

Will Volunteering Drive Social Entrepreneurship in Ukraine?

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Abstract

Research background: UN Volunteers identify the financial value of volunteer work to reach \$287.6 million in 2022. Ukrainian statistical data from the Labour Force Survey reveals that approximately 7.1% of the population aged 15 and over, equivalent to 2,260,800 individuals, were identified as volunteers in January-June 2021. Nonetheless, the literature lacks grounded research on volunteer and social entrepreneurship ecosystems and their cooperation.

Purpose of the article: This article explores volunteering as a prerequisite to social entrepreneurship in Ukraine. Namely, the research describes volunteering as part of a larger ecosystem that supports social innovation and entrepreneurship development.

Methods: We analyse a selection of articles to identify the structure and interaction between the Volunteering Ecosystem (VE) elements and the input it can provide for the Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (SEE). We use desk research to map the VE and secondary data analysis to identify the portrait and the dynamics of volunteering in Ukraine.

Findings & Value added: During the war, there are two main directions of volunteering in Ukraine: (1) rear support directly related to combat operations, and (2) organisations that resemble social entrepreneurship, operating with the support of international organisations and state cooperation. The article defines the ways in which the volunteering ecosystem can contribute to social entrepreneurship development: skills formation, networking, and collaboration, identifying social needs, testing ideas and models, inspiration, and motivation. The paper also offers recommendations to stimulate social entrepreneurship through volunteering.

Keywords: volunteering, social entrepreneurship, volunteering ecosystem

JEL classification: D64, O35, D71

1. Introduction

When a crisis occurs, governance or local authority do not always have time to respond. Also, there are a lot of tasks to solve with limited resources, so there are gaps where volunteers are very important. Volunteers play a crucial role in filling gaps and meeting needs that may not be adequately addressed by formal institutions or systems.

Volunteering refers to the act of offering one's time, skills, or resources for a cause, organisation, or community without expecting financial compensation. It is a selfless and altruistic activity undertaken to make a positive impact, address social issues, or contribute to the welfare of others and the overall betterment of society. They contribute their time, expertise, and enthusiasm to various causes, often bringing about positive change and making a difference in the lives of individuals or communities they serve. It offers a pathway for individuals to translate their passion for social change into entrepreneurial action, ultimately driving innovation and sustainable solutions to address pressing social and environmental issues.

Since 2011, volunteer activity in Ukraine has been defined at the legislative level (the law “On Volunteering”, 2011) as a voluntary, socially oriented, non-profit activity carried out by volunteers through the provision of volunteer assistance. At the same time, after the Russian full-scale aggression, the volunteer activity in Ukraine had acquired immense proportions. Regions in which active hostilities are not taking place work tirelessly, aiding in various directions: support for displaced persons; support of

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hospitals; support of the Ukraine Armed Forces and the National Guard; protection of animals; support for people who need help due to various circumstances (loss of job, for example); psychological support; legal support; cultural and social development.

Directing efforts to create benefits for society is related to the idea of social entrepreneurship, which is looking for innovative solutions to environmental, social, or cultural problems. Therefore, we plan to investigate what exactly can transform the volunteer movement into social entrepreneurship. Volunteering can catalyse social entrepreneurship by fostering inspiration, understanding, networks, skills, and practical experience.

Social entrepreneurship has gained significant attention as a tool to address social issues and foster economic development. On the other hand, volunteering involves individuals dedicating their time and skills to serve their communities without financial compensation. By examining existing literature on the subject, this review seeks to shed light on whether volunteering can drive social entrepreneurship in Ukraine. The transformation of volunteering into social entrepreneurship is a catalyst for sustainable post-war recovery for Ukraine. It can also serve as an example of such a transformation for other regions with ongoing armed conflicts.

1.1 Volunteering as a social phenomenon

Scientific interest in volunteering gradually grew. If in 1995, the Scopus database had only one scientific article, then in 2010, there were 43 such articles, and in 2021 there are already 152 scientific publications. Scientists have a more considerable interest in social entrepreneurship than volunteering. A keyword search in the Scopus database shows 106 articles in 2010 and 685 scientific papers in 2021. However, the relationship between volunteering and social entrepreneurship is not well understood. For example, the Scopus database search for “volunteering” and “social entrepreneurship” found limited publications from 2013 to 2022.

Scientists have been interested in the motives and motivations of volunteer activity for a long time, so many scientific works are devoted to this topic. Scientists believe that individual characteristics are decisive for volunteers. (Howarth, 1976). Later, scientists proposed an integrated approach to understanding volunteering: social theories that stress the importance of context, roles, and integration; individual characteristic theories that emphasise values, traits, and motivations; and resource theories that focus on skills and free time. (Einolf & Chambre, 2011). Researchers (Dury et al., 2015) were interested in individual characteristics that motivate people to volunteer. A two-year study (Hovard & Burnds, 2015) of volunteering in Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, and the Philippines showed the importance of volunteering for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as a call for a better understanding of indigenous informal volunteering and how ‘outsider’ volunteers can support it.

