

Volunteering in addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals

What did I know about the volunteering around the world before I received a recommendation to participate in the International Winter School? Last year I would have described volunteering as unpaid job only altruistic ones can do. The vast majority of the world's population prefers to be paid or rewarded for their work and ongoing efforts. As for me, I believe that it is absolutely normal and even natural since we live in a world where we are required to have to earn a living. However, turn on the TV – every day there is news report about fragile political, socio-economic and security situations in some countries. In this context the question arose whether volunteering as building a better future for all is a job.

In 2015 the United Nation General Assembly set 17 Sustainable Development Goals aimed at addressing the global issues related to poverty, gender equality, unemployment, sea pollution and climate change [1]. Approximately 900 volunteers provide support to UN organizations in various steps in about 70 countries annually [2]. Targets for 2030 include access to affordable and clean energy while protecting the environment. The main changes will concern the development of healthcare system in least developing countries, the elimination of discrimination against women, the eradication of extreme poverty and reduction of marine pollution. Also there are many other activities to do with educational, economic and social issues so that volunteer work is essential. The volunteers are considered to be a tool in the world's transformation since they have been playing an important role in this process. You don't need to be a volunteer if you want to make your own contribution. The careful attitude to natural resources and environment helps to make a difference as well. Peacebuilding starts with realization and awareness of our consumption lifestyle which is becoming more wasteful and pressing every year. The fact that we ignore the issues does not mean, they will not affect us. Global warming applies to all. One thing is beyond doubt: the more people care the faster situation will change.

The volunteering is not only about the capacity for self-sacrifice but it is also a good opportunity to gain some invaluable professional and personal experience.

It is not a specific work. Nowadays we can say that the volunteering is about to become an integral part of each country's society, a mission for a brighter tomorrow.