Senior Adults’ Participation in Volunteering

Research study

Vytautas Magnus University
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The authors
**About the study**

This study consists of two parts. *The first part includes theoretical assumptions about volunteering.* There have been conducted an analytical research of foreign authors sources, which have been analyzed and submitted some conclusions about the importance of volunteering in human existence. Considering the motivation for voluntaring, a human should ask WHY? and WHAT FOR? Human sees the meaning when he/she can contribute to creating common good in the society.

In the theoretical part there have been analyzed adult aging and demographic problematic questions. There have been discussed volunteer and volunteering conceptions and presented the characteristics of participation in the volunteering. There were provided the experience of volunteering in Lithuania and abroad.

Volunteering in the European union is highlighted as one of the key possibilities for people to participate and include themselves into the international society life, solving various problems, such as poverty, unemployment, public safety, organization of the meaningful leisure etc.

*The second part of the study consists of accomplished various empirical studies, which have been executed by the meaning of project work.* The main goal of the project “Communication, Empowering, Integration, Experience For Senior Age Volunteers (C.E.I.E.)” was – to promote communication and collaboration between international senior volunteers in two countries, to share the experience by acquiring new abilities and skills, needed for knowledge-based society in the action based environment. Executing international Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and Thessaly university (Greece) volunteer project, six senior volunteers from Greece visited Lithuania, who not only got known local cultural life, traditions, aistoms, and people, and they shared Mediterranean Sea states experience. Equally the same six senior volunteers from Lithuania visited Greece. In volunteering there have been developed bilateral collaboration, opening international environment for
successful process of life long learning (LLL). Elder members of society just because of the project could adapt to the changes of the modern life and acquire new skills: get to know the people and surrounding world, to discover new opportunities how to behave in society differently.

Therefore in the empirical part there was presented researches which was accomplished through the time of volunteering in both countries (Greece, Lithuania). There were analyzed diaries of both countries senior volunteers as well as interview – survey. Lithuanian seniors activities map was created while volunteering in Greece. The results of the research diversified with the pictures prepared by the authors. The main results of the analysis of the senior volunteers of cultural and social experience at national and international level were: the case of senior volunteers communication, empowering, integration and experience in Lithuania and in Greece; experience of volunteering by Greek and Lithuanian volunteers; reflection on voluntary activities by Greek and Lithuanian volunteers using portfolio method; reflection on voluntary activities by Greek and Lithuanian volunteers.

This accomplished, interrelated and presented research will serve for the student of all levels preparing for final theses or scientific publications.

_The author of the study_

_Genutė Gedvilienė_
Introduction

Volunteering is a way of empowering and integrating citizens into active communication and experience sharing between the generations. This activity helps develop values and makes influence on education, employment and citizenship. In the majority of cases, volunteering is practised in various social and environmental organizations and institutions of informal education. Successful volunteering needs a relevant legal environment to ensure safe and flexible volunteering acceptable to both, a volunteer and a hosting organization. In Lithuania, volunteering is defined by Volunteering Act, 2011 as a volunteer’s unpaid work for the benefit of the society stipulated by a volunteer and volunteering organization.

Volunteering is a way of human empowering, integration, occupation and an important factor in the process of creating social communication and cohesion. This activity helps implement the main social values with the influence on education, busyness and public life. It may also improve interrelations, communication and cooperation.

Volunteering became the subject of scientific research only in the 80s. Various aspects of volunteering have been researched by E. G. Clary, M. Snyder (1991), V. Molly (1998), S. J. Ellis (1985), W. Naidich, M. Chisholm (1996), J. Patterson, Ch. Tremper, P. Rypkema (1994) and B. B. Stallings (1998). The review of the works of foreign scholars reveals that Social Psychology, Sociology and History are among the most typical aspects of research in volunteering.

Nowadays volunteering has gained a significant national and international sense, as it is closely related to human expression, active citizenship, which is the essence of democracy. Volunteering is an opportunity for everyone, regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion, political belief, age or health, to use personal skills and experience, gain new knowledge, make friends, get involved in working and change the social life of the country. Volunteering promotes individual development, expands social benefits, general human capacities. It is time devoted for
the benefit of other activities and the opportunity to exercise, improve personal, professional and social competencies. Volunteering is one of the ways where people of different nationalities, religions, social and economic environment can be positively affected.

Volunteering is a person’s freewill activity with no payment but increasing common good and useful for other people. Volunteering based on public values coming from personal engagement and effort is much more worthwhile than that enforced by others or because of external necessity of the requirements of the organization.

Nowadays, volunteering is related to non-govermenthal (NGO), representing the group of narrow interests. So NGO is a basic mechanism letting different social groups be active in social life. Volunteering services, i.e. non-governmental organizations (NGO) encourage a person to communicate, take part in social life and get some educational experience. Non-governmental organizations (NGO) are the possibility for people of different age groups to be empowered into learning through volunteering with the possibility of realizing different skills, ideas, values and creating positive communication.

Volunteering is an activity arising from a person’s altruistic intention to perform some work without being paid for it. A person who can act this way is called a volunteer. The main goal of such a person is to help others and be socially active. It is one of the natural human features – to be happy by helping others.

Internationally, in different countries volunteering is understood differently, but the process of volunteering is similar. Volunteering is especially important for the country’s economy because at low expences national product is created together with intercultural education. The Declaration of Volunteering defines volunteering as informal education: „Volunteering creates opportunities for non-official and informal education, and in European Union it is an important instrument of lifelong learning (LLL)” (Savanorystės Europoje deklaracija, 2005)

World Health Organization (WHO) says that ageing population raises many questions for policy makers. How do we help people remain
independent and active as they age? How can we strengthen health promotion and prevention policies, especially those directed to older people? As people live longer, how can the quality of life in old age be improved? These questions WHO direct for government decision-makers at all levels, the nongovernmental sector and the private sector, all of whom are responsible for the formulation of policies and programmes on ageing (World Health organization, 2002).

As the European Union workforce is aging, job opportunities for people aged 50 are declining as older workers were often the first in restructuring companies, and employers are not likely to hire older workers. This loss of human capital spent more money on social security, unemployment and health care. This challenge has led to an “active aging” concept. Active aging is growth in number of older workers in the labour market (European Social Fund: 50 years of investing in people, 2007). Active aging in the concept of the World Health Organization is presented as an implementation system of social policy, possible to optimize physical and functional health of the elderly, their participation in various social activities, as well as their safety, giving them equal rights, providing necessary and high-quality social services and ensuring equal opportunities of self-realization in the society. We can see the active aging necessity in European societies from two aspects: as causing vital need of the objective and inevitable demographic and economic factors and as opening new opportunities for older generations, as the result of general development of the essential human choice opportunities. One of the following choices – to live longer and healthier lives – is already available for many people across Europe, where life expectancy of people above 60 is significantly prolonged by the effectively functioning health system, and second – making a person’s life more meaningful and richer above sixty is one of the new opportunities, opening today to generations throughout Europe.

In 2011-2013 VMU Department of Education and the University of Thessaly (Greece) carried Senior Volunteering Project “Communication, Empowering, Integration, Experience For Senior Age Volunteers (C.E.I.E.). “The aim of the project was to promote international communication
and cooperation of both sides. Senior Volunteer is sharing experiences, gaining new abilities and skills for the knowledge society. The cooperation between Greece and Lithuania was established in order to draw public attention to the importance of volunteering in Lithuania and Greece. The project was developed through bilateral cooperation and opened international area for successful lifelong learning process.

*The object* of the research: experience of seniors participating in volunteering.

*The study goal:* to reveal communication, empowerment, integration and experience of senior participants in volunteering.

*The objectives of the research:*
1. Theoretically based volunteering.
2. Having conducted the research of experience of participants of Lithuanian and Greek seniors in volunteering to highlight the cultural and social expression of recent activity.

*Methodology and methods of the research*

A qualitative study was conducted in 2011-2013. This study aimed to highlight the cultural and social expression of the volunteering experience. It was based on the European Year of Volunteering basic objectives and other studies - adult needs to participate in volunteering at national and international level; content analysis of documents regulating volunteering, expert analysis and volunteering experience in organization performance.

- Semi-structured interview survey is used.
- Content analysis method is applied to the analysis of interview results.

The results are divided into five categories (Lifelong learning, volunteering experience, the ability to volunteering, volunteering benefits and volunteering expectations) and several subcategories (Participation in education, training professional or personal development, concept of Lifelong learning, volunteering experience, knowledge, relevant volunteering, general skills). Interview method was used to reveal the details of the informants views on volunteering at a later age.
1. Theoretical part
1.1. Active aging in a changing society

1.1.1. Demographic trends of aging

Transition to adult life is a successive process of movement through childhood and adolescence, taking on more responsibility in solving various problems in life, learning at school and taking over the senior experience. Some adult image formed after leaving school or university, and others became adults after acquiring a profession, starting to work or creating a family (Teresevičienė ir kt. 2004).

The experts, studying adult human development, adult life relatively divide into three main periods: young adult (approximately 20-40 years), middle age (older) adult (40-65 years) and old age (approximately 65 years) (Žukauskienė, 2002). Adult developmental stages of the individual effects of social and cognitive development has a special meaning and all the social experiences and the regulators actually last throughout a person’s life (Durkin, 2002).

The World Health Organisation has proposed to distribute a person’s age periods as follows: up to 44 years-young; from 45 to 59 years-average; from 60 to 74 year- elderly; from 75 to 90 year- old; more than 90 – durable (Krikščiūnas A., 1993; Kairys, 2002).

The definition of roles in life is commonly used to describe an adult age. Involvement in a wide variety of roles helps to develop personality and make the younger generation of the function of socialization. Even though the roles have already been learned in childhood, however, only a grown person is fully experiencing his role requirements (Beresnevičienė, 2003).

The main descriptive demographic ageing process indicator is the share of older people in society. According to the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, the aging population describes the age of 60 and older (Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, 1983). Ageing population refers to a decline in the proportion of children and young people and an increase in the proportion of people aged 60 and over.
Aging population is an inevitable stage in demographic development of society, associated with the transition from traditional to modern society. In Lithuania as in other States of European Union, the population of 60 and older is increasing each year. At the beginning of this year in the country lived 697,1 thousand of 60 and older population so every fifth (20.9 percent) resident was older. According to the data of the Department of statistics for the past ten years, the number of elderly people increased by 28, 8 thousand (4.3%), although the country’s population declined by 183,1 thousand (5.2%). The prediction is that at the beginning of 2030 almost one-third (28.9 percent) of the population of Lithuania will be the elderly. It is likely that there will be about two persons of working age for one person at the age of 65 (currently-3) (Lietuvos statistikos departamentas, 2011).

In the National consequences of an ageing population coping strategy (2004) is argued that the 60-year threshold separates the so-called third age people who are already leaving the labour market, but are still quite dynamic. The strategy emphasizes that increasing life expectancy – a great achievement, but this phenomenon must be taken into account in shaping the future economic, social and employment policies. The aging problems should be solved not only in special methods but also with methods which help to create a society for all ages (Nacionalinė gyventojų senėjimo pasekmių įveikimo strat egija, 2004).