Volunteers are those who, during a short reference period (four weeks or one calendar month), perform any unpaid, non-compulsory activity to produce goods or provide services for others. Therefore, community engagement and social impact is critical for volunteer.

“Any activity” means work performed for at least one hour.

The term “unpaid” refers to the absence of remuneration in cash or in-kind for work done or hours worked. Volunteer workers may receive some small form of support or stipend in cash when below one-third of local market wages (e.g., for out-of-pocket expenses or to cover living expenses incurred for the activity) or in kind (e.g., meals, transportation, symbolic gifts).

“Non-compulsory” is interpreted as work carried out without civil, legal, or administrative requirements, different from the fulfilment of communal, cultural, or religious social responsibilities.

The production “for others” refers to work performed:

- Through or for organisations comprising market and non-market units (i.e., organisation-based volunteering), including through or for self-help, mutual aid, or community-based groups of which the volunteer is a member.
- For households other than the household of the volunteer worker or of related family members.
- Excluded from volunteer work:
- Community service and work by prisoners ordered by a court or similar authority, compulsory military, or alternative civilian service.
- Work for the benefit of others during working time.

In October 2013, the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians identified volunteering as one of the primary forms of work. It recommended that countries regularly measure the phenomenon to assess its contribution to household well-being and development of countries.

These are referred to as equal to own-use production work, employment work and volunteer work. It is also acknowledged that other forms of work exist, such as unpaid compulsory work for others, but the proposals in the draft resolution deal only with the three forms of work identified here.

No priority is assigned between the three forms of work. Rather, they are introduced to enable the production of separate sets of statistics on each, providing measurement flexibility to meet different policy needs better. Underlying this feature of the proposals is the recognition that persons may engage in various forms of work during a given reference period. Persons may hold one or several income-generating jobs and may also engage in the own-use production of goods and/or work as volunteers for an organisation or the community. At the same time, they may provide services for their own use by the household. The benefit of this is that the labour input into each form of work is measured exhaustively within the specified period. It is also possible to examine how persons allocate their time to different productive activities and how participation in one form of work may impact participation in others (see Fig. 1).

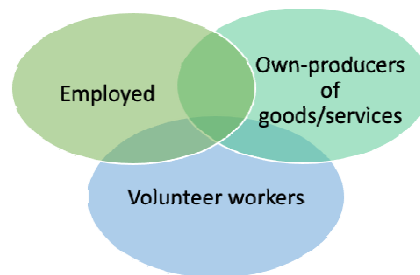


Figure 1. Participation in different forms of work
Source: own processing (2023)

1.2 Volunteering ecosystem

There is no standard term to refer to the participants of the volunteering process in the literature and the expert community. Most papers and industry reports use the term “sector” to name the organisations dealing with voluntary work and having a social impact as their primary purpose. Other stakeholders are not considered in this case, and cross-collaboration opportunities are often overlooked.

In Europe, the term “voluntary infrastructure” includes supporting tools and organisations in sector analysis. The Centre for European Volunteering (Rusteki, Bal, & Czerwińska, 2012) uses the term “volunteering infrastructure” to refer to the system for supporting volunteering and its development, but its elements slightly differ across countries. In the UK, this infrastructure was defined for the Volunteering strategy, developed in 2004 and included “the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, coordinate, represent and promote frontline organisations thus enabling them to deliver their missions more effectively.” (Penberthy & Forster, 2004)

Polish experts, in turn, include volunteering organisations of all types into the infrastructure definition Rusteki, Bal & Czerwińska, 2012): organisations active specifically in the field of volunteering, organisations involving volunteers but having other aims, public administration at all levels, business supporting volunteering, media specialised in civil society/volunteering issues, academic institutions active in the field of volunteering and social research, governmental agencies In addition, Political, Legal, Educational and Economic framework; Research and analysis; Supporting tools & matching systems are also considered to constitute the voluntary infrastructure of the country.

Australian National Strategy for Volunteering (Volunteering Australia, 2023) defines the volunteering ecosystem as “a network of people, organisations, institutions, and agencies all working for the collective viability and recognition of volunteering”. Its elements include Volunteers, Volunteer Involving Organisations, Volunteering Support Services, national and local administration bodies, national and local volunteering associations, industry associations, Community Organisations/Groups, Philanthropy, Business community and Research community, supporting volunteering or having an interest in volunteering, Enabling Organisations.

1.3 Volunteering as a driver for social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs are individuals who harness the principles of business and innovation to address pressing social issues. Their ventures aim to create sustainable solutions that benefit society as a whole.

