

“Center for Volunteer Activities”

This document is part of a larger collection of examples of current policies for young people in Europe. The collection is an outcome of a European research project called “UP2YOUTH – Youth: actor of social change?”

The basic idea of the “current practice” collection is to see how current practices and policies relate to young people as active agents in shaping their lives. Therefore, our intention is not a collection of “good” or “best” practices. Rather, it includes also practices, which are interesting because of their relation to young people’s agency but which involve problematic aspects, such as restricted financial resources, a very thin spread, or no clear evaluation criteria. We have applied a searching pattern which asked for “strengths” and “weaknesses”. This explicitly opens space for your own evaluation, because also policies are included, which definitely do have weaknesses, but are highly interesting for specific reasons. Therefore we have to stress that the researchers did not evaluate these practices themselves.

The whole collection can be found at <http://www.up2youth.org/content/view/192/60/>

Section	Indications of contents
Title of programme/ practice	Center for Volunteer Activities
Location	Slovakia, Banská Bystrica
Main theme	Civic participation - Youth Volunteering in community and service-learning
Practice/Programme-related keywords	volunteering, young people, volunteering program, service-learning, community, social work, university, participation
Summary of programme/ practice	Centre for Volunteer Activities offers different volunteering programs main for young people in community Banská Bystrica. In programs young people work with different target groups and do different activities, witch help people, organization or community. Many programs are connected with study of young people, because important partner for Centre is University of Matej Bel, especially Department of social work on Faculty of Education. Within the concept of service-learning we connect together theory form university education with volunteering experiences and increase civic participation of young people.

<p>Target</p>	<p>1) Target area: The city of Banská Bystrica is located in central Slovakia. Banská Bystrica is the most important historical, cultural and economic centre of the central Slovakia. It is a seat of administration of the Banská Bystrica Region, one of the 8 regions of the Slovak Republic. The first written reference about the city is from the year 1255. Today Banská Bystrica has 81281 inhabitants.</p> <p>Banská Bystrica has a long tradition in schooling and culture. Nowadays Banská Bystrica Zvolen is a seat of several prosperous banks, quality elementary and secondary schools and also the for University of Matej Bel - that is the biggest in central Slovakia.</p> <p>Banská Bystrica and its surrounding offers rich opportunities for relaxation, culture, sports and social life.</p> <p>2) Target groups/issues/problems addressed: Target group of programme are young people, especially students, but we work also with another age groups. Young people work in volunteering programs with different target groups: children a young people, old people, people with different disabilities, drug users, Roma people...</p>
<p>Objectives of programme/ practice</p>	<p>Main mission of Centre is through the volunteering increase human and social capital, quality of life and contribute to development of civic society.</p> <p>Common objectives for all programs in Centre for Volunteer Activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop awareness of volunteering, - Increase interest in volunteering , - Increase participation of young people in volunteering, - Built up credit and status of volunteering. <p>Specific programs, in with participate young people have different objectives, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentoring program for children, young people and young people with disabilities, witch is concentrate on social inclusion, - Harm reduction in the area of drug using, - Collection of money for different organization, - service in community, - Service for old people...
<p>Content of programme/ practice</p>	<p>Every year Center for Volunteering Activities in cooperation with students of social work of Faculty of Education University of Matej Bel prepare the campaign about volunteering. During campaign we inform young people about volunteering, opportunities for volunteers in community and different volunteering programs. We present our own activities and program, but we also offer the space for other organizations in our community. After campaign we create address book of volunteering opportunities in Banská Bystrica.</p> <p>Every volunteering program has own management (time, financial, personal...) and coordinator, who can be also young person or student.</p> <p>Other important activities are connected with concept of service learning. In process of education we connect theory with volunteer-</p>

	ing experience. Some volunteering opportunities we offer students as a part of education. Important part of service-learning is also reflection of experiences.
Time scale	Duration/Sustainability: There is not a certain period of time in which it has to be developed.
Programme/ practice design	1) Development of programme/practice: The Programme is developed by coordinators of Center for Volunteering Activities in cooperation with students, young people and teachers from Department of Social work Faculty of Education Univesity of Matej Bel.
	2) Decision-making actors and process: In decision-making process are active all people, who cooperate on different volunteering programs in management. Specific role has also Department of Social work as a partner of program.
	3) Management and leadership of programme: Centre for Volunteer Activities has two main coordinators and every volunteering program has own management (time, financial, personal...) and coordinator, who can be young volunteer or student
	4) Implementation: Coordinators are in charge of every volunteering program. For service-learning activities is responsible teacher of subject, in with are integrated service-learning activities.
	5) Legal framework: - National level - Key areas and action plans state youth policy In Slovak republic, Law about support of youth work - Local level: Program of economical, cultural and social development of town Banská Bystrica.
Resources involved	Main financial support for programs: Ministry of Education Self government Univesity of Matej Bel Slovak foundations

<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Evaluation:</p> <p>Periodic assessment of the program, during the process of realization of activities and when the activities are finished, through regular and specific meetings with those involved.</p> <hr/> <p>Results / impact of programme:</p> <p>The impact on the community and target groups of programs has been positive. Different actors participating in the programme are subjected to evaluation.</p> <p>We analyze also impact of program on young people. Coordinator of centre is author of dissertation witch solves the problems of volunteering as a part of the university preparation of social work and social pedagogy students. There is analyzed measure of student's involvement in volunteering activities, chosen voluntary experience characteristics and assessments, contextures of voluntary activities performance and social and personal responsibility rate, attitude towards target groups, attitudes towards activities in the community and students career planning.</p> <hr/> <p>Difficulties encountered:</p> <p>One of the most urgent needs of the programme is to stabilize the labour position of those experts participating in the project. This need stands in opposition to the limited resources provided by the administrations.</p> <p>Volunteering cannot make up for an activity that needs stability and time to achieve objectives.</p> <p>Many difficulties are also connected with specifics of volunteering of young people, witch is mostly irregular.</p> <hr/> <p>Assessment of programme/ action/ practice in terms of sustainability:</p> <p>The assessment team is made up by the whole group of coordinators working in the Centre. They use surveys to get information provided by different actors, as well as group meetings, and corresponding individual reports.</p>
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<p>Other doc related to the programme/ practice</p>	<p>www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk cd@centrumdobrovolnictva.sk</p>