Aging population is an inevitable stage in demographic development of society, associated with the transition from traditional to modern society. Elongation of lifetime and the dramatic decline of birth rate caused the changes of population. These changes just reversed for more than fifty years existed age pyramid. Older people in the world are increasing, and young people are decreasing (see figure 1).
It is predicted that by 2050, 65 and older than 65 in the EU will grow by 70%, and over 80 years – 170% (Europos komisija, Pagyvenę žmonės, 2012). For such a demographic change in the 21st century will be faced with major challenges: meet higher demand for healthcare, adapt health systems to the needs of an aging population and ensure the sustainability of the society with fewer people of working age. The main challenge will be to encourage European citizens to stay healthy and active at older age. If older people remain longer in good health, they will be able to enjoy a better quality of life, be more independent and active. Implementing a variety of older people, workers, child and youth health promotion and disease prevention initiatives, the EU is actively supporting Member States’ efforts to promote active aging citizens.

1.1.2. The concept of active aging

The problem of aging in Europe is evident. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Political Declaration was adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 in Berlin. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing is a practical tool to assist policy
makers to focus on the key priorities associated with population ageing. It addresses a wide range of issues with implications for the lives of older people around the world including social protection, health, urbanization, labour, education, nutrition, and career training, housing, infrastructure, and images of ageing (Nacionalinė gyventojų senėjimo pasekmių įveikimo strategija, 2004).

In implementing the 2002 United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing Regional Implementation Strategy, Lithuanian government decided to adopt a National consequences of an ageing population coping strategy in 2004. One of the points is presenting the images of older people development. Purpose – to keep older people in the society, the community, self-help initiatives; decisions relating to older persons accept only with their knowledge and their participation; promote the development of non-governmental organizations and to strengthen their influence. Objectives are: to develop and implement effective and efficient government institutions and interests of older persons representing non-governmental organizations cooperation model (Nacionalinė gyventojų senėjimo pasekmių įveikimo strategija, 2004).

It is necessary to support and encourage the creation and sustenance of non-governmental organizations, community centers and senior citizens clubs in municipalities. In these centers, clubs it would be able to communicate, share information and experience not only with each other but also with the different generations of people with similar interests to meet their cultural needs. In particular, care should be taken about elderly activities in rural communities and participation in public life. These activities should be made by the rural neighborhood and the organizers of social work in community; support the activities of non-governmental organizations of older people, the development of volunteering; these people can help each other and be engaged into attractive, skills and dispositions corresponding activities (Nacionalinė gyventojų senėjimo pasekmių įveikimo strategija, 2004).
The social situation of the old people and the approach to them in the Western world has changed a lot. In today’s materialistic society, young and productive people are valued as being able to work because work can make money. Ostensibly the retirement is assessed as the top working career but really it is not true. The retirement is often kept as the beginning of the old age and the retired feel incapacitated, no longer needed, worthless (Mikulionienė S., 2003).

In today’s changing society, older people have to adapt to changing lives and find new ways to self-realization and feel happy. Lifelong Learning Memorandum states that all European citizens, without exception, should have equal opportunities to adapt to changing social and economic conditions (Mokymosi visą gyvenimą memorandumas, 2001).

The European Union labor force is constantly aging, job opportunities for people aged 50 years, is declining as older workers were often the first in restructuring companies, and employers are not likely to hire older workers. It makes influence on human life and increases the costs of social security, unemployment and health care. This challenge has led to the concept of “active aging”. Active aging means the increase of older workers increases in the labor market. It is recognized as the essence of the future of the European social model of modernization (Europos socialinis fondas: 50 metų investavimo į žmones, 2007).

Although in recent years the employment of older persons grows rapidly, the General employment objectives of the Lisbon strategy aims are too slow. The labour market of EU is still segregated; discrimination against vulnerable groups of society and predominant gender inequality in the labour market is vivid. Economic factors show the influence of competence and creativity on the results of the progress, the level of education is becoming a key factor in productivity and economic growth. Changing technology requires a constant upgrading of the skills and abilities. Today not work and capital, but ideas and innovations lead to the development of knowledge economy. The advantage of the benefits of globalisation and innovation can only be reached by changing the existing procedure of work and lifestyle, although these changes are often
very painful. Employees’ competence and skills usually do not comply with these new conditions and thus create a new area of unemployment and social exclusion and vulnerability.

Active ageing has become the concern of the global policy. Both governments and international organizations support the ideas of value of active ageing and disseminate them to all. The concepts of active aging and various implications arising from them are changing the understanding of the contents of active aging: it can be understood as covering the life course event or as a shorter life span, which coincided with the transition from work to retirement. One or another understanding of active aging leads to different settings: using a broader or more holistic approach, it is associated with several social policies; in contrast, it focuses on only a few of these specific policies, such as labour market and pension policy.

Active aging in the concept of the World Health Organization is presented as a implementation system of the social policy, possible to optimize physical and functional health of the elderly, their participation in various social activities, as well as their safety, giving them equal rights, providing necessary and high-quality social services and ensuring equal opportunities to realize themselves in the society. In active aging policy system it is very important the existing culture in countries (values, traditions and the system of attitudes) Here is ideological approach to the implementation of the policy determinants:

1) The guarantee of equal rights to the elderly;
2) The promotion of autonomy and self-sufficiency of their life;
3) Physical, psychological and social welfare, as the recognition of personal health factors;
4) Physical activity and healthy lifestyle as essential promotion of personal physical and functional health-enhancing factors;
5) Assurance of equal opportunities to participate in public life and activities (labour market, educational, cultural, political activities as the realisation of self expression), depending on the needs of elderly people, as well as relevant social desires and competences to guarantee the quality of service;
6) Guarantees of social, economic and physical security for the elderly (WHO, 2002).

Promoting active ageing is in the core of the European employment strategy, which coordinates the Member States’ employment policies. Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2005-2008) are focused on including employment and keeping older people in their workplace, taking into account life-cycle perspective. They include better working conditions, lifelong learning, healthier working environment and appropriate incentives to work and preventive methods of early retirement. For the first time the guidelines stress the need to modernise social protection systems, in order to increase working life (Europos užimtumo strategija, 1997).

In many Member States, active aging strategies are starting to deliver results. A significant increase in people aged 55-64 in employment; in 2000 it was 36.6% and in 2006 reached 43.6%. It is important that when employment grows, the quality has not diminished.

The employment grows in those professional fields where high level of expertise and knowledge is required. Member States shall apply a variety of aging-related policy measures, but the best results were reached by integrated strategy which helps to establish the retirement rules, to provide financial incentives, to take into account aspects of employment, such as health, education and lifelong learning, as well as flexible work organization. Excellent examples of active aging policies are Denmark, Finland and Sweden (Užimtumas Europoje 2007 metais, 2007).

We can look at the active aging necessity in European societies from two aspects: as causing vital need of the objective and inevitable demographic and economic factors, and as opening new opportunities for older generations, as the results of general development of essential human choice opportunities. One of the following choices – to live longer and healthier lives – is already available for many people across Europe, where persons’ above 60, life expectancy is significantly prolonged by the effective functioning of health system. Making one’s life more meaningful
and richer after sixty is one of the new opportunities, opening today to
generations throughout Europe.

So the task is rising for the public to remove the brakes and barriers
hindering the elderly to participate in working life and create new
incentives to motivate them to remain in labour market as long as they
want. Sometimes for financial reasons older people are prevented from
the work they like.

**1.2. Participation in volunteering**

**1.2.1. What is volunteering?**

Contemporary society faces a range of social, economic and political
transformations. With the growth of population the number of individuals
needs social support augments. Volunteering brings out the first social
problems and addresses issues related to the individuals’ needs (Ellis,
1985). National and international volunteering closely associates with
active participation in social life that constitutes fundamentals of
democracy. Differences in attitudes towards volunteering has opened the
way to analyze volunteering in scientific, political, and practical areas.

Volunteering became the subject of scientific research only in the
80s. The volunteering in Social Psychology, Sociology and History is
(1985), W. Naidichas, M. Chisholmas (1996), J. Pattersonas, Ch. Tremperis,

Evolution of volunteering, relations of volunteer movement with
governmental institutions, prospects of volunteer movement in Europe
(W. Lorenz, 1994); impact of volunteering on the volunteer and volunteer’s
personal and professional development (Th. Rotolo, Jh. Wilson, 2006);
volunteering as a constituent part of social education (G. Williams, 2005)
are discussed.

Issues of training of volunteers and volunteering in community
centres have been addressed by E. G. Clary, M. Snyder (1991),


Volunteering theorists have formulated various definitions of volunteering. According to Clary et al. (1998), volunteering is a planned help, starting with the activity, most of the individual’s abilities, interests and priorities, tracing to the active operation. Jordan, Ochman (1998) defines volunteering as an opportunity for everyone, regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion, political belief, age and
health, use of skills and experience, learn new skills, make friends, get involved in the work and change social life. According to Wilson and Musick (1999, 2000), participation in voluntary activities is beneficial to both the receiving assistance and the volunteer. According to the authors, volunteering is proactive activities related to the initiative, the assumption of responsibility, activity in their environment and a commitment to devote part of their time and effort to the development of public welfare.

Volunteering interests not only scientists but also politicians. The analysis of the national and political documents governing voluntary activities is found in a variety of definitions of volunteering.

European Voluntary manifesto describes volunteering as an activity carried out in one’s own free will, choice and motivation, making financial gain, carried out in an organized environment, which is trying to help others, not to the volunteer, and the public in general, contributing to the common values of the society, although it is recognized that voluntary activity levels are also very useful for the volunteer (Europos savanorystės manifestas. 2006).

In Voluntary Code of Practice it is stated that volunteering is an unpaid activity then people devote their time and that it is a benefit to the public, groups and individuals (Volunteering Compact and Code of Good Practice, 2005).

Volunteering activity practitioners define volunteering as non-profitable, in addition to monetary rewards and non-professional activities which individuals carried out by neighbors, community or public interest; volunteering has many forms and include traditional mutual assistance in case of crisis in the community, as well as conflict resolution and poverty reduction. Volunteering involve local and national efforts, as well as bilateral and international programs which are carried out in spite of borders (Nausėdaitė, 2002). The corner stone of volunteering is doing voluntarily and unpaid work (Europos savanorių tarnybos asociacija, 2012).

The scientific, political and practical concept of volunteering is characterized in figure 2.
Each activity has its own uniqueness and characteristics specific to it, but in order to reveal what is volunteering it gets acquainted with the motives of volunteering participation. According to the European Economic and Social Committee, the motivation which underlies voluntary activity, is the desire to make a contribution by personal initiative to the common good and to help in shaping society, promotes values such as altruism and solidarity and thus forms a counterweight to increasingly widespread isolation and egoism in modern societies (Europos ekonomikos ir socialinių reikalų komiteto nuomonė dėl Savanoriškos veiklos, jos vaidmens Europos visuomenėje ir jos poveikio, 2006).

According to Jonutytė’s monograph “Voluntary in the social education system” refers to the main groups of motifs:

1. Voluntary activity is directed to meet the Personal requirements: enhancing the value, new skills-building, personality development, warrant for the future perspectives, understanding of loneliness.
2. Voluntary activity is directed to meet the requirements of others: concern for the community, help other people (I. Jonutytė, 2007).

Morris (2000) notes that it is difficult to single out one or another motive, leading to self-determination to volunteering. Often the reason of public activity is a specific situation, hortative to seek for
self-promoting opportunities in non-governmental organizations. The author identifies three groups of motives that may lead to the volunteering choice:

1. Personal choice to help people to relieve suffering, to give the joy for human existence;
2. Aim to reduce and eliminate injustice;
3. The desire to satisfy the needs of self-realization.