Social entrepreneurship applies the principles and guidance start-up founders and entrepreneurs use to a business that directly generates social change or impacts a social cause. A social entrepreneur is primarily motivated by a desire to alleviate systemic social or cultural problems. Social entrepreneurship is well-researched and systematised. There is a fundamental bibliographic analysis of social entrepreneurship research (Trabskaia et al., 2023). The authors of this analysis said that social enterprises are embedded in their social and cultural communities, orientated to create both social and economic value. Social enterprises are built on an understanding of a community’s needs. Research on social entrepreneurship from an ecosystem perspective has increased in the past 13 years (Thomas, 2023).

Researchers from New Zealand and the UK (de Bruin et al., 2022) proposed the conceptual framework advances understanding of social entrepreneurship ecosystem by demonstrating the intrinsic inter reliability of social entrepreneurship ecosystem dimensions, envisaging the ecosystem itself as a complex context linking communities of interdependent actors engaged in both dyadic interactions and collective processes of social value creation (Fig. 2).

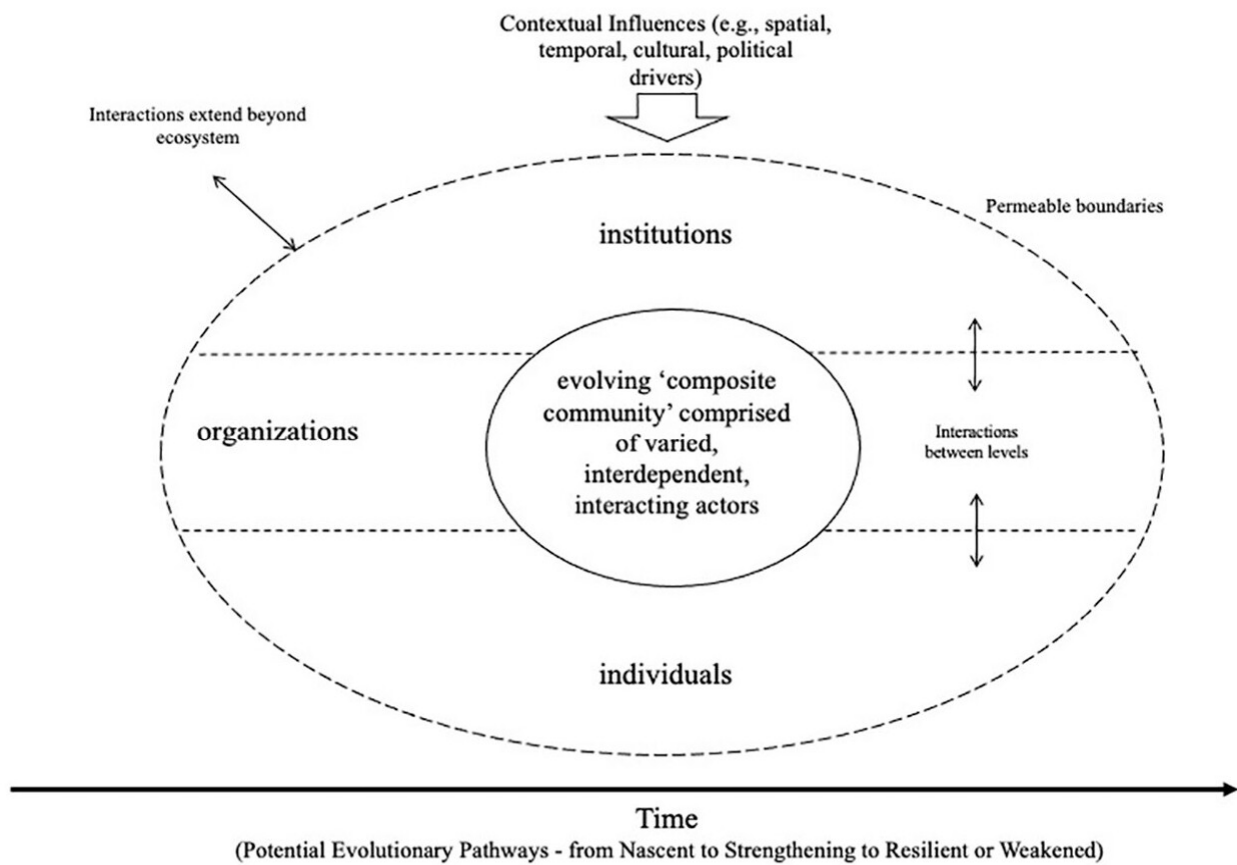


Figure 2. Social entrepreneurial ecosystem framework
Source: Bruin et al. (2023)

It is interesting to study the experience of university volunteer programs in Argentina (Raimondo et al., 2017), which encourage entrepreneurship culture by developing innovative socio-environmental projects that promote a joint effort between the different administrations of the state, the universities, and regional social organisations. The program includes a training phase for the university volunteers, an action plan addressed to the social agents and an evaluation of the results.

