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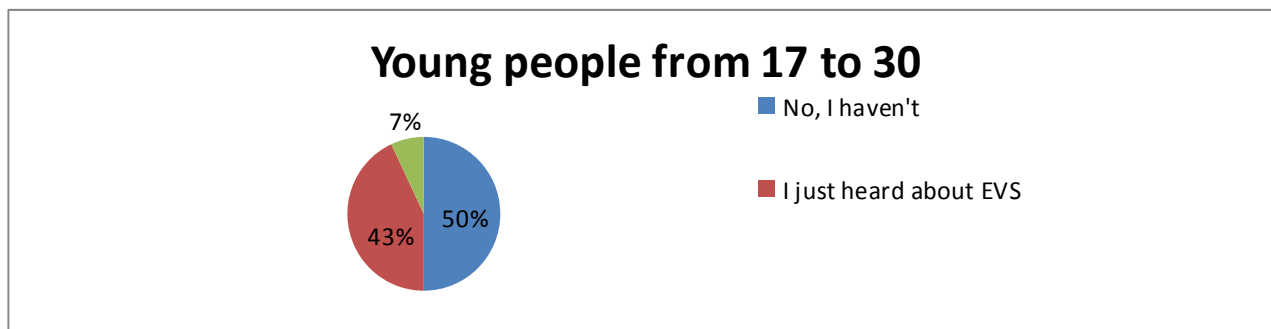
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EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE AS A BRIDGE TO DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

ЕВРОПЕЙСКАЯ ВОЛОНТЕРСКАЯ СЛУЖБА КАК МОСТ ДЛЯ РАЗВИТИЯ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ

At our fast developing time, when money and success rule the world it's hard not to lose your human face and stay a successful person with clear understanding of what exactly differs us from the world of animals. We can't change the past, but for now we are the future and it's up to us to decide how it's going to be. "We are the future" is a slogan of one European Voluntary Service (EVS) project.

Aim of the research: studying EVS projects as a way of developing international solidarity, tolerance, an active citizenship position among young people.



To begin with, we decided to examine whether young people from 17 to 30 know about EVS projects, their main ideas and features. For our survey we took 50 young people from different educational establishments (BSU, our university, BSUIR).

Getting acquainted with European Voluntary Service

European Voluntary Service is the European Commission's project that allows a young person (17–30 years) to become a volunteer in another country for a specified period, normally between 2–12 months. The service activities can be, for example, in the field of environment, arts and culture, activities with children, young people or the elderly, heritage or sports and leisure activities.

It aspires to develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people. EVS promotes active citizenship and understanding among young people.

An EVS project involves a triangular partnership: a volunteer, a sending organization, and a host organization. One of the countries involved in a project must be an EU Member State.

In 2014, the renewed program of the European Union "Erasmus Plus" was launched, which combined previously existing programs to support young people in the field of both academic and non-formal education. "European Volunteer Service" was included in the program block on individual mobility of youth and offers the opportunity for informal education of young people.

Program countries are EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Norway and Turkey. The rules for participation in Erasmus + are different for different partner countries. For Belarus there are rules established for the Eastern Partnership countries. Belarus can participate only in EU countries.

Opportunities given by EVS projects:

- 1) Participation in various forms of voluntary activities.
- 2) Developing your level of foreign languages.
- 3) Developing the level of international tolerance by learning their cultures and people from different countries.
- 4) Gaining experience in your specialized field.
- 5) Promoting Belarussian values to foreigners.
- 6) Touristic activity – EVS gives you opportunity to explore new places and discover new cultures.

European Voluntary Service is a “learning” service: throughout nonformal learning experiences young volunteers improve their personal, educational, professional development and social integration. The learning elements consist of the EVS training cycle, linguistic and personal support, including a crisis prevention and management mechanism. While choosing the country of the project volunteer should also consider the theme of the project and a kind of job he or she is going to do.

How to take part in?

Step 1: Acquaintance with organizations.

Step 2: Writing a motivation letter.

Step 3: Collecting documents.

Step 4: Volunteer work.

The volunteer works mostly 5–6 hours a day. Two days a month are allocated for rest, not counting the weekend. Before the start of the project, the volunteer sending and receiving organizations sign a special agreement that has legal force.

Conclusion: EVS project may be considered as a project which develops one's personal features such as solidarity, team work, tolerance, it can also widen your outlook and enlarge your adaptability.