Volunteering promotes individual improvement, and provides the ability to communicate, collaborate and participate in the creation of public welfare. For a person to be able to create his own successful life and to participate in the welfare of volunteering it is necessary to mobilize the general competencies which are for all people for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment needed competencies (see figure 3).

Figure 3. Key competences (Key competences for lifelong learning). Recommendation by the European Parliament and of the Council, 2006)

These competencies are considered to be particularly important for the society as guaranteeing more flexibility in the labour market, adapting to constant change. Each competency has its own uniqueness, let’s look at the characteristics of competencies:

*Communication in the mother tongue.* It is a citizen’s ability to use properly and correctly vocabulary, grammar and writing in cultural context. Competent communicating using oral language, expressing opinions, participation in conversations and discussions.
Communication in foreign languages. The duty of every citizen, in spite of age, is to be proactive in intercultural communication. Ability to communicate in a foreign language expands human capabilities. However, foreign language proficiency level depends on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Foreign languages, one or more, are important to know for many reasons. As one of the necessities, being the member of European Union/under the European Union supervision, to cooperate with other nations, in developing business and others.

Mathematical competence and basic Competences in Science and Technology signifies that every citizen should master the mathematical skills such as number, measurement units, basic mathematical operations and actions in everyday life.

Digital Competencies. Living in the twenty-first century, for people it is getting more difficult to be an active participant in it. The use of digital literacy is becoming a necessity, because computer is as a tool for information literacy, which assisted in the presentation and exchanging of information, communication, development of cooperation networks. New social networks, as Facebook, Skype and others, information society technologies help citizens to communicate with each other, to share information, and finally to spend their leisure time. These skills help individuals to enhance critical and creative thinking, to develop information literacy skills.

Learning to learn. All competencies are interrelated. Learning to learn is a complex process in which we learn to analyze learning situations reflectively, trying to identify ourselves. Therefore, in learning to learn, a citizen can identify his strengths and weaknesses, and thus to use learning strategies proper for him. For this is important to a student learning motivation, self-confidence and faith in what you are doing, linking with existing practice.

Civil and Social Competencies. All human life runs being and participating in society just in different functions. In other words, a person is born to express his attention and future life depends in greater part on the surroundings (the institutions), as he succeeds thanks to them, to
socialize and integrate in society and to be important. Therefore, this ability includes personal, interpersonal and intercultural skills. Through the general skills expression, a man reveals himself. Seeking this ability, a person learns to be tolerant, honest, confident, he learns to understand and evaluate his own and other opinions, in a constructive communication and cooperation, creating a democratic, justice-based environment. Only civil skills, such as democracy, citizenship, justice, equality development supports the public unity, maintain order and stability. In other words, only in democratic society citizens are united by devotion to freedom and equality principles.

_Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship._ Through this competence displays human creativity (the ability to formulate new ideas, to be resourceful, curious, enterprising for innovations and changes), thrusting (optimistic glimpse into the future, vigorous pursuit of accomplishing these tasks), the desire to be independent (to have personal opinion, the ability to make decisions, the ability to work independently). Faith affects one’s success and the ability to achieve goals. In other words, it reveals human devotion to work, entrepreneurial skills, i.e. ability to successfully organize and manage your life and business, profitably produce goods or provide services. This competence is necessary for every citizen to be able successfully lead you to work in a competitive job market, trying to keep job place or creating a job place setting up business.

_Culture awareness and expression._ This competency refers to an individual’s cultural knowledge. Culture, expressing human world-view and world-picture, is not just a national phenomenon. Cultural awareness is important for national and international orientation. In other words, knowledge about other cultures will give the pre-offer insight and help to successfully communicate, better recognize the differences, the development of various nations historical, religious and cultural development.

All these competencies are equally important for every citizen, because only they can help to orient in a knowledge society. It should
be noted that these competencies are directly linked with each other, overlap and complement one another. The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning [Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006] speaks that Key competences for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. They are particularly necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment. Continuously upgrading the skills of people, in line with the needs of the labour market (Europe strategy, 2020).

1.2.2. Volunteering as a form of adult learning

Nowadays an adult person should strive to participate and plan his life because of its complexity in either social or political sense. Senior citizens are expected to be socially active. People of different age groups should constantly learn because changing cultural, ethnic and linguistic conditions make life complicated. Meeting these challenges is not very simple. Otherwise, adult learning through volunteering may help create new norms of social communication.

Volunteering in a society has become popular not only as a way of being social in helping others or communicating among different age groups but also as a possibility to learn. Volunteering is a very important instrument in realizing Lifelong learning strategy in European Union. Besides, volunteering gives opportunities for an adult to join informal learning. Informal learning opens abilities to educate personal, social and professional skills. But it is worth mentioning that a volunteer is naturally involved into self-learning. Depending on one’s motivation, competence increases because a lot of things in life a person learns himself, analyzing and evaluating his experience. That may improve involvement into labour market thus expanding employment possibilities and making a person competitive. Taking part in volunteering, an adult has a possibility to learn and perfect
three groups of skills:

- **personal**, related with a person’s inner motivation and his personal needs.
  Only a personal interest and values make an adult seek for something new, valuable by helping others and self-expression.

- **social** which appears working in a group – it may be an activity helping each other and the condition where a helped person lives or the whole group of volunteers.

- **professional** closely connected with the process of learning and qualification as a part of professional skills. Junior volunteers use volunteering as a means of acquiring professional skills before starting their career.

All the three groups of skills are closely connected with volunteering as **learning, interrelations and conditions** that encourage a volunteer to be active in life-long learning.

Kurapkaitiene N. and Borovskaja O. describe three principles of volunteering that determine volunteer’s involvement.

**Conditions** – they are material and structural conditions of the volunteer, i.e., working place, organizational rules, cultural norms, a responsible person, labour contract etc. Creating conditions influences volunteer’s involvement into organization and his working motivation. The main task of the conditions is to ensure increase in volunteering.

**Relations** – these are relations of the organization where a volunteer appears. It is the structure of conscious and subconscious interpersonal processes in the organization. Volunteers usually keep in touch with different groups – workers, clients and other volunteers. They have to understand and find encouraging relations. Mostly because of relations, volunteers stay long in the organization, and relations become the strongest motivation in volunteering.

**Learning.** A volunteer appears in new possibilities and conditions of learning that encourage him to learn not only technical or mechanical but also social, professional and personal competences. (Kurapkaitienė, Borovskaja, 2007).
The authors stress that in spite of the conditions for informal or self-education, a volunteer still gets into a loop of at least minimal and sometimes quite vivid change.

“A loop” – is understood as a period of volunteering, getting out of a usual way of life with its clear determinations. It has the beginning and the end. A learning “loop” may be bigger or smaller depending on a person’s openness to learning and organization’s contribution to the field of learning.” (Kėžaitė, 2007).

In creating conditions for volunteers, it is important to set what information and skills are necessary to make volunteering successful and how a volunteer should be integrated. It is also important to clear up a volunteer’s motivation. Positive conditions and relations together with constant learning abilities positively influence the choice of volunteers and educating new skills.

For a successful integration, a volunteer should always learn. The issues of volunteer learning and progressing are discussed in the programmes of European Union carrying such attitudes:

- volunteers gain knowledge and skills during volunteering activities, not in advanced preparation for social work;
- volunteers are prepared in advance for specific activities following specialized programmes and systematic courses, workshops, individual consultations. (Veiklus jaunimas 2007-2013 m., 2005).

Involunteering the process of informal, self-modified and experimental learning takes part during relations between organization members and a volunteer, volunteer and client, volunteer and other volunteers, also during personal self-knowledge and gaining new professional skills. It is difficult to distinguish some common volunteering skills because of different conditions, activities, structure.

During volunteering, personal progress, social values and common human skills are educated. This is illustrated in the volunteering model.
Skills gained in volunteering can be prescribed to the recommendations of European Parliament and Council to the skills of common life-long learning. Recommendations give 8 skills: communication in the mother tongue, communication in a foreign language, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology.

These skills prepare people for adult life and is the basis for life-long learning. They create personal welfare and progress, active citizenship, social integration and occupation (2006).

Volunteering service gives a person possibility to communicate, educational experience, to be active in social life. Non-governmental organizations also encourage the possibilities for people of different age groups to be involved in learning through volunteering, to realize their skills, share ideas and values, to communicate.

Speaking about volunteering activities of non-governmental organizations, the concept of informal learning is used. Informal learning
consists of different courses, workshops, conferences offered by the same or different non-governmental organization in a neutral atmosphere, but it also should be remembered that learning is practised during the volunteering activity itself (Karasevičiūtė, 2013).

To sum up, volunteering gives a person possibilities to gain experience in different fields, to know himself, educate skills, widen knowledge, strengthen responsibility for himself and community. These are universal skills, obligatory for every person and they educate critical confident personality.

1.2.3. Volunteering experience in Lithuania and abroad

There are many reasons why people are volunteering. Some do it because they believe in the organization’s goals and are confident that it can in some way contribute to solving various problems. Other volunteers are working because they want to become actively involved in community life, to change and to help people.

On the 5th of December, 1985 the United Nations proposed the world day of international volunteering for economic and social development. This day is designed to acquaint the public with the services and volunteers to promote the desire of the people in different fields to offer their services – at home and abroad (Nevyriausybinių organizacijų informacijos ir paramos centras, Tarptautinė savanorių diena, (2009).

Volunteering has a long tradition throughout the democratic world. Volunteering plays an important role in European countries. In the United Kingdom 23 million people become volunteers each year, Germany – 23 million (36%) of the population, in Ireland – 33% of the population, in Poland – 18.3% of the population. Belgian citizens are volunteering 5 hours a week. Across Europe, voluntary activities are carried out in different fields, and represent the means and traditions of the EU members. Across the European Union, volunteering is an important part of the social activities (Savanorystės Europoje Deklaracija, 2005).
According to Jonutytė (2002), volunteers offered a very wide range of activities in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy. For example, the activities in children and youth centers, activities and events for cultural and recreation issues, assistance to the elderly, infirm and disabled people; fighting racism, discrimination against women, children’s participation in violence, crime prevention work.

As regards voluntary activities, we need to remember that various activities are often carried out in the social, environmental, non-formal education organizations. To carry out the voluntary activity, legal environment is necessary to ensure a secure and flexible condition, convenient to a volunteer and the host organisation. For example, let’s remember the Czech Republic, where in one of the first among Central and Eastern European States in 2003 “Volunteer Law’ entered into force. It is defined what is a volunteer, voluntary activity, its policies and contracts with volunteers, etc. This law defines a voluntary activity as voluntary work to help other people (Volunteer Law of Czech Republic, 2002).

2011 was the European Year of Volunteering, which was intended to involve more people in volunteering, raising awareness, and practically help institutions in organizing and administrating volunteering. In order to emphasize the importance of volunteering and encourage more people to take action and deal with the related problems, the European Year of Volunteering had four main objectives: to reduce the barriers to volunteering in the EU; empower volunteer organizations and improve the quality of volunteering; rewarding volunteering to recognize it; informed of the voluntary sector and its importance.

