such as:

- loyalty; having one spouse for life; “the husband of one wife” (Tit. 1:6);
- caring for your family; “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8);
- being a good parent; “having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly” (Tit. 1:6);
- honesty;
- work ethics, hard work; “if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thes. 3:10);
- care for orphans and widows (Acts 7);
- not to be indifferent to the problems of others; “Bear ye one other burden, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2);
- not to act against our conscience; “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16); and more.

These values have to be treasured, developed in our own personal lives, and should be taught and practised at every stage of educational process in every strata of society.

Apostle James advised people to have faith in God, because they will be blessed by Him, to make wise decisions according to one’s beliefs, and to ask God for wisdom. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering” (Jam. 1:5,6).

Not even the majority will agree that faith in God is a core value. Of course, many people have a set of their personal values that can include kindness, positivity, purposefulness, and practicality. Some will mention objectivity, intelligence and professionalism. It is a disputable issue, and people always disagree about their beliefs and convictions.

If we want to receive a stable job in a respectable company, then preparing to the interview we will check their core values,—to know for ourselves if those are compatible with our own, and to know what could be asked and expected from us in the future.

When choosing a company we will analyse its reputation, history, products or services, how well the promises were kept. Many companies craft “core value statements” or “vision/mission statements” to anchor every aspect of a business in a set of commonly-held beliefs and commitments. These statements become ingrained principle and fabric

that guide employee behaviour and company decisions and actions.

Choosing a school for a child, we will make sure that highly qualified professionals are working there. Do they love the children and care for them? Is the curriculum well-rounded? Is it safe? Is the schedule and rules applicable for my child? The school can have a well-written statement that emphasizes their educational and life values, advertise their successes, being proud of their motto and numbers of students, but...If we know that smoking is common with high school students, screaming teachers and bullying problems are there we will not be willing to pay for it.

Deciding which university to go to, there is a high probability that a future student will inquire about the rating of employment of graduates and the regalia and academic titles of university professors. Grants and stipends, living conditions of the dormitories are a concern too. But the most important will be a Diploma, its value for the employment and competency of its holder.

Choosing a university many European, USA and Canadian future students will check the opportunities for volunteering. Many scholarships are given with preferences to those who actively and regularly volunteer.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, in collaboration with the U.S. Census Bureau and the non-profit coalition Independent Sector conducted a federal survey of volunteering by teenagers in more than a decade about the state of youth volunteering and the connections between youth volunteering and the primary social institutions to which teenagers are exposed — family, religious congregations, and educational institutions. An estimated 15.5 million youth—or 55 percent of youth ages 12 to 18—participate in volunteer activities;

- youth contribute more than 1.3 billion hours of community service each year;
- 39 percent of teen volunteers are “regular” volunteers, at least 12 weeks per year;
- 64 percent of teenagers who volunteer do so primarily through a religious organization, a school-based group, or a youth leadership organization; (Youth Helping America, 2015).

An economic news release by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics about volunteering in the US in 2015 states that between Sept 2014 and Sept 2015 volunteering primarily for educational or youth service organizations increased. 19.9 percent of volunteers with less than a high school diploma volunteered for educational organizations, compared with 26.3 percent of volunteers with a bachelor’s degree and higher (Volunteering in the

United States 2015, 2016). That gives us a proof that a good educational system of a country and its non-profit organizations in unison can provide opportunities for volunteering, motivate students, affect decision-making process in youth, and benefit the participants and the economy of the country as well.

Opinions on various subjects described above were about regular lifestyle. To the contrary, emergencies: earthquake, tsunami, tornado, flood, fire in the house, accidents are highly damaging —physically, emotionally and mentally. In the mitigating circumstances people often react non-adequately. A panicking crowd could destroy more things than the catastrophe itself. There is nothing more valuable in such cases than a person who stays calm, takes charge and controls others' actions. A kind heart, friendliness, education, talents, will not help much in the mentioned scenarios. The most needed are usually rescue troops and specialists with the right skills and appropriate special technical equipment.

As citizens of the world we do not have a right to be "passers-by" and bystanders. Indifference is not a "fine" quality, not a virtue, and should be corrected. Every kind deed, no matter how small, changes this world for the better. We need to have our convictions, principles, and core values, so-called "eternal values", that we treasure, develop and steadily hold to. We have to learn and to teach, train and form them in our youth, constantly influencing those around us in a positive manner, especially the generation of present students, who will be leaders and rulers of our society in the near future. It is very important to remember though, that other individuals and nations often have values that significantly differ from ours, and are even opposite at times, so we have to be patient, tolerant and respectful towards others, using common sense and wisdom for the sake of the common good.

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Abstracts

HOWORUCHA NATALIA. **Odmienność wartości życiowych i znaczenie ich kształtowania w czasie wolontariatu.** W artykule rozważane są aktualne problemy związane z postrzeganiem wartości życiowych (rodziny, państwa, społeczności itp.), a także z brakiem powszechnego rozumienia wartości osobistych. Analizowane są poszczególne historyczne i wielokulturowe aspekty uniwersalnych wartości, które są źródłem i podstawą działalności wolontariackiej.

Słowa kluczowe: wartości, wartości życia, wolontariat.

ГОВОРУХА НАТАЛІЯ. **Неоднаковість життєвих цінностей та важливість їх формування під час волонтерства.** У статті розглядаються актуальні проблеми сприйняття життєвих цінностей (сімейні, державні, громадські, та ін.) і відсутності універсального розуміння цінностей особистісних. Проаналізовано окремі історичні та полікультурні аспекти загальних цінностей, які є по-

чатком і основою волонтерської діяльності.

Ключові слова: цінності, життєві цінності, волонтерська діяльність.

ГОВОРУХА НАТАЛЬЯ. Неодинаковость жизненных ценностей и важность их формирования во время волонтерства.

В статье рассматриваются актуальные проблемы восприятия жизненных ценностей (семейных, государственных, общественных и пр.) и отсутствия универсального понимания ценностей личностных. Проанализированы отдельные исторические и поликультурные аспекты всеобщих ценностей, которые положены в основу волонтерской деятельности.

Ключевые слова: ценности, жизненные ценности, волонтерская деятельность.

GOVORUKHA NATALIYA. The difference in life values and the importance of their forming during volunteering.

The article highlights the urgent problems of perception of life values (of family, the state, the community, etc.) and the absence of a universal understanding of personal values. Separate historical and multicultural aspects of universal values as the genesis and the base of volunteering are analyzed.

Keywords: values, core life values, volunteering.