



BEYOND WORDS

THE COMMUNICATION OF UNIVERSAL VALUES THROUGH THE LANGUAGE OF ART

TEACHING UNIT

VOLUNTEERING and its ART

April, 2011



2011- European Year of Volunteering



The European Commission EU has designated 2011 as the "*European Year of Volunteering*".

In the European Union, almost 100 million citizens of all ages invest their time, talents and money to make a positive contribution to their community by volunteering in civil society organizations, youth clubs, hospitals, schools, in sport clubs, etc. For the Commission, volunteering is an active expression of civic participation which strengthens common European values such as solidarity and social cohesion.

Volunteering also provides important learning opportunities, because involvement in voluntary activities can provide people with new skills and competences that can even improve their employability. This is especially important at this time of economic crisis. Volunteering plays an important role in sectors as varied and diverse as education, youth, culture, sport, environment, health, social care, consumer protection, humanitarian aid, development policy, research, equal opportunities and external relations.

In general terms, *volunteering* is the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause without payment for their time and services. Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic activity, intended to promote good or improve human quality of life, but people also volunteer for their own skill development, to meet others, to make contacts for possible employment, to have fun, and a variety of other reasons that could be considered self-serving.

Volunteering takes many *forms* and is performed by a wide range of people. Many volunteers are specifically trained in the areas they work in, such as *medicine*, *education*, or *emergency rescue*. Other volunteers serve on an as-needed basis, such as in response to a natural disaster or for a beach-cleanup. In a military context, a *volunteer army* is an army whose soldiers chose to enter service, as opposed to having been conscripted. Such volunteers do not work for free and are given regular pay.

The social capital generated by volunteering plays a key role in economic regeneration. Where poverty is endemic to an area, poor communities lack friends and neighbors able to help. Thus, voluntary mutual aid or self-help is an important safety net. This model works well within a state because there is a national solidarity in times of adversity and more prosperous groups will usually make sacrifices for the benefit of those in need.

Skills-based volunteering refers to volunteering in which the volunteer is specifically trained in the area they are volunteering in. This is in contrast to traditional volunteering, where specific training is not required. The average hour of traditional volunteering is valued by the Independent Sector at between \$18–20 an hour. Skills-based volunteering is valued at \$40–500 an hour depending on the market value of the time.

Virtual volunteering, also sometimes called as eVolunteering, online volunteering, is a term describing a volunteer who completes tasks, in whole or in part, offsite from the organization being assisted, using the Internet and a home, school, telecenter or work computer or other Internet-connected device, such as a PDAs or smartphone. Virtual volunteering is also known as cyber service, tele-mentoring, tele-tutoring and various other names. Virtual volunteering is similar to telecommuting, except that, instead of online employees who are paid, these are online volunteers who are not paid.

Environmental volunteering. Environmental volunteering refers to volunteers who contribute towards environmental management. Volunteers conduct a range of activities including environmental monitoring, ecological restoration such as re-vegetation and weed removal, and educating others about the natural environment.



Volunteering in schools

School systems around the world rely heavily on volunteers and donations in order to run effectively. In some countries, whenever the economy is down, the need for volunteers and resources increases greatly. There are many opportunities available in the school system for volunteers to take advantage of, especially if you have a special skill or trade. There are not many requirements in order to become a volunteer in the school system. Whether you are a parent, grandparent or just a community member most schools just require a volunteer form be completed. Much like the benefits of any type of volunteering there are great rewards for the volunteer, student and school.

➤ These benefits include but are not limited to:

School Benefits – Provided with additional service without having to have added costs, Teachers are given extra time for educational purposes and planning, A positive relationship between the community and the school.

Volunteer Benefits – Parents become involved in their child's school and education, New talents that one never knew they had are discovered, A sense of personal satisfaction, Ability to meet new people and develop new friendships.

Student Benefits – Students are given a positive role model, Educational success is encouraged and improved.

Corporate volunteering and employee volunteering.