Throughout 2011, the European Union countries organized the Tour of the European Year of Volunteering, which led to different profile organizations working with volunteers to present and publicize their activities and to attract potential volunteers. The Tour took place in Vilnius Town Hall on June 21-23, 2011. The visitors of Tour had the opportunity to attend the conference and the discussions and participate in the Volunteer Awards; to hear the real stories of volunteers and access
to a variety of organizations, to visit the open NGOs spaces centre. Non-governmental Organization (NGO) is a great opportunity for people of all ages to get involved in volunteering learning and realize their abilities, to share ideas, values, to communicate.

Volunteering features are revealed in various non-governmental organizations. According to Leliūgienė (1997), a non-governmental organization is independent from government help set up and working institution operating in accordance with national legislation. The main features are: voluntary, absence of government grants and subsidies, democratic governance, active involvement in state issues.

Experience in Lithuania. The recognition, encouragement, support and cooperation of volunteering are essential points to ensure the volunteering meaning and value. By law volunteering in Lithuania is defined in the Republic of Lithuania Law on Volunteering (2011), which sets voluntary characteristics, principles, rights and duties for the volunteer and the voluntary organizers, the order of volunteering, voluntary insurance, voluntary reimbursement cases. The volunteering in Law is defined as unpaid volunteers and the public benefit activities, which conditions are determined by the agreement of volunteer and organizer of this activity. By this definition, the formulation of voluntary activities in Lithuania has been treated in different ways, for example, according to public opinion survey, volunteering is most often understood as the activities for which remuneration is free, donations, assistance in organizing events / projects, voluntary military service, monetary donations to any organization, voluntary leisure or even – overtime (Tanutienė, Čivinskas, Jarašiūnaitė, Baltrušaitis, 2011).

In 2009 in Lithuania there were registered 32,476 different non-governmental organizations (Valstybės įmonės Registrų centro duomenys, 2010). Volunteering in society is increasing. In 2010, the public opinion survey on participation in volunteering and NGO performance evaluation revealed that 20% of the Lithuanian population participates in volunteering, nearly as many respondents indicated
voluntary participation by members of their families and nearly one-third – of friends and acquaintances. Compared to the Euro barometer, the idea of volunteering infected more Lithuanian residents, if in 2007 there were 11 %, so in 2010 20 % (Europoje vyraujančių savanorystės modelių analizė, 2011).

According to Jarvis (2001), University of the Third Age is a growing, voluntary association that provides informal adult education, as well as giving the opportunity to get together in small groups, teaching and learning from each other. University of the Third Age is an independent, voluntary, social organization to ensure older people better social integration into society, promoting a productive and meaningful life, support at work, physical activity, upraising knowledge and cultural level (Gedvilienė, Zuzevičiūtė, 2007).

It is typical of Lithuania that young people are more interested in volunteering. However, it is noted that an important opportunity to supplement the volunteer ranks are seniors (Johnson, 2001). In aging society, volunteering is an important activity that can and has to supplement social services, improving the quality of life of the elderly. Volunteering is a way to contribute to social inclusion and integration. It contributes to the unification of society and social capital.

Under the Lifelong Learning Programme Grundtvig sub-program supports the participation of citizens in volunteering projects in other European countries. It gives people the opportunity to learn and share knowledge and experience abroad. Lithuania also has the Grundtvig program. The aim of the program is to improve the quality of adult education and the availability of supporting international adult education institutions cooperation and mobility (Švietimo mainų paramos fondas, Grundtvig programa, 2011).

Grundtvig program has a Grundtvig Learning Partnerships and Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects. The Grundtvig Learning Partnership is a framework for small-scale co-operation activities between organisations working in the field of adult education in the broadest sense. It focuses on the management of adult education and
training techniques. The participating organisations are encouraged to monitor and evaluate their transnational work and to interconnect it with the initiatives of their local community. They are also encouraged to cooperate with organisations and authorities at the national level, to ensure a sound basis for their ideas and activities and open up channels for dissemination. This will maximise the value of the transnational exchange, promote the circulation of good practice, and thus ensure the wider impact of results (Švietimo mainų paramos fondas, Mokymosi partnerysčių projektai, 2011).

Senior Volunteering projects give European senior citizens the opportunity to take part in volunteering projects in a European country other than their own, allowing them to learn and share their knowledge and experience. It helps seniors and people above 50.

Projects support partnerships and exchanges of senior volunteers between local organisations located in two countries participating in the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. Each organisation sends and hosts up to six volunteers during a two-year project. Volunteers, who should be aged 50 and above, will usually spend from three to eight weeks abroad working for projects in fields including social protection, environment, sport and culture (Švietimo mainų paramos fondas, Senjorų savanorystės projektai, 2011).

It is noted that in modern society seniors are thought as people like actors in change development experiencing discoveries and losses. When older individuals are faced with a cognitive task, they prefer other learning strategies than the younger. Traditionally, these differences are understood as the elderly weaknesses. Nowadays it is often considered that their used learning strategies correspond to the needs of life experience and changing requirements.

As it can be seen in the model (see Figure 5). Grundtvig Learning Partnership and Senior Volunteering projects promote the formal, non-formal and informal learning. Especially pay attention to the methods of adult learning, participating in project values and provide opportunities to learn and acquire key competencies.
Grundtvig Learning Partnership and Senior Volunteering Project activities are valuable for the elderly self-expression. Participating in these activities seniors help themselves and others realize themselves and feel needful (Trečiokienė et al., 2011).
2. Empirical part
2.1. The experience of Grundtvig senior volunteering process

In the context of an ageing society the young and the old are more and more faced with new learning needs of senior adults and vice versa. Senior adults – even if they are not willing to learn – are forced to cope with the changes of modern life to keep social contacts. It brings chances and challenges, but also risks and threats for the young and the old. This unique situation in history of mankind requires learning process to focus on ageing, as well as on intergenerational links. This is a completely new challenge for adult educators, teachers, trainers, facilitators, as well as for learners and students of all age groups. Special competencies are therefore needed.

Volunteering – is one of the ways of being involved in society’s life, taking part in solving various problems like poverty, unemployment, community’s safety, organizing purposeful leisure time, health, environment protection, nurture problems and others. Senior volunteering is a way to live a more meaningful life with the possibility for everyone irrespective of sex, nationality, religious and political views, age and health abilities. It is the possibility to use personal skills and experience, to actualize personal hobbies, to get new skills – like enterprise, get new knowledge and skills, to find new friends, to be important for the others, to take part in a working sector and public life, changing it according to the needs of community.

Grundtvig senior volunteering project was a great possibility for adults over fifty to adapt new factors of life, to develop bilateral (Lithuania – Greece) collaboration, to develop international space for successful participating in life - long learning process. Taking part in voluntary activity seniors gained common competence, which included: knowledge about humans and proceeding world (various non-governmental and national institutions); common abilities such as social life, employing, organizing, leading, universal abilities. Values and attitudes which are connected with moral principles, responsibility, public spirit and social justice. The aim of
the project was to create open international communication of senior age volunteers, by encouraging their social cooperation and networking skills. It was perfectly made in accordance with the project objectives.

Seniors were involved in learning and working through volunteering, improved and actualized their social skills, shared their ideas, values, communicated and collaborated on international level, developed personal and vocational skills and integrated into community. Accordingly, they helped themselves and the others to be active in public life, took part in solving various problems like poverty, unemployment, community’s safety, organizing of purposeful leisure time, health, environment protection, nurture problems and others. They gave their time, shared their experience and worked for social welfare in non-profit organizations without any monetary rewards.

The participating organizations running the project shared information about the pursuing actions of the project, organized conferences about the project development activities and topics in a distance way, spread and shared voluntary experience with volunteers. The volunteers of both countries (Lithuania and Greece) met and collaborated in all the planned activities of the project. Volunteer seniors took part in volunteer activity in the Botanical garden in Kaunas, worked with disabled people and adults, who were ostracized in Soviet years and worked in the regional town of Lithuania – Tauragė, in the museum of deportees. They helped in the museum activity looking after expositions, communicated with deportees.

The network of senior age volunteers was established in both partner countries. The best practice examples of voluntary activities in both partner countries were collected and published at the project website and presented to international volunteers. Project activities were evaluated by the volunteers of both partner institutions. The participating organizations in the future will be stimulated by exchanging good practices, using theirs participating network and positive works making logistics consulting active senior attendance in senior volunteers activities.
2.2. Results of the analysis of the senior volunteers of cultural and social experience at national and international level

Since 2011 VMU Department of Education and the University of Thessaly (Greece) carried Senior Volunteering Project “Communication, Empowering, Integration, Experience For Senior Age Volunteers (C.E.I.E.)”. The aim of the project was to promote international communication and cooperation of both sides Senior Volunteer sharing experiences, gaining new abilities and skills for the knowledge society. The cooperation between Greece and Lithuania was established in order to draw public attention to the importance of volunteering in Lithuania and Greece. The project was developed through bilateral cooperation and opened the international area for successful lifelong learning process. This is particularly important to Vytautas Magnus University for implementation and dissemination the ideas of Lifelong Learning.

The international Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and the University of Thessaly (Greece) volunteering project this summer in Lithuania gave the possibility for elderly volunteers from Greece to get familiar not only with the local cultural life, traditions, customs and people, but also to share experience of Mediterranean countries.

2.2.1. The case of senior volunteers’ communication, empowering, integration and experience in Lithuania

Six guests from the sunny country arrived in Kaunas on the first of July. Four women and two men stayed in Lithuania for one month. Seniors who came to Lithuania on Sunday, on Monday visited Kaunas Botanical Garden where they were involved in different activities, like working, cutting silver bushes.

Their first job was trimming the labyrinth of bushes, which jointly was called “Greek - Lithuanian labyrinth”. Botanical garden workers showed
how to cut and handle this labyrinth, growing at the botanical garden oak grove and made for a small botanical garden visitors. The volunteers were impressed by the labyrinth of bushes. The Greeks were interested in the therapeutic properties of plants growing at the Botanical garden and enjoyed the opportunity of working with them. The Greeks sincerely asked what healing properties of these plants has tea. They can improve the functions of the heart. So seniors not only managed the labyrinth of bushes, but they also gathered the blossoms of the bushes. Volunteers were happy that when they return home they will be able to make tea, or even grow plants themselves.

These activities were interesting to our guests, four of them became interested in organic agriculture and plants. One of the seniors’ family cultivates grapes, the other – olives, two seniors participate in the activities related to organic plant production and promotion, as well as beekeeping. So the first week the weather was very changeable in Lithuania and it often rained. However, the visitors from Greece kept repeating that they like the weather and the time in Greece this summer is very hot, so our rain does not scare them. The guests praised Lithuania and its beautiful greenery. This green colour, according to the Greek seniors, provide them with the refreshment and the effect of Lithuanian nature was like a meditation for them.

Another work, which also melted in the hands of the seniors was medicinal plant processing in the botanical garden at the medicinal herb section. Voluntary work was complemented with herbal treatment: women graded the birch leaves and men grained Melissa. Work chased work, because on a sunny day the seniors picked up the blossoms of Abbotswood for drying.

The time was running out fast but senior volunteers followed everything that was around them. Botanical garden workers got out just to name medicinal plants in Latin names. The seniors took notes, made photos for all that interested them. For them every detail was important. It was important because all the news in evenings they transferred to home fellows in Greece, and pictures were put on Facebook.
Vytautas Magnus University employees were not indifferent to the Greek seniors wishing to find out as much as possible. The project participants from Greece met with the community at Vytautas Magnus University and also heard about Vytautas Magnus University history, achievements of the university and study programmes at the Department of Education as well as different activities.

