

## THE USAGE OF ICT IN PROMOTING THE CONCEPT OF VOLUNTEERING:

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### Abstract

Student participation in local community projects is an important part of a student's experience and further career development. Volunteering projects conducted by students are linked to underrepresented groups of people (national minorities, people with disabilities, low social income, age, gender...). The main goal of this research is to promote the concept of volunteering among University students with an emphasis on the usage of information and communication technology. This technology can also be used for educational purposes, communication with media and networking. Networking is based on usage of the *Big Blue Button* tool for communication in the international environment as a part of the international student research symposium. The main aim of research was to collect volunteer's feedback regarding to their attitudes and motivation for volunteering. A sample was taken of 120 college and high school students participating at different volunteering projects. The data collected has been assessed using the Likert scale, semantic differential and content analyze of the volunteers reports. Volunteers emphasize the positive effects of volunteering, particularly in terms of developing communication competences and social skills. Those skills and competences will be needed for further employment at the competitive labor market. According to the research result, volunteering projects are a good model for developing competences, networking in the international environment and preparation for the further labor market. Those results are compared with the data of the volunteering activities in Albania in terms of analyzing statistical data, types of computer mediated communication and information on the volunteering web pages. Results show the increasing number of volunteering projects in both countries. The social media are becoming useful tools for communication in international environment. Students conducted their own researches regarding to the volunteering project. They exchange information at the international student's on-line symposium and conference. Information is delivered also through digital media. Further researches will be planned in terms of including more volunteers from underrepresented groups, networking with institutions in the local community and international environment and giving support to the students in conducting their own researches.

**Keywords:** *volunteering, information and communication technology, communication, student*