A majority of the companies at the Fortune 500 allow their employees to volunteer during work hours. These formalized Employee Volunteering Programs (EVPs), also called Employer Supported Volunteering, are regarded as a part of the companies' sustainability efforts and their social responsibility activities. According to information from VolunteerMatch, a service that provides Employee Volunteering Program solutions, the key drivers for companies that produce and manage EVPs is that it builds brand awareness and affinity, strengthens trust and loyalty among consumers, enhances corporate image and reputation, improves employee retention, increases employee productivity and loyalty and provides an effective vehicle to reach strategic goals.

Community volunteering.

Community volunteering refers to volunteers who work to improve community enhancement efforts in the area in which they live. Neighborhood, church, and community groups play a key role in building strong Cities from the neighborhoods up. Supporting these understaffed groups can enable them to succeed in a variety of areas, which connect social, environmental and economic boundaries. Volunteers can conduct a wide range of activities. Some choose to support a variety of groups as a "volunteer broker."

Volunteering in the field of art

The need for volunteers has been shown up since centuries, all over the world. Many volunteers were specifically trained in the areas they work in, such as medicine, education, or emergency rescue. One of the most important contribution to mankind was the participation of the volunteers during the wars, not only as war fighters, but also for emergency rescue and in the medical field.

The sculptures showing their bravery we can find in Bucharest are:



*The statue of “Medical Volunteers”
in Bucharest*



*The statue: “The volunteer heroes”
in Voluntari*



The Monument: "The Volunteers from Ardeal" (2008)



The inscription: "Nothing without God"



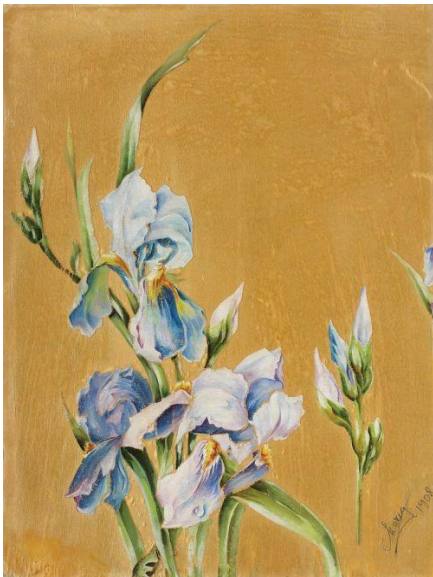
The Monument: "The Unknown Volunteer" in Bucharest

- During the 1877 Romanian War of Independence, **Queen Elisabeth of Romania** founded hospitals, procured medicine for the injured and involved herself in offering field-hospital assistance. At the same time, she was a supporter of the arts and encouraged the high-society women to raise funds and do charity work. Given the absence of a charity system in Romania, the **Queen Elisabeth Society** voluntarily treated around 17.000 patients per year, offered free medicine and monitored the well-being of poor families.

Under the name Carmen Sylva, she dedicated her life to writing in several languages. She wrote over one thousand stories and 90 short-stories . At the same time, she encouraged young talented people to pursue studying by means of a scholarship programme and surrounded herself with future artists such as Goerge Enescu while financially supporting painters such as Nicolae Grigorescu and poets like Vasile Alecsandri.

In 1909, she founded the **Queen Elisabeth Hospice for the Blind** which is still functioning today fulfilling her desire that the location would continue to fulfill its humanitarian purpose and that the disabled would always enjoy comfort in its precincts.

- **Queen Marie of Romania** was a deep lover of art and poetry. She continued in the tradition started by her predecessor, Queen Elisabeth, and supported young artists by offering scholarships and sums of money to various representatives of the cultural and artistic world. In her turn, she also wrote children's stories, poetry and painted especially lilies and poppies and was a refined collector of art works.



Iris, painting by Queen Marie of Romania.

During WWI she was deeply involved, as a volunteer for the Romanian Red Cross, in comforting the injured

<http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=76568>



- One of the artists admired by both Queen Elisabeth and Queen Marie was **George Enescu**, the famous Romanian violin player, composer and conductor who refused to leave the country during both WWI and WWII and chose to perform for the injured.

As Romania entered WW II, the Romanian Red Cross used all its resources to support the injured, the sick, the prisoners and the refugees. 2745 volunteer nurses worked on the battle camp and in hospitals.