After the visit to University there was organized the conference at the Botanical Garden with the presentations for the guests, during which they heard about the botanical garden, the history of the manor, a deeper note of gardening activity. An important point of this project was exchanging of cultural experiences: the Greeks presented their country history and culture, while the Lithuanians, in turn, showed the guests the film about Lithuania and unique Lithuanian folklore, dances, songs, etc.

How else could we talk about Lithuanian dances, which Greek seniors were dancing with the help of the friends and botanical garden folk group, who were enthusiastically dancing and singing, introducing the guests to authentic folklore of our country during summer holiday. Greek seniors – volunteers participated in various events in the city.

Senior volunteers also visited Kernavė, Vilnius, Trakai and the surroundings, saw the port of Klaipeda, the Old Town. They were interested in German old buildings and other points of interest in Lithuania. Guests really enjoyed the Lithuanian Panemune and admired the view of the red castle tower in Raudone.

The Greeks spent three days in Taurage rehabilitation centre of disabled people. They communicated with the disabled people. They also were teaching local people to dance Sirtaki. In the centre, they shared the impressions about Lithuania and talked about Greek glorious past and future, that the crisis is very vague. According to project organizers, the people had an extraordinary opportunity to interact with a warm temperament of completely different people.

The senior volunteers have been empowered through volunteering process together with disabled people to participate in different activities.
volunteers worked with disabled people in Taurage rehabilitation centre. They participated in different working groups, doing different handicrafts: making items from wool, wickers, wooden flowers, sewing different things, making different hand-made details as well.

The volunteers have improved their social abilities and relation among different age groups in Taurage rehabilitation centre. Volunteers from Greece also met with former exiles, deportees, visited the museum in Taurage, where they were assisted by the local staff and had the opportunity to experience the painful Lithuanian history. They had historical experience in the Museum of deportees, helping local workers to clean the exposition, at the same time feeling the pain and glory of Lithuanian people there.

To finish the description of all activities, the best sides of the volunteers should be mentioned. The volunteers have been punctual and responsible. They have been very sincere in presenting Greek culture and traditions, of course in teaching „Sirtaki“, too. The volunteers have been regardful, active and interested in many things. They have been laborious, hardworking and open to new experience in the Botanical garden. They have been very kind-hearted in communicating with the disabled people and very creative in handcrafting. The volunteers have been so expressive, emotional smiling and laughing – wonderful volunteers. It was time together for communication, empowering, integration and experience. The Greek volunteers by their voluntary work and warm communication in Lithuania showed that for Lifelong learning no barrier exists, neither of age, gender, culture, religion or any other. This showed the experience of senior volunteers volunteering in Lithuania.

### 2.2.2. The case of senior volunteers’ communication, empowering, integration and experience in Greece

The August of 2012 was the most important to Lithuanian senior volunteers. They went to Greece joining the Grundtvig project for senior volunteers at Vytautas Magnus University together with Thessaly University.
To Greece went 6 people who arrived at Volos city, about 400 km from Athens. First of all, they were impressed by a very exciting landscape of the country and unusually hot weather. It was a big opportunity and big – interest to watch the Greek way of life. Greek people were very friendly and communicative and showed the volunteers big hospitality and tolerance.

Lithuanians volunteers resided in St. Lawrence Magnesia and wider region of Pelion acquiring experience about culture and nature of the site. Selected representatives attended events at Music Village. The first visit was to the village of St. Lawrence. The main mentor, Spyros tread, and the team of volunteers from Lithuania made introductory meeting in the village square which is still an important element of the social structure of the community of St. Lawrence. They talked about daily life of the village. Volunteers were also acquainted with the history of the area. The discussions followed and comparisons with similar situations in Lithuania. There was a tour around the village looking at the traditional architecture of St. Lawrence and the general area of Pelion. Was there a presentation and discussion on the organization of residential and public spaces? The volunteers showed a particular interest in the temples (three in number) as the sample temples of different ages. They also discussed religious differences and similarities of the denominations in Lithuania. After this first introductory meeting, the activities were adapted to the natural features, taking into account issues of fitness and skills of volunteers within the framework of project objectives as defined in the proposal submission. Specifically, for the promotion of the region and its culture, including events such as the Music Village, volunteers worked on experiential gathering and recording information relating to the cultural, natural and architectural wealth of the region. The information collected in the form of images, while volunteers kept writing daily diaries about their experiences. The obtained information is a reference / description of the experiences of volunteers and a good item to view the location of St. Lawrence through life experience with visitors who participated in the village life for over 4 weeks. It can be used as a good practice and
basis for a future collection of such reports for the view of the place and events such as the Music Village. To gain Lithuanians volunteers experience about the daily life and family in Greece the main mentor, Spyros- invited to his home for dinner. The volunteers were able to taste traditional dishes of Volos and Pelion and socialize in a relaxed and friendly environment by developing the relationship between them and their knowledge about Greece and Magnesia.

Lithuanian volunteers had to assist at the musical festival and create a map for advertising the festival and creating closer contacts with both countries – Lithuania and Greece. They were driven up to the mountains to prepare and watch the festival, to take photos for the map and enjoy the evening views.

So the Lithuanian volunteers had the opportunity to learn a lot of new things. That was the main idea of the volunteering. New country, new people with their different way of life and different appearance, unusual landscape and new activities encouraged volunteers to get interested in life and activated them to learn more and more and invite other people to join similar activities.

In a subsequent visit we toured the periphery of the village that included crops, livestock farming, forest and similar activities, and a very special place in the limits of the village used for events but it was configured essentially as forest (bare soil and very little discretionary facilities).

The volunteers stayed in Agria, a village located 5 km outside the city of Volos. Agria was selected because it offers a friendly and safe environment, located near the sea, and allowed the visitors to watch pedestrians in providing an additional degree of freedom. Agria was chosen because of another reason: because the organization of the Music Village all accommodation in Saint Lawrence is full 12 months prior (i.e. since 2011).

Volunteers were transported from Agria to St. Lawrence, where they were taken by the van of the University. The distance is about 10 km. The van is a safe mode of transport and was considered the best and most
convenient solution for the benefit of volunteers moving as a group thus supporting each other.

The collection of information was mainly accompanied by the mentor but the volunteers were given the opportunity to tour unaccompanied to experience, observe, and record unaffected elements of their own interest.

There was a series of visits to neighbouring villages: The next visit was to the brother and „opposite village of St. George Nileias. The village is interesting from a cultural and architectural point of view because of the monasteries around him and a small outdoor stone amphitheater. It presents the traditional square together with an outdoor center” on the edge of the village, built at the beginning of the last century, used by locals for ‘westernized’ events.

Then there was a tour around the Pelion (very typical way) which demonstrates the great variation in Pelion in the natural environment but also in the villages of personalities. Stops were made in Apples with a very interesting depiction of Hell in the narthex. Another interesting village is the train station designed by de Cirico and was, until the middle of the last century main mode of transportation of the public from Volos to Apples. The 60 lines of a clear link to the past since followed the design of wagons during Roman times. The volunteers also visited the Saint John whose pelagic coast contrasted with the calm shores of Pagassitikos. Finally, the volunteers stayed for a while in Hania, near the top of the mountain. This tour was extremely interesting for the volunteers who were able to experience the richness of Pelion and stayed with excellent impressions. Indeed, the sense of mentor was that „they rejoiced like little children. These were the most positive impressions after viewing the Pelion region.

In all the tours and stops volunteers and the mentor commented on social and labor daily activity, traditions and eating habits, and their connection to the place and the area including the historical development of the area.

Excursions were organized at the late afternoon or evening because of the heat and because of the program of activities of the Music village.
In the mornings and afternoons, the volunteers were free. Time was used for free browsing and working on the submission.

Volunteers were taken to the Catholic Church for the service in Volos every Sunday. It was an extremely interesting experience to appear among the multinational congregation. On weekdays some of the volunteers attended Greek Orthodox churches, enjoying their traditional rituals.

At the end of their stay, volunteers recorded their impressions in a general account. The texts and the photographs of the report joined pages (http://ailavrentis.blogspot.gr and http://edukologija.vdu.lt/Lt/destytojui/projektai).

The farewell was the last days of stay with a dinner attended by volunteers from Lithuania, mentors from Lithuania, members of the implementation team from Greece, and members of the Greek mission volunteers to Lithuania. The meeting left a very good impression on everyone and was given an in-formal rendezvous for the future through voluntary and other activities.

Dissemination activities: Dissemination of information about the project could be found on the website of the Vytautas Magnus University Department of Education, local newspapers and local TV.

2.2.3. Volunteering experience of Greek and Lithuanian volunteers

The qualitative research was carried out during 2011-2013. The goal of the research was to highlight cultural and social manifestation of volunteering experience.

The informants of the research. Twelve senior volunteers participated in the research. Six Greek senior volunteers and six Lithuanian senior volunteers were selected as the informants. Their age varied from 54 to 70 years. In the reasearch participated nine women and three men. Answers of informants have codes (A, A1, B, B1, C, C1, D, D1, E, E1, F, F1). Of all the informants, ten had higher education, one of them spec.
secondary and one high school education. The content of the responses to the interview was analyzed by employing the qualitative content analysis method.

*The research instrument.* The informants answered to 11 questions. (see annex 1 and 2). The interview was carried out in an individual conversation with the informants.

**RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

In this research the answers of the informants are divided into five categories and several subcategories: Lifelong learning (Participation in training, Training in the field of professional or personal, the concept of Lifelong learning), Voluntary experience (Available experience of voluntary activity, Hoping to gain the experience of voluntary activity), Skills in volunteering (Knowledge, important for voluntary activity, key competence), The benefits of voluntary activity (Personal life, Professional life), Expectation of volunteering (Lithuania and abroad).

Category *Lifelong learning* and three subcategories: Participation in training, Training in the field of professional or personal, and the concept of Lifelong learning. In the research different experiences of volunteers have been highlighted the. Many of the informants educated themselves only vocationally, seeking the development of career or key competences. It is interesting that the informants have not been motivated to participate in lifelong learning activities; their knowledge of LLL is deep.

In the discussion about the conception of LLL the informants were saying that LLL is the possibility of continuous education all life, however its conditions to adjust to changing world, the new technologies, help for spiritual and human development. In other words the LLL is the permanent updating of the key competences.

The informants expressed their different views on how they realize lifelong learning. A Lithuanian senior says:

*This is a development of human personality, a spiritual advancement. It opens many possibilities to get to know and to learn innovation,*
to learn to solve problems, the basis of knowing the world, its people, customs and culture. This is knowledge update (A, E). Permanent development, the old new renewal and new skills acquisition in the professional activity and personal life (B), ...it’s the pursuit of self development, to learn as much as possible something new. There is no one who knows everything about everything because it is impossible. In each phase of life, a human person would like to discover something new by him or with the help of another. So we can learn all our life because the knowledge is never too much (C). The world is constantly changing and the man is a part of the world, so he must grow physically and spiritually too. The development is going through the knowledge (D). ... it is learning to learn constantly, improving knowledge, new skills and competences needed in everyday life (F).