The choice experiment survey in Chicago, Illinois and Portland, Oregon (Ando et al., 2020) shows that people are willing to spend free of their own time (volunteering) to solve critical social problems, including environmental issues and water purification, which is shown in the study. Researchers believe that local authorities can effectively use volunteering during decentralisation. At the same time, they recommend further research to elicit a true marginal monetary value of time independent of any utility or disutility of volunteer activity.

Social entrepreneurs often operate within tight budgets and limited resources. Engaging with social entrepreneurs provides a unique learning opportunity for volunteers. These individuals possess a deep understanding of social issues and a relentless drive to address them. Volunteers gain valuable insights into the challenges faced by marginalised communities and the strategies employed to effect change by spending time with them. They witness first-hand the innovation, resourcefulness, and determination required to create sustainable solutions.

So, we can see that the motivation and activity of volunteers are similar to social entrepreneurs, but they differ in the way and methods of its implementation. (1) The activity of volunteers and social entrepreneurs is aimed at solving social problems. (2) Work in conditions of limited resources. Volunteers offer their time, skills, and resources without seeking financial gain. Social entrepreneurship combines business principles with a social mission. Social entrepreneurs are driven by a desire to address social and environmental problems through innovative solutions. They create sustainable ventures that aim to bring about systemic change while generating revenue to support their mission. (3) Institutional organisation of work. Volunteering typically involves working within an established organisation or program. Volunteers often join existing initiatives and assist with specific tasks or projects. Social entrepreneurs create their ventures or organisations. They take the initiative to identify a social problem, develop an innovative solution, and build a business model around it. (4) Financial sustainability. Volunteering is typically a non-monetary contribution. Volunteers offer their time, skills, and resources without expecting financial compensation. Their involvement is based on altruism and the desire to give back. In contrast, social entrepreneurship involves creating financially sustainable models. Social entrepreneurs develop revenue-generating strategies that support their social mission. They often use business principles to generate income through products, services, or partnerships. This financial sustainability allows social entrepreneurs to sustain and expand their impact over time. Therefore, we believe that transforming volunteers into social entrepreneurs is a driving force for solving social problems and should be stimulated.

2. Methods

This study explores volunteering as a prerequisite to social entrepreneurship in Ukraine. The research's exploratory nature and the subject's relative novelty define the case study as the most appropriate research method. The primary objective of our study was to analyse the structure and dynamics of the VE in Ukraine and determine the extent to which it can contribute to the development of the SEE. Ukraine was chosen as a case country intentionally for several reasons. Firstly, the current situation in Ukraine has boosted volunteering to a nationwide phenomenon. Secondly, due to the war and the deteriorating economic conditions, social issues will become a real challenge for policymakers and society. Thirdly, the accumulated volunteering experience and the thrive for quick solutions can make Ukraine a perfect market for testing social innovations. The volunteering phenomenon under study is complex in nature and involves multiple actors in a relatively complicated social context. Therefore, in-depth data from multiple sources is needed to draw relevant conclusions (Caridà et al., 2022). The literature analysis served as a foundational step in understanding the conceptual framework and key components of the VE. We analysed sector reports and research publications on volunteering published between 1995 and 2023.

We employed a desk research methodology to gain a comprehensive understanding of the VE within the context of Ukraine. This involved collecting and analysing existing reports, surveys, and data sources related to volunteering in Ukraine. We collected secondary data from 2019-2022 using Ukrainian State Statistics, UN Volunteers reports, online publications, and reports of voluntary organisations in Ukraine. Through this process, we aimed to map out the landscape of volunteering activities in the country, discern the prevailing trends and patterns, and identify any challenges or opportunities that exist within the VE.

By examining secondary data sources, such as national surveys and organisational reports, we were able to develop a detailed portrait of volunteering dynamics in Ukraine. By integrating desk research, literature analysis, and secondary data analysis, our study aimed to provide a comprehensive description of the VE in Ukraine and its potential contributions to the SEE. We described the elements of the VE based on the VE structure suggested by the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033 (Volunteering Australia, 2023).

We paid specific attention to the ways in which the insights generated from this research endeavour can inform policymakers, social entrepreneurs, and volunteer organisations in developing strategies to

foster collaboration, leverage the strengths of the VE, and maximise the positive social impact achieved through the synergistic relationship between volunteering and social entrepreneurship..

3. Results

3.1 The elements of the volunteering ecosystem in Ukraine

Volunteers and Volunteer-Involving Organisations: The total number of volunteers in Ukraine account for almost 2,7mln people, volunteering both individually and through organisations. This number has increased gradually since 2021 (see Fig. 3). The register (National social service office of Ukraine) of the Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy as of July 12th, 2023, contains 1505 entries of the organisations involving voluntary workers or doing voluntary work themselves.