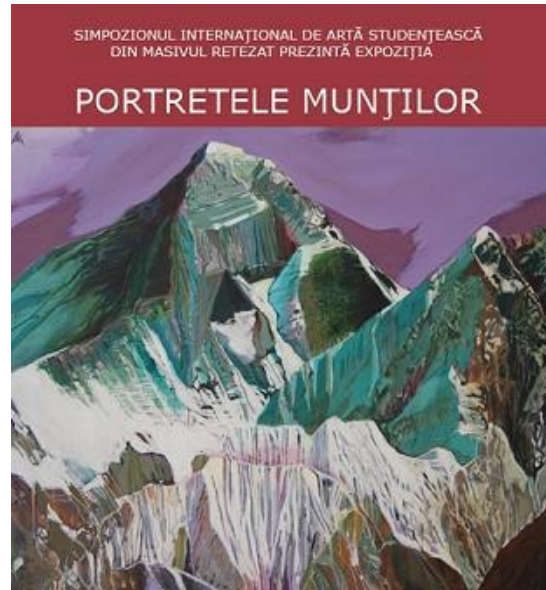
Photo: George Enescu visiting a Red Cross hospital

Apart from George Enescu, various other representatives of the Romanian culture joined the efforts made by the Red Cross to support the population. Grigoras Dinicu (violin player, composer and conductor) and Cella Delavrancea (piano player and writer) are some of the personalities who, throughout WW II performed concerts for the benefit of the Red Cross and sang in hospitals in order to comfort the injured.

- The Royal Residence at Brebu whose construction was begun by Matei Basarab and continued by Constantin Brancoveanu is an example of the mixture between arts and volunteering. On the one hand, it was the place where Romanian painter Stefan Luchian found inspiration for his paintings and also the place that writer Alexandru Vlahuta described in his book *Picturesque Romania* . On the other hand, it was also used as a recovery hospice for tuberculosis sufferers and as a recreational site for the students of “Elena Doamna “ Orphanage
 - In 2009 a group of young volunteers joined by well-known Romanian actor Marcel Iures helped plant 5000 trees accompanied by the rhythm of rock music. At the end of the day, they had the opportunity to listen to a violin concert performed in the middle of the forest by violinist Alexandru Tomescu and to admire a unique photo exhibiton: photographs taken during the countless activities made by the association were exhibited on the very trees.
- 1) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eq33GK8Jptg&feature=related> Alexandru Tomescu – Concert for the Oaks
 - 2) Exhibition by Cosmin Bumbut



- The international Symposium of painting and sculpture organized by volunteer students from the Fine Arts University in the Retezat Mountains displayed works of art in the middle of nature in order to question the condition and meaning of the contemporary landscape.



- Romanian singer **Margareta Păslaru** was chosen to be the Romanian Ambassador for the 2011 Year of Volunteering to promote the campaign **Europe, our home**. She wrote the music and lyrics for the song **Be a volunteer**. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLvTwWdUICg>

Fii voluntar

Be a volunteer,

Esti liber s-alegi pe cine vrei s-ajuti

You're free to choose who you want to help

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Europa-i casa noastra

Europe is our home

It is a tradition for our college to develop projects based on volunteering; some of the most important are:

Let's cherish the elders around us

- Performing support activities for old people
- *Home for elderly, Derwent Monastery*

We are all children

- Integrating abused children in the community's social groups and efficiently disseminating the information to its members
- *Little Rotterdam Placement Centre*

A child's Soul

- Forming a responsible and tolerant attitude towards children in placement centers through activities conducted with them

Colour and Soul for everyone

- Developing the ability to express oneself creatively so that the child acts on the environment and the materials which he transforms according to his needs and imagination
- *Special School no1, Placement Centers*

Different, yet the same

- Developing students' responsible behavior and empathy towards the elders
- **The Social Centre for Elderly people**

Drugs – a deceiving mirage

- Raising the students' awareness and involvement in programs meant to prevent drug abuse so as the increase protection and reduce risk factors
- *Antidrug Centre, Constanta*

Save the Dolphins

- Raising the young people's involvement in activities meant to monitor and preserve the lives of dolphins in the Black Sea
- **"Mare Nostrum" NGO**