Greek senior volunteers noticed that the man personally and professionally develops while learning all his life. The informants expressing their opinion said:

... when people help each other, then they will improve (A1) ... ... people can learn at whatever age or profession necessity (C1) ... ... I was always learning even when I was here in Lithuania (E1).

The study noted that the seniors from two countries (Greece and Lithuania) lifelong learning understand as help to each other and opportunity to improve regardless of age.

Category Voluntary experience has two subcategories: Available experience of voluntary activity, hoping to gain the experience of voluntary activity. In the discussion about volunteering, the informants actively shared their experiences, mindful of where, how and when they helped to the old people or sick loved ones.

The seniors from Lithuania said:

...already when at school after classes they visited old people, ill class friends and helped them to prepare lesson. I was working in summer camps in various parts of the Institute. As a doctor, I am helping for the old and suffering people a lot. Contributing for charity (clothing, food, books, and medicaments) (A)..., ... I am not in any voluntary organisation but often participate in the Church
activity, take care of old people (B,C)..., ... In study times I was working in Lithuania farms during the summer holiday (D). ... I am participating in various voluntary activity promotions (E).

Some informants are permanent helpers in the activities of the Church for many years, working for the Caritas organization whose activities based on the principle of helping others. One of informant said:

_I am a volunteer in Caritas organisation for many years, so I always have to care and help somebody (F)._ 

The Greek volunteers revealed, that:

_I worked in Emergency Services (C1), ...participating in various voluntary organizations (A1, D1), ... this experience is the first for me (B1, E1, F1), ... for marmalade, oversaw olive helped the disabled and labored at the Botanical garden (D1), ...I have international experience, I have worked with people with disabilities (A1), ...helped handicapped children (F1)._ 

The participants of both Lithuania and Greece participating in the volunteering, hope to gain a good and useful experience:

...discover a new land, its customs and culture (A). You might learn something new. Learn to better communicate with other volunteers (B), ...I will gain and develop communication skills (B, D, F), ... I think only good and useful experience, which is accessible and that convey here in Lithuania living with me generated in collaboration with humans. I hope to learn something new, unexperienced, unusualy. Besides, it is always easier to give than to receive, but the reception is sure to be released. Many thanks to those who give! (C, E, F). ...familiar with the other country’s people, their environment, nature, culture, and national characteristics (D, E), ...to be made available, and which convey here in Lithuania living with them generated in collaboration with people. I hope and will get more personal experience, new skills at national and international level. Improve language skills (B1), ...I will accept new experiences with other people (F1), ...I will gain experience and go on(A1), ...learn new things, new forms of interaction with other people in ways sharing love and support with others (C1). To be able to better understand humanity (D1), ...I want to work with other people (E1).
According to one of the informants:

...it is always better to give than to receive, but the reception should be released. Many thanks for those who give (F).

In summary, the most important is the internal motivation to try to do what elates the other. It can be noted that Lithuania and Greece senior volunteer participation in voluntary activities, the most important is the internal motivation, a special desire to help others, the desire to do what elates the other.

Category the benefits of voluntary activity have two subcategories (Personal life, Professional life).

According to the respondents:

Knowledge is never too much. Everybody heard the expression – it is rather modern (F), ...it seems that a lot of what I know, you might be interested in volunteering to clarify the scope of (A, B), ... how can I help the people I engage in any activity related to elderly care and care to learn self-sacrifice. I would like to learn more about volunteering (B, D). ...how can I help take care of that for what I am instructed to take care of (E), ...team communication and collaboration, and listening to another (B, C, F).

Greece seniors have expressed very similar views on the importance of knowledge and the need for engaging in volunteering. The informants assumed, that:

I have knowledge, however, it is important to be able to communicate and to know a foreign language (D1), ...I have social skills, but communication and cooperation is the key (F1), ...specific volunteering needs specialized knowledge, but help is the most important (B1, C1), ...just patience and cooperation (A1).

All the informants believe that general competence is a key of volunteering, but the Lithuanian informants emphasized the communication and collaboration. They noted that communication is a mutual relationship, cooperation, to develop the activity. For Greek informants language skills are essential to communication with the citizens of other nations. According to them, living in the information
society relevant computer skills are necessary, in helping to develop communication networks, to find relevant information. In spite of the fact that the participating informants are older adults, they want to volunteer and improve the performance of it.

In summary it can be stated that Lithuania and Greece senior volunteers have the knowledge of how to carry out voluntary work, but for them it is important to know a foreign language, which opens up more opportunities to participate in international volunteer programs, as well as the importance of acquiring intercultural communication and cooperation skills, and be able to operate a computer.

Category the benefits of Volunteering distinguishes two sub-categories (Personal benefits and Professional benefits). When there was a question about private usefulness of participation in volunteering the informants were active speakers:

Many of them said that they will share the experience with families, friends and co-workers (G), ...tell to family and loved ones. I will overcome the problems bearing other people’s example. Attempt to prove the need to live with joy, on this day, and do not wait for something good in the future (A, B1, C1 ), ...from this experience I hope to gain more self-confidence, which decreases with age. This would be a positive step in my life (B), ...really like to interact with people (C), ...will use the experience gained in his personal life (D), ...share it with your colleagues and co-workers (E ), ... at first it will help to properly care for the loved ones, and then transform into the material and knowledge to their children (F).

Greek informants were attentive to personal expression of emotional well-being. They said that:

I’ll try to prove that to live with joy, this day, instead of waiting for something good in the future (B1, C1). I try to be the most polite, gentle, more unders-tanding, and I would like to help others to be such (A1, D1), ...tell about volunteering to relatives, friends and co-workers (F1), ...to help take care of family and community members (E1).
Some of the informants believe that the person improves in volunteering professionally, and that means an opportunity to interact and collaborate with a variety of professions, getting to know their identity and share their experiences.

The seniors shared and argued that:

...more patience and take the daily grind, thinking that the other is worse. Remember that life cannot be changed, it is necessary to exchange the same (A), ...hope to improve communication when working with people of different age (B, C), ...meet new people and share their experiences with colleagues. Excel professionally (D, E), ...will provide an opportunity to interact and cooperate with people of another culture, get to know their identity and share their experiences (F).

These answers are very similar to Greek seniors, too. The informants said:

...it will be easy to learn to communicate while working with different age, education and the needs of human beings (A1, B1, D1), ...acquainted with new peers and will share experience with colleagues (F). I will be able to communicate and collaborate with other people of the country, to get acquainted with their culture and share the experience (C1, E1).

There is a tendency that the benefits of volunteering, for Lithuania and Greece senior volunteers (personal and professional experience) were most associated with the interaction and sharing of experiences with loved ones, colleagues and friends.

Category Expectation of volunteering has of two subcategories: Expectation in Lithuania and abroad. Whereas the informants are the participants of the Grundtvig programme, so they are developing the voluntary activities in Lithuania and will develop voluntary activity abroad.

Lithuanian senior volunteering expectations in Lithuania expressed the hope of earnest sharing. The seniors said:

...sometimes people take goodness without trust. Perhaps it is because of what they experienced in childhood as they grew,
in communicating with friends and acquaintances. Their own limited thinking and unwillingness sometimes is the enemy to improve (A). I sincerely hope that it will be able to hear others and feel useful as well (B, F). ...the volunteering will enhance confidence, promote rational use of various issues or caused problems, and I think that it will be something to learn and improve skills (E, D). I would the mutual understanding between the people, thought-provoking (spiritually) would not only give to others, but gets back. I hope that Lithuania will be our spiritual, benevolent and voluntary country, if not now, then tomorrow (C).

A lot of hopes and new experiences Lithuanian senior volunteers foster away to another country. They say:

* I hope that communication with foreigners is easier, people are more confident and want to help to each other. I will learn from them and gain experience (A, B, D). ...will find new Minded (E), ...I want to know- as much as possible about organized volunteering, how it is performed and what the measures are used for that (F).

Similarly, Greek seniors think about volunteering in their country:

* I hope that physical work will help others; I hope to meet new people, to help the most needed, to share the experiences (A1, B1, C1, D1, E1 F1).

Informants’ expectations show that they have a strong motivation of participation in volunteering. They were in high interest to develop volunteering abroad. Greek seniors believe:

* Volunteering will give confidence and possibility to communicate and will improve themselves (A1, B1, E1). I hope to know a different culture, the people and their customs, to learn at least a few words to say in another language and to share experiences (C1, D1, E1, F1).

The informants expressed the hope to find new friends and get to know another culture and tradition, and to compare the similarities and differences with volunteering in Lithuania. There is a tendency that the Lithuanian and Greek seniors hoping to interact and collaborate with
others, and those who need help, get to know another culture, customs and traditions, learn the language, to gain volunteering experience and to share their personal experiences.

Having compared the Lithuanian and Greek volunteer results, it should be noted that the Greek perceived lifelong learning as helping each other and a possibility to learn at various ages is more vivid than in Lithuanians. The senior Greeks noted that throughout their development humans improved both personally and professionally by learning continuously; the Lithuanian and Greek senior volunteers noticed that the most important factors in volunteering were inner motivation, extraordinary wish to help others and doing things that make others happy; Lithuanian and Greek senior volunteers claimed that they have the knowledge how to do volunteering jobs; however, it is important for them to master foreign language and computer skills; the volunteering benefits for the informants of both countries in terms of personal and professional experience are firstly associated with communicating and sharing with their close relatives, colleagues and friends; when participating in volunteering the senior volunteers hope to communicate and cooperate with other people, get to know other cultures, share their experience and listen to others. The idea of lifelong learning reveals that people are innately different. Differences are those things which could be improved, as intellect, talent, emotional sensitivity, psychological insight. For a grown man to build their own successful life it is recommended to be an active participant in professional and personal activities. One of the most important documents in setting a guide for European lifelong is the European Commission Communication on Adult Learning: It is never too late to learn. This paper highlights the growing role of adult learning and its impact on their personal development and fulfillment.

In this study, we aimed to provide one of the Grundtvig project involved volunteers – senior opinion about volunteering. Interview method was used to reveal the details of the informants views on volunteering at a later life.
2.2.4. Reflection on voluntary activities by Greek and Lithuanian volunteers using portfolio method

2.2.4.1. Reflection on voluntary activities by Greek volunteers. Qualitative content analysis of diaries of Greek seniors in Lithuania

The assessment of the achievement of the project objectives and the quality of implementation was performed by quantitative and qualitative methods: the progress showed portfolio: diaries of volunteers, reflections of volunteers, individual evaluation forms of volunteers. The monitoring and evaluation showed very good results. Specifically, the volunteers had a very positive experience from both the activities themselves, and from communicating with each other and with members of the working groups. It was also very positive cooperation between them and developed constructive relations between them to be continued and cultivated after the end of the project.

COMMUNICATION THROUGH SOCIALIZING

Each kind of activity requires participation, communication, involvement and sharing with others. Every person understands communication differently: some can communicate in silence, others need conversing and discussions, some communicate by solving problems. In communication people are interactive by talking, listening, exchanging opinions and emotions. It is noticed that people who have difficulties in communication are unable to listen and hear. If there is no interrelation (I speak – you listen or you speak – I hear), there is no communication. In spite of good communication skills, people still have problems in communicating with people of different culture and languages. They feel happy having the opportunity to know each other, experience friendship, get into social contacts. Here are the ideas of Greek volunteers:

*I felt happy to have new friends in another country. I have friends in Lithuania (Volunteer A.).*
Once we, Greeks, started singing together and felt great unity (Volunteer J.).