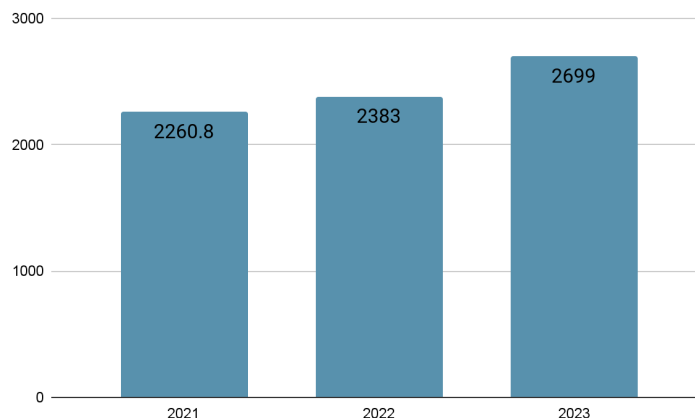


Figure 3. Number of volunteers in Ukraine, thousands of people

Source: The State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2021)

Governments. The law “On Volunteering” (2011) and the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on “Some issues of the National Social Service of Ukraine” (2020) define the legal framework for volunteering in Ukraine and the National Social Service of the Ministry of Social Policy in Ukraine as the body, responsible for volunteering-related policies within the Ukrainian Government. Voluntary organisations and individual volunteers in Ukraine are also actively supported by the representatives of local authorities and the ministries - the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Social Policy. According to most of the civil society and voluntary experts in Ukraine, the issue which needs to be resolved is that volunteering is not well distinguished from charity.

National and local volunteering associations. Volunteers and their interests are advocated for and protected by four volunteering associations: e.g., NGO “Association of People’s Volunteers of Ukraine”, Ukrainian Voluntary Service, NGO “FOR the Association of Veterans, War Disabled and ATO Volunteers”, NGO “International Volunteer Association”, and NGO “Association of Volunteers of Ukraine”.

National Associations. The list of national associations involved in volunteering in Ukraine contains 44 international, national, and local level associations, mainly representing communities. There are only a few industry associations on the list, e.g., NG “Ukrainian Association of Artificial Intelligence” (“UASHI”) and NGO “Ukrainian Association of Certified Accountants and Auditors”.

Community Organisations/Groups. Civil society organisations and volunteers are increasingly uniting to tackle complex challenges that small, fragmented organisations alone cannot handle. In the Ukrainian civil society landscape, we witness the emergence of digital platforms, hubs, and other institutional mechanisms that provide support to volunteers. One prominent example is UAREforms, a platform that brings together active citizens, public organisations, businesses, and other stakeholders to discuss the implementation of necessary reforms in Ukraine.

Philanthropy. Ukrainian volunteers have three main sources to finance their operations. Most of the funding is collected from individual donors through crowdfunding platforms and social media. In addition, they raise business donations and grant funding from international organisations. Despite this diversification and the fact that Ukrainian volunteers got extensive access to funding during the war, the lack of financial resources is mentioned by experts as the most important problem volunteers face due to the unfavourable economic situation and the military risks Ukraine continues to experience.

Business community. The Ukrainian business community is helping volunteers in managing processes related to military volunteering (evacuation, logistics etc.), creating digital platforms for volunteer networking, providing catering services for those in need and volunteering to organise food delivery etc.

Research community. As volunteering in Ukraine is a relatively new and rapidly developing phenomenon, it becomes pertinent to explore the motivations behind volunteering and assess the sustainability of this trend. We can recall such research papers from the KSE Foundation, Ilko Kucheriv Foundation “Democratic Initiatives” (2016), GfK Ukraine, National Institute for Strategic Studies (Potapenko & Dvignun, 2022). Notably, the National Institute of Strategic Studies of Ukraine identifies it as a new social movement that took clear shape after 2014. Ukraine’s mass social volunteer movement operates as a network comprising sympathisers rather than formal members. It relies on diverse funding sources, creating a mosaic of financial support. Despite certain shortcomings, this movement reflects genuine democratic processes, aiming to ensure stability at the rear to achieve success on the frontlines.

Additionally, some volunteer organisations are evolving to take on social entrepreneurship functions. These organisations primarily rely on funds from international organisations, joint participation budgets, and membership fees to sustain their operations. This blending of volunteerism and entrepreneurship highlights the dynamic nature of the civil society landscape in Ukraine.

Enabling Organisations. Monobank made fundraising for volunteers easier through their “Banka” tool.

Currently, key elements such as community organisations and enabling organisations are undergoing significant development, leading to the maturation of the volunteer ecosystem in Ukraine. The presence of war has acted as a catalyst, accelerating this process. We can confidently assert that the volunteer ecosystem in Ukraine has evolved and expanded, with various actors coming together to address pressing challenges.

The results of the survey (Povrar et al., 2023) indicate the existence of a request to strengthen the volunteer ecosystem for more effective work of volunteers, in particular noting the need for (1) increased transparency and ease of cooperation with state and local authorities; (2) creation of educational programs of civil society and volunteer management; (3) consultations on tax legislation.