A Smile for Us

- Raising awareness and increasing the number of volunteering activities, becoming responsibly involved in the community's problems
- **"Gheorghe Hagi" Shelter for street children**

Ecologist Argonauts

- Involving the students in creating a lasting and advantageous partnership with the institutions interested in promoting cultural tourism, valorizing the historical-cultural objectives, greening and protecting the peninsular area of Constanta
- ***The Museum of National History and Archaeology , The Art Museum, The Folk Art Museum, The Romanian Navy Museum***

The Friendship Week

- The emotional and financial support of the students in schools and kindergartens with simultaneous teaching
- *Schools: IAS Ciocarlia, IAS Negresti, IAS Izvorul*

A friend in need is a friend indeed

- Rendering children sensitive to the problems of the people around them, forming values and attitudes for children
- *Schitu Kindergarten*

2% campaign

- Raising awareness in the public and private institutions in our community regarding the necessity to allocate 2% of the global tax to humanitarian centers and NGO
- *World Vision Foundation – Constanta*

Happiness and Joy through Art

- Creative expression, developing emotional intelligence, and raising the degree of socialization through entertainment and recreational activities
- *Placement Centres*

The Social Theatre, The Theatre of the Oppressed - "spect-actors for non-discrimination"

- Developing a network of non-governmental organizations and theatres in 14 cities in Romania which would use social theatre as a tool for the benefit of the community members

- *Placement Centers, 12 partner high-schools, The Regional Resource Centre for Non-Governmental Organizations*

Equal Chances in Education

- Helping AIDS-suffering teenagers, orphans and abandoned children to graduate from school. Promoting a non-discriminating behavior towards people living with HIV/AIDS
- *“Hope” Association, Constanta*

The Club of art, music and dance therapy

- Performing activities meant to form volunteers with a view to accomplishing actions which would develop skills for life and improve the living conditions of children and teenagers in 4 placement centers in Constanta
- *The Association of the Romanian Centre for Community Development and International Cooperation – CONTRAST*

Culture and Democracy

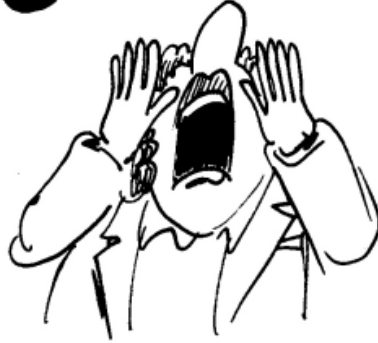
- Accomplishing some cultural-educational activities; promoting the principles of cultural education in a democratic society
- **The Association of former political prisoners**

Learn today, build tomorrow

- Raising awareness of students’ necessity for active learning
- *AIESEC Constanta*



Volunteers!



Steps to become a volunteer

You've probably walked past people who are living on the streets or know a family that's having a tough time in the current economy. Perhaps you've seen news reports about people who need assistance after a natural disaster. Maybe you want to protect forests from development or rivers from pollution.

Volunteering gives you an opportunity to change lives, including your own. If you're feeling frustrated or overwhelmed by the news of a disaster, volunteering to help can be a great way to cope. If you'd like to support a cause but can't afford to donate money, you can donate your time instead.

For example: Helping others in need is such an important part of the American way of life that many high schools require their students to spend a certain number of hours volunteering in order to graduate.

So how do you go about it?

Find What's Right for You

Unlike school, with volunteering you get to pick what really interests you and who (or what) is most deserving of your time. Need some ideas to get you started? Here are just a few:

- Help kids learn and grow. Become a Big Brother or Big Sister, camp counselor, or volunteer for an after-school sports program. Special Olympics games and events are great ways to get to know special-needs kids.
- Give back over the holidays. Serve Thanksgiving dinner to the homeless, volunteer at your local food bank, or distribute toys to kids. Your church, temple, mosque, or other place of worship also may be able to use your help.
- Play with pets at a local animal shelter. Most shelters depend on volunteers to keep the cats and dogs happy and well exercised. (And when you're walking rescued dogs, you get a workout too.)
- Volunteer for a political campaign. If you're interested in politics, it's a great way to find out how things work on the inside. Even if you can't vote, you can still work to get your candidate elected — whether it's the president of the United States or your town mayor.
- Help the environment. Join a conservation group and help out with river preservation. Take part in a local park cleanup day. You don't have to be an outdoorsy type — if you can't picture yourself hauling trees up a hill, you could help out in a park office or education center.
- Support a health-related cause. Lots of us are close to people who have a medical problem (like cancer, HIV, or diabetes, for example). It can feel good to donate your time to an organization that raises money for research, delivers meals, or offers other help to people with an illness.

