

Chapter 28

The Culture of Volunteerism and the Role of Social Media in its Development

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ABSTRACT

Volunteering is one of the various social activities that human societies have known and practiced since their inception. It is not the outcome of the last decades of the life of these societies, but it was present in almost every human civilization in its various forms and methods. Voluntary work is of great importance as far as individuals and societies are concerned. It is a symbol of solidarity among the members of the community and all its institutions. It positively affects people's lives as well as the community at large. It symbolizes the meanings of good, giving, and help. Accordingly, volunteering has become a cornerstone in building society and social cohesion among its members. In this regard, voluntary work is of great importance. It necessitates the need to spread this culture in the society and to promote and develop volunteerism among young people using all available and possible methods.

INTRODUCTION

Volunteerism is considered one of the most important social activities that accompanied the emergence of human society. It evolved through its development through the ages. The impact of various types and methods of spontaneous volunteerism is dominant in almost every human civilization.

As the human society developed, voluntary work has developed in terms of size and impact. It had a specific methodology and mechanisms of action. This has led the societies of the world to pay more attention to volunteerism, and to spread the culture that supports it as well as to develop the mechanisms that make it possible to benefit most from volunteers, their skills and expertise which they wish to har-

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ness in the developmental field. Moreover, the mechanism harnessed should implant in their minds the culture of voluntary work and incite them to practice it in all its forms.

The best of these mechanisms is that promotes and develops the culture of volunteering can be social media networks. They have two advantages as far as the field of volunteering is concerned. The first is that they can address a large number of people through participating in voluntary initiatives. The second is publicity for these initiatives so that the idea of voluntary work becomes popular, and then turns to developmental initiatives having supporters of financial and cultural capabilities who would help develop and support these initiatives.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Volunteering work plays a crucial role in building and developing society through its many activities, projects and services which are characterized by smoothness, flexibility and speed of movement. Voluntary work today is one of the outstanding works in the lives of people and societies at peace and war times and at times of crisis. It is an essential element in achieving social cohesion among individuals of society, especially with crises and tribulations afflicting humanity. But voluntary work as an important humanitarian practice is not one in all human societies. It differs from a society to another in terms of form, size, motives, trends, and from time to time. It becomes important and increasingly needed as the societies progress and their life getting more and more complex in all fields and aspects of life.

Volunteering, in this context, has become a vital area for important cultural, social and economic activities. The modern concept of development gives particular importance to the voluntary sector.

In view of this paramount importance for volunteerism, societies ought to pay attention to volunteering, disseminate and reinforce this culture in society, and find appropriate mechanisms and means for the development and promotion of this culture. Perhaps one of the most important means and mechanisms that develop and promote voluntary work within the community are social media networks. These networks represent the new generation of the Internet. They provide new opportunities to communicate through the network using social networking sites, and their impact on people, and how these social media sites can be exploited by some institutions and organizations.

Almost every organization and establishment have a page or an account on social media networking sites, where the big role of this site is shown through contribution to the construction of social virtual networks.

The Facebook site is in the forefront; it is the most important because of its great impact in supporting the idea of communication. It is possible to promote the culture of voluntary work among young people, and to demonstrate its role in society, and the need to engage in it. This is due to the benefits it offers to members or users and their community, providing opportunities to exchange videos and photos and share files and conduct instant conversations and achieve direct communication and interaction, which plays a significant role in influencing the youth using it.

It also might contribute to the development of the culture of volunteerism, which will enable the community to benefit from the energies and capabilities of volunteers and their skills.

The culture of voluntary work reflects a national will that springs from the desire of individuals in society to progress, develop and participate in confronting the challenges and crises that afflict society to minimize their effects and guarantee a better standard of living. Volunteers and voluntary associations have become a criterion showing the degree of the progress and sophistication of a society.

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