The awareness of Ukrainian volunteers with international volunteering practices is low, which indicates a weak integration of Ukrainian volunteering into the global volunteer ecosystem. In the same survey (Povrar et al. 2023), to the question of whether the respondents are aware of effective mechanisms for supporting volunteer initiatives in foreign countries, they provided only single answers about the USA, Moldova, Poland, and the Czech Republic. For its part, the international community recognises the need to expand support for volunteers in Ukraine. In particular, UN Volunteers mentions that it will “strengthen its support to volunteer-led and community-based initiatives” (UN, 2022).

3.2 The portrait of volunteering in Ukraine

In January-June 2021, the state statistics bodies, for the first time, conducted a module of the Labour Force Survey on the work of volunteers (the module). The module program was developed with the methodological support of the senior statistician of the Department of Statistics of the International Labour Organization, Volodymyr Ganta.

Based on the data in Figure 4, we can determine the portrait of a typical Ukrainian volunteer. They are educated people between the ages of 25 and 64 with permanent jobs. These are mostly city dwellers who are personally involved in volunteering. According to the results of the study “Resilience during the war and in the post-war period: what Ukrainians rely on” conducted by the sociological group “Rating” on June 6-11, 2023. A survey of 1,200 respondents over 18 throughout Ukraine showed that 6% of respondents are constantly engaged in volunteering and another 43% - from time to time. (Sociological Group Rating, 2023)

Among the main reasons why people volunteer:

- The main reasons people volunteer include:
- Invaluable experience that can be useful in everyday life.
- The opportunity to change something in your life and other people’s lives.
- Desire to do good.
- Teamwork, communication with like-minded people, new acquaintances, and constant contact with interesting people.
- Application of one’s talents, strengths, and abilities.
- To see the country by travelling with volunteer units.

The volunteer movement in Ukraine began to form in 2014. Still, with the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Russia, almost immediately, Ukrainians began to unite their volunteer initiatives to help each other and the state, first - through personal connections (friends, relatives, colleagues, neighbours, previous acquaintances). However, very soon, special platforms appeared where citizens could unite and coordinate their efforts, such as <https://platforma.volunteer.country/>, <https://palyanytsya.info/>, <https://spivdiia.org.ua/> and others. So, volunteering in Ukraine has become more systematic and effective.

High self-organisation contributed to the fact that volunteers and volunteer organisations, to a large extent, began to specialise and compensate for the incomplete institutional capacity of the state in various areas. Their focus includes the material and technical support of fighters at the front, the provision of medical assistance to the wounded and injured, psychological service to internally displaced persons in the rear, and the provision of shelter for pets that lost their owners during hostilities. Such specialisation enables volunteers to be more effective in a specific direction and to develop permanent connections to solve particular tasks — for example, some supply military equipment, additional products and clothing, etc.



Figure 4. Characteristics and number of volunteers in Ukraine, thousands of people
 Source: Own processing, based on The State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2023)

Thus, we can observe that the volunteer movement has turned from a chaotic solution of minor problems into a powerful social force. It is confirmed by the results of the study, which showed that 59% of respondents consider the volunteer movement to be one of the most effective public institutions in the country today. Of the 49% of respondents who are volunteers, 82% are ready to personally participate in solving community or city issues in the future. (Sociological Group Rating, 2023). These numbers show

that volunteers are willing to solve social problems within their communities actively and can form sufficient human capital to develop the social economy and social entrepreneurship.

3.3 Interconnection between the VE and the SEE: using volunteering capacity to drive social entrepreneurship

OECD (2018) suggests evaluating the efficiency of the existing SEE through 7 dimensions: social entrepreneurship culture, institutional framework, legal and regulatory framework, access to finance, access to markets, skills and business development support, and the way the system manages, measures and reports impact.

Volunteers can support the ecosystem in at least three of the mentioned above dimensions see Fig. 5):