If you have more than one thing you love, find a way to combine the two. For example, if you love kids and are great at arts and crafts, visit your local children's hospital and offer to lead art activities for young patients.

Find What Fits Your Schedule

Once you've found something that inspires you, decide how much time you want to spend. Local organizations (like hospitals or shelters) often like volunteers to give them a set amount of time every week or two.

But what if school, sports, or other commitments prevent you from devoting time every week? Many large organizations (especially those related to the environment or finding cures for diseases) have daylong activities. These include walkathons, bike rides, cleanup days, or building homes for those in need.

You can also spend a week, month, or even a whole summer volunteering through a structured internship or "alternative spring break" program. The advantage of these is you get to immerse yourself in the activities and feel a real sense of achievement when you see the results. Because you spend a lot of time together, most people who work on long-term volunteer projects form close friendships. Sometimes you get to travel, and the organization may pay your travel and living costs.

Expand Your Mind

Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills — from working as part of a team to setting and reaching goals. It gives you a chance to discover what kinds of things you're best at and enjoy the most. A volunteer job that you love can even help shape your ideas about your career goals.

Volunteering also can provide you with a sense of responsibility because people really depend on you. And it can help you develop a new understanding of people who are different from you — people with disabilities, people in financial distress, sick kids, or the elderly.

Feel Good

Donating your time is a great way to feel like you have the power to change things for the better. When people depend on you, it can change the way you look at yourself. You can feel proud of the goals that you've achieved for an organization — whether it's helping to organize a 10K to raise money for breast cancer or running the race itself.

Volunteering is also a great way to get a perspective on your own life. Sometimes it's easy to get consumed by worries about your grades or the fight you had with your friend or parent. And although these things are very important in their own way, sometimes it can be helpful to get some distance and think about other things. Volunteering allows you to do this. It lets you focus on others and see that your involvement in the world can be meaningful.

Finally, volunteering can help save you from being bored — it gives you a place to be where you can have a good time and keep busy.

Look Good

When you donate your time to a cause you care about, it looks impressive on college or job applications. That's not the main reason for volunteering, of course — if you do it just to please other people or to look good you may not enjoy it. But volunteering does show others (and yourself!) that you are reliable enough to make a commitment and show up on schedule.

Volunteering also shows employers and colleges that you believe in making the world a better place — and that you're willing to sacrifice your time and energy to do it.

Where Do I Sign Up?

After you've decided what you're interested in and how much time you can devote, it's time to find out where you can volunteer.

You have several choices. You can search the Internet or look in your local phone book under "volunteer." You can call an organization directly and ask if they need volunteers in your area. You can ask friends or relatives for ideas and contacts or look on bulletin boards in your library or in bookstores. It's worth spending the time up front to identify a job that's a good fit for you.

When you're calling an organization to offer your time, it's best to ask for a volunteer coordinator. Be ready to answer some questions, like:

- Why do you want to volunteer for our organization?
- What do you know about our organization?
- How many hours a week will you be able to volunteer?
- What are your interests?
- Do you have any special skills?
- Do you have a way to get here?

Most places will ask you to come for an interview, which is usually pretty casual. They want to talk to you face to face and if they haven't yet asked the questions above, they will do it at the interview.

Whether your interview is on the phone or in person, don't forget to ask questions of your own. For example:

- What will be expected of me if I volunteer here?
- What kind of training will I receive?
- How many other volunteers are there?
- How many hours do you expect me to volunteer each week/month?

You might even want to ask if you can observe some other volunteers in action to get a feel for the work before you commit.

If it's a good fit — meaning you like the organization, they like you, and you like the work — volunteering can be an incredible experience