

Workshop: „Volunteering in divided societies”

Date, Time: Wednesday, 28.09.2011, 9:45 – 12:45 and 14:15 – 17:15 (duration 2,5 h plus 30min break)

Trainer: Siniša Stanivuk, Youth Peace Group Danube, Croatia

Workshop content/theme

How the volunteering in divided societies create an opportunity for community development?

Can you volunteer in spite of division and an insecure environment? How can you promote volunteering in divided and dysfunctional societies? What knowledge, skills and attitudes do you need? What are advantages and disadvantages of volunteering? How can the community support your volunteering and developmental ideas? Volunteering = challenge for learning, personal growth and active participation.

During this workshop, we have explored different stakeholders in community that influence volunteering and how to work on attitudes and behavior when confronting difficulties (e.g. different opinions, perceptions, prejudices and other divisions).

Aims

Aim:

The aim was to raise the awareness among participants for their personal and group responsibility for active involvement in their community by volunteering.

Objectives:

- To share ideas and experiences related to community needs
- To explore possible ways of active participation in the community

Method(s)/Approach

- Welcome, introduction of trainer and participants (15') games: (line-up), (pass the squeeze), (apples and oranges)
- Short presentation of participants (10')
- Program presentation and group rules (10')
- Volunteering – why do people volunteer? (25') Exercise: participants individually wrote reasons/motivation for why people volunteer (thought shower), Plenary discussion and conclusion
- Linking volunteering with Maslow hierarchy of needs (10') theory input, related to previous exercise, Plenary discussion
- What is (in) my (divided) community? (35') "Balloon" exercise (5' personally; 15' group work; 15' plenary) (in the balloon there are different community representatives, the participants had to choose which passengers will be thrown from the balloon), first personal selection and after that group discussion and selection with consensus with presentation of reasons for their selection at plenary. During group work after 5-7min, they have to choose another 5 passengers).

FEEDBACK: How was it to do a personal selection? What criteria did you use for your selection? How was it to work in a small group? How was the first round of selection? And the second one?

This exercise gives an insight into your values, prejudices, political views and can be useful tool to do assessment of the new volunteers and their perception of the community they live in.

See handout "Balloon" attached.

- Issues in (my) community (40') "The Ducks and Swans Story" exercise in two groups (20' group work; 15' plenary presentation and discussion; 5' conclusion), the group had to identify issues in community and to propose actions to solve them. This exercise helps participants to look at prejudice, discrimination and human rights in their divided communities/societies (Majority vs. Minority, Natives and Immigrants/Refugees, Race issues, Class issues, Religion issues, Gender issues etc.)
See handout "The Ducks and Swans" attached.
- Workshop evaluation and closing (5') Feedback forms, finally, the handout "What are so good qualities to volunteer?" was delivered.

Further tips, sources, resource material or links

For Volunteer Qualities see website: <http://www.volunteercard.com>

For Community Development see website: <http://www.infed.org/community/b-comwrk.htm>

Questions for workshop reflection

Feedback questions were asked to both students and teachers during exercises. Please see section Methods/Approach as well as handouts.

Impressions, Outcomes of the workshop

The workshops were dynamic in spite of smaller number of students and teachers. The workshop was informative, interactive and creative and participants have managed to focus and to get into insight of the topic with passion.

The programme gave some examples of volunteering in divided communities with focus on different stakeholders and their influence on volunteerism as well as how to use different community resources in order to improve conditions and recognition of volunteerism. Teachers have got understanding how to present such a complex topic through creative exercise and learning tools for students. Due to the time limitation we needed more time for the last exercise for reflection.

Participants namely teachers were impressed with the topic exercises and discussion. They stated that they will use it for they classes.

Age limit for participation should not be an issue but some students did not have enough experience and/or motivation with the topic and methods.

Some of the key messages from the workshop were:

- Workshop tackles major issues in divided community/society
- Understanding what problems may arise in divided communities
- Adjust hand-outs for community and volunteering needs
- Linking volunteering with Maslow hierarchy of needs

HANDOUT 1 – BALLOON

Balloon exercise

You are in a hot air balloon which is losing height rapidly and will soon crash because it is overweight; therefore you have to get rid of seven of the passengers! Who would you choose? The passengers are:

- City Mayor,
- Bank Manager,
- Builder,
- Judge,
- Single Parent
- Nun,
- Journalist,
- Police Man,
- Veterinarian,
- Firefighter,
- School Teacher,
- Librarian,
- Student,
- Writer,
- Musician,
- Social Worker,
- Nurse,
- Engineer,
- Sportsman,
- Disabled Person,
- Refugee,
- Doctor,
- Bus Driver.

Task:

Carefully read the description of Balloon exercise, and personally make your own selection of passengers. Take 5 minutes.

Then, discuss it in the small group and make joint selection! After 5-7 minutes inform participants that hot air balloon is not yet stable and therefore they have to choose another 5 passengers.

Prepare a joint list with explanations/reasons for selection both for those who are staying and for those who are leaving hot air balloon.

FEEDBACK

How was to do personal selection? What criteria you use for selection?
How was to work in small group?

HANDOUT 2 – THE DUCKS AND SWANS STORY

The Ducks and Swans Story

Once upon a time there was a beautiful Mill Pond where a large established community of ducks lived. The ducks had lived there for years. They had a very nice community with their own way of doing things. They set up a local parliament and, whilst not bothered with the outside world, the ducks kept up-to-date with community matters through their own local newspaper. Occasionally they had a problem with outsiders – mainly the swans who flew in from time to time and tended not to stay long or mix with the ducks on a social basis. The reaction of the ducks was to view the swans in a bad light.

This was reported in the local press, the “Duckpond Gazette”, which confirmed the ducks’ views about the swans. Every duck knew that all swans were greedy – not like the frugal, hardworking ducks that lived on the Mill Pond.

Eventually, the Parliament passed a law forbidding more than two swans at a time to swim on the Mill Pond. To ensure fairness – for ducks are known for their fairness – they also introduced identity cards. Some swans like the notorious Sally broke the “two swans on the lake” rule and were barred from the Mill Pond.

Some members of the swan community felt they were being treated unfairly, that they were being discriminated against. They organized campaigns to fight for their rights. They began to hold meetings to assert their cultural identity and to argue about their right to gather at the Mill Pond.

The reaction of the ducks was to become harder, and many were angry at the swans because they felt threatened. More and more ducks saw the swans as a problem.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROUPS (WRITE INSTRUCTIONS SEPARATELY FOR EACH GROUP)

DUCK’S GROUP

As a group of ducks, can you identify what your issues are with the swans? Spend some time discussing the story and then list in terms of priorities the issues that confront you, as ducks. During your discussion, focus solely on the ducks/swans story.

SWAN’S GROUP

As a group of swans, can you identify what your issues are with the ducks? Spend some time discussing the story and then list in terms of priorities the issues that confront you, as swans. During your discussion, focus solely on the ducks/swans story.

THE DUCKS AND SWANS STORY

Aim: To help participants look at prejudice, discrimination and human rights

Facilitator's questions:

- What needs do the ducks have?
- What needs do the swans have?
- How did the ducks respond to the swans individually?
- What views do the swans and ducks communities have of each other?
- Does either community hold legitimate or fair views?
- Who do you perceive to be the ducks in our society?
- Who do you relate to most?