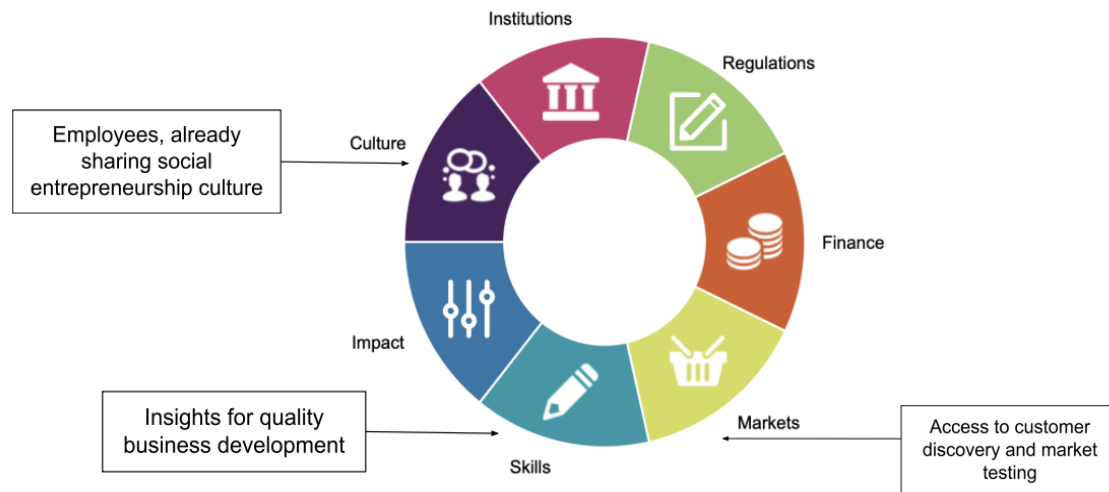


Figure 5. Participation in different forms of work

Source: own processing based on The Better entrepreneurship policy tool (2023)

- *Social entrepreneurship culture:* an active civil society is a prerequisite for a healthy social entrepreneurship culture. Volunteers representing this part of the society engaging with them gives SEE an opportunity to demonstrate to volunteers the potential path for further development beyond voluntary activity and from the necessary human capacity reserves for the ecosystem. These reserves will already obtain the energy and thrive for solving social issues and the appropriate skills and knowledge about the challenges of their communities. This experience can be essential for aspiring social entrepreneurs in Ukraine who want to impact society through their ventures positively.

- *Access to markets:* volunteers in Ukraine are engaged in solving urgent issues and working at the forefront of emerging social challenges from a vast network of contacts from the public and private sectors who are the most in need of solving these challenges. Cooperating with VE will provide SEE with easier and more trustful access to potential markets. Moreover, social enterprises can get access to market testing of their innovative ideas and models on a smaller scale at lower technology readiness and market readiness levels (TRL and MRL). By engaging with communities and beneficiaries, volunteers can gather feedback and assess the viability and impact of social innovations.

- *Skills and business development support:* volunteers can provide insights for identifying customer needs and developing appropriate business models for social enterprises, as well as information about the target audience’s characteristics. Through volunteering, individuals can gain first-hand insights into their communities’ pressing social issues and needs. This direct exposure allows them to identify specific problems that can be addressed through innovative and entrepreneurial approaches. By understanding these needs, volunteers can develop ideas and solutions that can later be transformed into sustainable social enterprises. Having participated in solving the aroused issues, they better understood the puzzle’s missing particles, the community’s real needs, and the skills needed to approach the target audience successfully. In addition, volunteers are good at networking. By interacting with fellow volunteers, community leaders, and non-profit organisations, aspiring social entrepreneurs can build a strong network of like-minded individuals who share similar goals and values necessary for further business development.

To ensure that the capacity of volunteers and their experience is used for the good of social entrepreneurship, it is essential to build relations between these two ecosystems and arrange joint initiatives, learning programs, networking events, etc. In Ukraine, this process has already started and has several forms:

- Training for volunteers on social entrepreneurship, e.g., “Social entrepreneurship: opportunities for volunteers” by the Future Development Agency (Public space, 2022), educational programs of the Ukrainian Social Academy (Ukrainian Social Academy, 2020) “Help once. Or once and for all. Social entrepreneurship for public and charity organisations”.
- Involvement of volunteers as social enterprise workers. In 2017, out of 150 self-reported social enterprises in Ukraine, 44 had volunteers among their staff (The Catalogue of Social Enterprises of Ukraine, 2016-2017, 2017). But we should be careful with stimulating such processes. They need to be temporary, and volunteers should not replace all social enterprise workers. Otherwise, it will rather demotivate volunteers from future social entrepreneurial activities.

Volunteering allows individuals to make a positive difference in their communities. By contributing their time, skills, and energy, volunteers can address social issues, support vulnerable populations, and contribute to the betterment of society. Volunteering strengthens the social fabric of communities. Volunteering brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. This diversity fuels innovation by providing a range of ideas, insights, and approaches to addressing social issues. When people with different perspectives collaborate, they can generate new and innovative solutions to complex social problems. Volunteering contributes to the development of social capital, which refers to the networks, relationships, and trust within a community. Volunteering can help tackle poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and access to education and healthcare. It is very important during the war.

Now Ukraine has an extensive network of volunteers, which generates trust in society, helps to solve military, social, and health problems during the war and man-made disasters (for example, the explosion of the Kakhovskaya hydroelectric power station). Volunteers solve problems without profit, but social entrepreneurship has a business model to solve social issues. Therefore, the government must create a mechanism for transforming volunteers into social entrepreneurs. Governments can play a crucial role in stimulating the transformation of volunteering into social entrepreneurship. Here are some ways they can support and encourage this transition see Fig. 6.

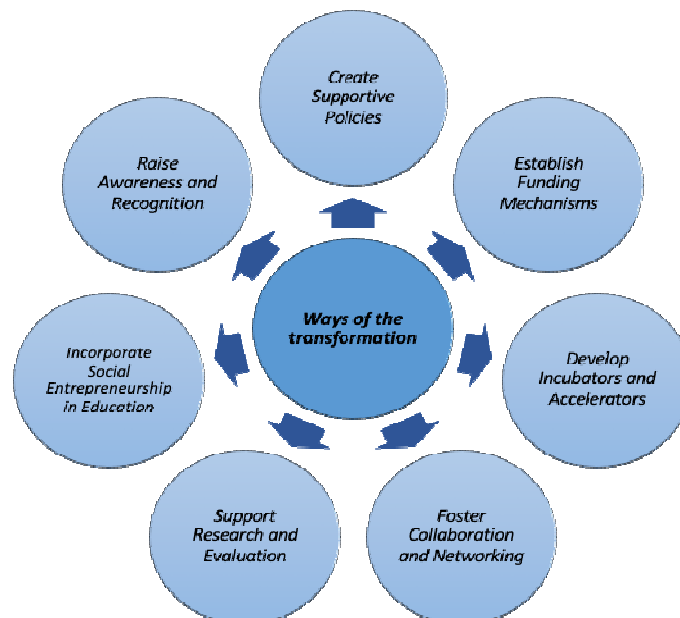


Figure 6. Ways of state support the transformation of volunteering into social entrepreneurship.

Source: own processing (2023)

By implementing these measures, governments can create an enabling environment that encourages the transformation of volunteering into social entrepreneurship. Such an environment, in turn, can stimulate innovations, job creation, and positive social impact within communities. Currently, the

governments of many EU countries have legislated the work of social enterprises in the form of cooperatives, the main feature of which is a democratic form of management and the mandatory distribution of company shares between founders, volunteers, and beneficiaries. In other countries, the form of non-commercial association is predominant. (Kamenko, 2020) Studying and applying such an approach can be very interesting for entrepreneurs in Ukraine.

4. Discussion

The data collection methodology on volunteering in Ukraine differs from the international one, so we cannot compare them. To be able to carry out a comparative analysis, it is necessary to unify Ukrainian approaches with them. In addition, most scientific researchers focus on volunteering among young people, while the “portrait of a volunteer” in Ukraine indicates completely different trends.

Volunteers’ motivation in Ukraine is in line with the reasons volunteers acknowledge across the globe, with “making a difference” and “useful contribution” being the predominant reasons, followed by “learning new skills and gaining new knowledge” (Schech et al., 2020, Kehl et al., 2016). At the same time, when a closer look is taken at voluntary actions taken during crises, additional aspects define the motivation, e.g., individual emotions (Domaradzki et al., 2022) or political preferences (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017). It should be considered when generalising policy approaches and tools to enhance the cooperation of volunteers and social entrepreneurs.

Regarding crisis phenomena, it can be stated that the activation of volunteering took place in different ways. So, for example, volunteer organisations aimed at solving environmental problems have specific characteristics. They act systematically, have a clear organisational structure and work plan. It is quite different - during large-scale disasters like earthquakes and hurricanes. Volunteer activity was short-term and aimed, first, at solving humanitarian problems. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all “offline” volunteer projects were suspended. Instead, many online initiatives appeared, to which everyone was invited. Humanity has not seen a full-scale war taking place in Ukraine for many years, so the experience of Ukrainian volunteer organisations is unique, as it covers a vast range of problems.

Other studies also determine the importance of interaction between volunteers and social entrepreneurs. OECD (2022) recognises civil society’s and all stakeholders’ potential in addressing social and economic challenges. Its latest recommendations include at least two principles, where we can identify volunteers as the input into the social economy and social innovation. Firstly, OECD emphasises that actions should be taken to enable civil society initiatives to be transformed into social economy organisations. Secondly, they outline the necessity for networking building and cross-sector partnership development.

Conclusion

The created foundation of the volunteer ecosystem gives reason to believe that volunteering will become a driving force for developing social entrepreneurship in Ukraine. Volunteers have the most active age, sufficient education, know how to self-organise, have knowledge and skills to solve various types of problems successfully, believe in the values of social responsibility and are ready to participate in solving social issues. But for this, it is important that such elements of the volunteer ecosystem as community organisation and enabling organisation are more clearly formed, as well as to introduce elements of institutional support for transforming volunteerism from pure philanthropy to entrepreneurship.

Also, it is crucial to activate such state support mechanisms as Develop Incubators and Accelerators, Foster Collaboration and Networking, Support Research and Evaluation, Incorporate Social Entrepreneurship in Education, and Raise Awareness and Recognition. These mechanisms can become a basis for volunteering in The Strategy of sustainable development of Ukraine.

The direction of further scientific research can be the study of the transformation of volunteering into social entrepreneurship and the sustainability of this process. Because there are still many upheavals in the world, such a mechanism will compensate for solving social problems where the state cannot react quickly and effectively.

Resources

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