We visited a young couple that we had met at the War museum. She is an artist, he is an architect. They own a house with a garden, and their hospitality was awesome. I am so happy to have friends in Lithuania. This trip is a surprise every day (Volunteer K.).

This trip to Kaunas offered us a lot of surprises, but the main was that Lithuanian people are so warm-hearted! (Volunteer F.).

The diary analysis showed how volunteering experience helped to deepen the sense of communication. The informants stated:

…intercommunion and communication with Lithuanians gave us the possibility to know and understand better ourselves. In comparing with others, we make conclusions about ourselves, our skills, values, temperaments. While communicating, we can share our ideas and emotions, reveal our personality to others, make influence on others (Volunteer S.).

To sum up, we can say that communication helps a person to enjoy life. People share information and thus know what is going on here and now. It helps in getting necessary information for everyday life. We can share our ideas and emotions, express our individuality to others and make influence on them. So we can state that successful communication helps to reach our goals. But some methods of behaviour using short-situational communication cannot be approved.

**EXPERIENCE IN VOLUNTEERING**

Gaining experience happens through all our life. It may be conceived and used. Thus we see human differences because some people prefer thinking, others not. But each person’s experience is unique and equally important. The volunteers were sincere in expressing their opinions:

I am happy at this moment at my volunteering in Kaunas. …painting at the Botanical garden is what I enjoy most (Volunteer A.).

The time passed so quickly, and it was very interesting experience to work in different group of disabled people. I liked the decoupage
Disabled people are so emotional and sincere (Volunteer K.).

All of us like little children pass by a box tree and come to the silver bush with little yellow blossoms that can heal. Smiling and jumping, we enthusiastically try to form it by the scissors. (Volunteer K.).

I love working with herbs. It is like a redolent meditation (Volunteer K.).

The ideas expressed by the volunteers show how important it is to be involved into some activity. Evidently, some skills are important in volunteering. The volunteers differed in mastering the elements of volunteering but they tried to understand interpersonal relations in groups.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

The volunteers were sincere in speaking about active involvement in cultural events:

I enjoyed dancing as I always love it. Dancing Sirtaki was a great pleasure for the disabled people. It was a great time! (Volunteer J.).

Relaxing after work in nature cleans my mind. With the years I understand how nature helps to avoid negative thoughts and feel relaxed (Volunteer J.).

They expressed their admiration in the beauty of our country:

Kaunas is a dream city. So much beauty! I could stay here for a longer time, to paint all this beauty around into thousands of pictures (Volunteer A.).

The evening at Kaunas Castle was wonderful. The concert was so different from Greek. I especially enjoyed the place itself, wonderful panorama (Volunteer A.).

We admired the city architecture. At the end of the day there was a surprise. In the morning we liked one statue. In the evening, the shadow of the statue showed to the stars. That was awesome (Volunteer K.).

Volunteers demonstrated their motivation to know and experience different way of life in Lithuania.
2.2.4.2. Reflection on voluntary activities by Lithuanian volunteers. Qualitative content analysis of diaries of Lithuanian seniors in Greece

COMMUNICATION IN CREATING SOCIAL RELATIONS

Human communication is not very different from other forms of relationship among living creatures. Social ties often determine our ability to get into contact with each other. Diaries of the volunteers showed how important was their new and rich experience.

...performance of trio with different variations. There was a great surprise to hear that (Volunteer A.).

It was so nice to meet the seniors from Greece who were in Lithuania. We exchanged warm greetings. They wondered about our impressions in Greece, the differences we noticed in comparing two countries (Volunteer J.).

In the afternoon there was a meeting with Greeks on the Lavrentia mountain. The meeting was very warm. We talk different experiences of volunteers a lot, then went to listen to the musical programme. The specific music “hel”...In the evening we went to Lavrentia village to meet Greek seniors who worked in Lithuania in July. The meeting was very friendly and sincere. We got acquainted, talked and went to listen to the string quintet. The music was wonderful! Then followed us to visualize mountains with all their sounds. That was unforgettable! (Volunteer N).

We met the Greek seniors. That was the last meeting, a farewell to this country (Volunteer V.).

We experienced great emotions, making friends and decided to keep in touch in future (Volunteer Z.).

In the afternoon, we keep contacts with our family members by computer. We help each other to master new skills on managing computer (Volunteer V.).

From the reflections of the volunteers it became clear that sharing their emotions and experience among themselves and with their family members’ strengthened their personalities.
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

The volunteers were very enthusiastic in their activities. They were very interested in Greek religious culture. On Sundays they took part in the Liturgy. They wrote:

*In the morning we were taken to the Catholic Church in Volos city to participate in the Holy Mass. We prayed, lit candles in the church (Volunteer V).*.

*Inside the Church, we saw people of different nationalities and experienced unity in prayer and faith (Volunteer Z).*.

*In the Church we felt at home. Though the liturgy was in Greek, but everything was very familiar. He was very kind-hearted priest (Volunteer L).*.

*In the evening we got to the mountains and visited a very old monastery. There was a ceremony there. Women are allowed to enter fully dressed. It was very impressive building with lots of candles and icons (Volunteer N).*.

*In the evening we went up some 300 metres to the mountains where we visited the first monastery of the place. It is surrounded by a small cemetery with the monuments of white marble. There are 10 nuns living in the monastery. Because of the lack of land, flowers are grown in big pots standing on the stone ground (Volunteer A).*.

We noticed the same faces in the church. The community is very small, so they know each other very well. During Mass we wished sincerely peace to people of different nationalities. We felt like a united family, smiling at each other. After the Mass, people communicate, nobody hurries home (Volunteer Z).

*In the church we watched the ceremony of Baptism. A Polish boy was baptized. There was sincere communication among the parishioners (Volunteer V).*.

We again were taken to Mass. After the Mass we were invited to a priest’s house for a cup of coffe. We communicated with the parish priest (Volunteer A).

*After the Mass we were invited to a community room for a cup of coffe and to meet community people. We took a photo with a priest who appeared to French (Volunteer Z).*.
On Sunday we were again at Volos Catholic Church, met the parish community, took photos with the parish priest and the sisters who came from France (Volunteer N.).

We participated in the vigil of Assumption. It was very important feast in Greece. People celebrate it very solemnly. Crowds of people gather to the village. They take part in the liturgy of the Orthodox Church (Volunteer Z.).

We were so blessed to have a possibility to know, to see and feel (Volunteer V).

A great possibility to know the members of our group with all our differences and individuality but being as a team (Volunteer V.).

We became friends with a roommate Violeta. Our wonderful team! We created like family relations (Volunteer Z.).

To sum up all their opinions about active participation, it is worth noticing that their experience was very diverse.

**INTERCULTURAL INTEGRATION**

Our modern world is famous for the diversity of societies and communities. Different national and ethnic groups live together in close and friendly contacts. Successful intercultural integration is based on interrelations. Analyzing their experience, Lithuanian volunteers stressed the unique possibility to know people of different cultures, get into contact with each other, to fight stereotypes and find the most successful forms of communication and collaboration. Here are their opinions:

It was very interesting to visit a Greek family. At first we were shown their garden and vegetables. They grow olives, plumes, oranges, different herbs, grapes, aubergine, paprika, tomatoes and etc. A tortoise lives in the garden and some friendly cats. We spent a long time at the table listening to Spyros story about the origin of mountain names related to the Greek mythology and living on the mountains. We had a warm conversation. Spyros told a lot about the history of the town and living on the mountains (Volunteer Z.).

An interesting visit listening to Spyros’ stories about the history of Volos city, local names and how they are related to Greek mythology (Volunteer N.).
We were introduced to a very kind Spyros’ wife, visited their olive garden, we tried different national dishes with olive oil (Volunteer L.).

From the reflections of the volunteers, the similarities and differences among different cultures appeared. So it is important to be respectful to other unfamiliar cultures and especially to acknowledge cultural differences without making comparisons and seeking for similarities.

The volunteers described their new experiences. It is very impressive to notice that they were very attentive even to the smallest items of flora and fauna. They admired:

In the morning we were awakened by the singing of birds. In the balcony we saw a wonderful view of mountains with small white houses around them (Volunteer N.).

We were at the university, a branch of it. A nice modern building, flowers around it. We enjoy the beauty of mountains, the flora, scars and mountain villages. All the streets, paths, buildings are of stone (Volunteer R.).

We were moving to another mountain with another church, monastery, with a lot of small cafes. There was very green place with fruit trees and bushes. Houses are built of local stone, surrounded by stone fences and mortars. We could observe the more water, the more vegetation and fruit with very little land. A great impression! (Volunteer R.).

The air smells so many odours, the silence reigns (Volunteer N.).

This time we climbed to another mountain. We were impressed by its height and how people managed to settle on it, by the architecture and flora. Going down, we admired the beauty of night lights, spreading on the Aegean Sea and the Agria town (Volunteer Z.).

After breakfast, we went on trip to visit Volos city. It is situated along the bay, and it is comparatively young city. Archeologists’ excavations proved to be another old city below this city (Volunteer R.).

Magnificent trees with their trunks! We dined under a large plane tree which counts about a thousand years (Volunteer N.).
We saw new and interesting plants for us, watched the way people live (Volunteer V.).

We found a eucalyptus tree, took its leaves for making medicine and taking home. My roommate Violeta and I decided to visit our district. We enjoyed the hotels, cosy open air cafes, with many people sitting at the seashore. We were walking along the seashore and admired the nature (Volunteer Z.).

We were impressed by the view of mountains through the window and singing of birds (Volunteer N.).

We were impressed by chestnut trees, magnolias, fig trees and other vegetation (Volunteer Z.).

Wonderful palm trees, agaves, oranges growing just on the street. A lot of gardens with apple trees pears, plume, the grapes. A lot of green chestnut trees full of fruit. The driving was very impressive watching high mountains with olive woods. Mountain villages are very nice with traditional fortress – like architecture with lots of flowers and fruit. The view of the Aegean sea was wonderful with green-blue water and lots of white marble pebbles on the seashore. On the mountains there are a lot of herbs growing. The odour of oregano is very strong, different from usual. Impressive trees with their large trunks (Volunteer J.).

Impressive view from the mountains to the sea with a lot of beaches. The sun, the wind and small white marble pebbles on the seashore. There is no beach sand in our Palanga (Volunteer A.).

We are at the sea with clear water and marble pebbles on the beach. We swam, laughed, and played like little children. I will never forget that joy (Volunteer Z.).

We were looking at the chestnut wood with private areas but cutting trees is not allowed because it is under protection (Volunteer L.).

Until the evening we were free to do what we liked. We decided to see the town finding new paths to the sea. We enjoyed the sea, walked around the town. Swimming, reading, surfing the internet (Volunteer L.).
Positive thoughts based on their new impressions were the source of information about their participation. The volunteers’ different experience showed their strong motivation to participate in volunteering.

**EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEERING**

The volunteers coherently described in their portfolio the activities they had been performing. A lot of attention was alloted to the discussions about the way they were going to get involved into the preparation for the musical festival. Their mentor was attentive even to the smallest details. According to the volunteers, they always discussed their agenda:

*Our mentor came and we discussed the timetable. In the evening we were driving along the seashore and then climbed the mountain (Volunteer R.).*

*We were getting ready for the work. That was the area of the festival. We heard the story of this interesting event. It is a mixture of folk and classical music when musicians from all over the world play improvisions. It lasts for two weeks. We will have to help in preparing the signs-directions for the festival (Volunteer L.).*

*We went to another village with more green vegetation, picked up herbs (Volunteer V.).*

*We went to the mountains, discussed our programme with Spyros, looked at the maps on computer, walked the paths of the festival (Volunteer Z.).*

*Yesterday we were also at the mountain village. We were shown the ready signs and how to use them. Discussed the map we will have to create and the pebbles to collect at the seashore to serve as the signs (Volunteer V.).*

*We picked up eucalyptus leaves as a remedy for winter colds (Volunteer V.).*

*Watched wonderful scenery, looked for oregano, saw the plats Orthodox used for burning lights in olive lamps opposite icons (Volunteer L.).*

*Yesterday we went to the mountain village. We were shown the ready signs and how to use them. Discussed the map we will have*
to create and the pebbles to collect at the seashore to serve as the signs (Volunteer V.).

We picked up eucalyptus leaves as a remedy for winter colds (Volunteer V.).

Watched wonderful scenery, looked for oregano, saw the plats Orthodox used for burning lights in olive lamps opposite icons (Volunteer L.).

There was a song from afar, so nice and melodious. I felt like in a fairy tale (Volunteer Z.).

After sitting at the plane tree, communication, we went by a stone path to the concert. It was a duet – guitar and saxophone, playing jazz. After the concert we got back, singing Lithuanian songs (Volunteer Z.).

There was a jazz concert and a documentary about the last year festival. I enjoyed it (Volunteer N.).

In the evening at Lavrentia village improvisation concerts began. The first concert “Baby’s tears” for the guitar and voice. But it was changed into guitar and saxophone. Then followed the film about the last year festival. We enjoyed the singing of an Italian singer (Volunteer A.).

Watched different performances. A group of youngsters, puppet theatre, listened to the opera (Volunteer J.).

The opera “Aphrodite and Adonis”. Students’ orchestra, students’ choir, only the main heroes were professional singers (Volunteer A.).

Watched improvisational antique theatre. Colourful costumes, make up, later watched opera in the open air (Volunteer N.).

In the evening walking along the seashore, we listened to the live concert of the reed with a Greek singer singing Teodorakis songs. It ended in sirtaki melody (Volunteer Z.).

Watched Japanese dances in Greek interpretation. Interesting discussions, a small fair of handicraft with national motifs (Volunteer N.).

A long talk in the café, listening to the story of the festival that has been organized for 6 years. Spyros described that very vividly (Volunteer J.).
Later we went to another café and were introduced to the menu of it. We tried different national dishes. We liked that very much, and Spyros described what they consisted of (Volunteer Z.).

The trip from St. John’s village impressed by wonderful views and beehives along the road. Met the beekeeper who sells honey, herbs and spices. Returned with lots of impressions (Volunteer L.).

The portfolio of the volunteers showed the information that was important, interesting and useful to them and sometimes rather difficult and sad in their mission. Each of them understood the value of the experience they had gained. The analysis of the results proved volunteering to be not only the way of self-realization but in being together they gained new experience and self-knowledge.

2.2.4.3. Reflective memories of Lithuanian volunteers

About voluntary activities in Greece senior volunteers from Lithuania imparted by writing diaries, reflections-memories and individual evaluation forms.

Volunteers had a task to register their experience and emotions writing diaries where they had the opportunity to express their opinions and evaluations. It helped to see their points of view, the way they look at a different culture, way of life, nature, personal communication. It was a source for making conclusions about the effects of volunteering and its impact on a person’s life, how it can encourage personal changes in choosing new activities, gaining different skills and making new friends. Here are some of their impressions:

Compared with the time, when I was a school girl, in the fourth grade, I learned more about Greece. All the time I was dreaming to see this wonderful country. What could be better after reaching the age of mine to have the opportunity to travel to Greece, the country of my dreams?

Since the first days of preparation for our volunteering, the warm relations have dominated in the classes between group members and project managers; that kindness prompted us to prepare for activities more thoroughly. The process of learning English and
the other preparation work went smoothly, as all volunteers, regardless of age, background or interests had the main aim, as if melted into one completeness. In such atmosphere, all decisions and recommendations were based on kindness, to achieve the best result because volunteering is based on the common strong mood to participate in volunteering, seeking the best result altogether, in one direction.

As soon as the plane landed in Athens, forgetting about a long trip, all the members of the group were ready to give all their energy to the voluntary activities. We had one aim – to be volunteers. It can be concluded as the feeling of overall aim of joining, being one command in this process of volunteering.

Already in the presence of the other country than your native, we felt many changes: different living conditions, new activities in a new small community, – everything caused changes. You must be a member of a small group, to complement others, to be ready to help in every situation. It is difficult to be a volunteer. Not all people, e.g., selfish and lazy people can be successful in such situation; it is unacceptable work for everybody. If not accept the other person as a neighbour, you cannot help him, sometimes the presence of such a member of the group will not allow it to perform voluntary functions.

But our six volunteers managed to be together, to work together.

Our main activity was to help Greeks to prepare for the music festival, which took place in a village on the mountains, for some weeks. A nice idea to make a sign, – a map to help participants of the Music festival and the audience quickly find the right place, we liked this idea very much, too. For that we used only natural substances that we found near the sea. White stones, the waves have made glue these stones; we put them like tracks on a black ground, showing the clear direction to the place of the festival. We worked hard, and the road signs appear – arrows that needed to be updated. In the concert participated artists from different countries, played a variety of musical genres. We were able to attend concerts, too, so it was a completely new experience with so different emotions. We could hear the music on the high mountains, with exceptional beauty and accompany to the song of birds, we were surrounded by spectacular views and wonderful smells, and we will never forget that.
Living in a hotel, we had access to the Greek national kitchen and everyday culture, their life. The housewife exhibited a variety of antiques, clothing, and furniture. We had the possibility to see and to taste the Greek traditional food. Everybody learned some Greek words. We liked watching people, their relationships, and flora in Greece. We had to work hard with the diaries, activity map, but these reflections are from our hearts. I walked around with the camera and recorded these wonderful moments. The architectural elements, the gates, every household had its own gate; they were completely different, if compared with each other. Special architecture of the shutters which protect against heat, people open them only in the evening, when the weather is not so hot.

I admired communication of several generations living in one big family. People do not hurry; they are slow, quiet, like sitting outside near their houses. Children respect their parents.

It should be mentioned that we were attracted by a variety of flowers and their wonderful smell. The flowers we are growing on the windowsills, were luxuriant outside. Local people get vegetable crops twice, which are very tasty, because of growing in the sun. Because of hot weather and the lack of water in the evenings everybody is watering their yard terraces, even in the streets near the houses to protect the plants from the heat. Volunteering, working together gave us new experience, but beautiful nature left for us an indelible impression, too. Some wine salesman learned that we are from Lithuania, so he listed the names of the basketball team players, so we understand that we all live in the same planet. During this time volunteering activities helped us to communicate, cooperate, integrate, got different experience and warm impressions. We would like to say to everybody that this is the greatest opportunity to make one active, to realize oneself and to integrate into full life even being a senior (Volunteer V.).

Preparation for voluntary activities in Greece at home. Studying English before leaving to Greece. The volunteers gave such an account:

The August of 2012 was blessed by spending it in Greece joining the Grundvig project for senior volunteers at Vytautas Magnus university together with Thessaly University.
We were six people who arrived at Volos city, about 400 km from Athens. First of all, we were impressed by a very exciting landscape of the country and unusually hot weather for us. It was very interesting to watch the Greek way of life. Because of the climate, they never hurry, enjoy themselves in every moment of life, and are very friendly and communicative. The only problem we had was that we didn’t know Greek and could not get into closer contacts with their people. Still they showed much hospitality and tolerance to us.

As volunteers, we had to assist at the musical festival and create a map for advertising the festival and creating closer contacts with both countries – Lithuania and Greece. Living at the seashore, we had the opportunity to swim every day and watch the way the Greeks have their rest. At midday nobody is at the sea because of the heat. In the evening we were driven up the mountain to watch the festival, take photos for our map and enjoy the evening views.

We were impressed by a very different nature we have in our country. The flora was so exciting that we stopped at nearly each tree or bush and wonder what it could be. The water of the sea was so clear that we could see every pebble at the bottom. The only problem was to avoid sea urchins not to put feet on their thorns. So we had the opportunity to learn a lot of new things. That was the main idea of our volunteering. New country, new people with their different way of life and different appearance, unusual landscape and new activities encouraged our interest in life and activated us to learn more and more and invite other people to join similar activities (Volunteer L.).

Preparation for voluntary activities in Kaunas. Studying spoken English. The volunteers described their practice of English and their achievements:

Before leaving to Greece, the volunteers for three months were studying the English language. The classes were held once a week. The volunteers had to do homework and classwork: writing exercises, listening, dialogue training. During the face to face lectures the volunteer had to introduce themselves, to tell about the country, about available preferences, the ability to volunteer, to help others and share different experiences about the
activities. Participation in voluntary activities: on the mountains, making the signs and directions, using white stones in the Musical festival; preparing the seats for participants in the Musical Village, enjoying and gathering medical plants in the mountains, writing diaries, filling in the questionnaires, making the activity map. After returning back to Lithuania, meeting people, telling them about the best volunteering practice and learning experience in my life (Volunteer N.).

Writing diary was one of the activities, learning experience as well. Participating in voluntary activities in Greece, together with other volunteers gave the possibility to communicate with different groups of people, as well as with the Greek volunteers. Facing different situations, participating in various activities, managing different tasks: activities on the mountains with plants, in the Musical festival, preparing activity map and other. Integration into foreign country’s everyday life and activities, feeling the specific atmosphere of the foreign culture. It was a great challenge full of experience and valuable memories. Meetings, dissemination after the return to Lithuania with the help of the mentor (Volunteer R.).

Preparation for voluntary activities in Greece. The volunteers shared their new impressions about their meeting different culture and people:

Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Project invited me and helped to get to know other cultures and people and at the same time to cooperate with people. I am a person who is very keen to interact with people to help them, so these details motivated me to join this project. The volunteering activities started getting acquainted with this Grundtvig project, as well as its importance and benefits. Project Manager organized a great selection of workshops that began to explore Greece, a country we cooperate with. The seminars were held in Kaunas at Vytautas Magnus University. The senior group of volunteers with six different backgrounds and specialties met. The meetings helped to explore Greek culture, customs, landscape, it was so useful for learning English, some words in the Greek language, too. It was the possibility to learn in different ways: verbally and watching video, practicing as well. In the meeting we gave the ideas what we would like to do in this project, how we can be helpful with our knowledge and abilities, and what experience we would like to gain, especially meeting each other, Lithuanian and Greek people...
Our excellent teachers gave us different tests, tasks that helped us to learn many things, language as well. My first acquaintance with the Greek volunteers began in Lithuania in my home town Taurage. For the first time they came to our country, they wanted to know many things about Lithuania, as we, of course ourselves wanted to get knowledge about their country, as well as voluntary activities. I am a specialist in Taurage historical museum; I participated in creating and collecting materials, working with the exposure in the museum of deportees. So we invited the Greek volunteers to visit our museum, to understand the place of misery, where the museum was founded.

Greek and Lithuanian volunteers were interested in my story about the painful Lithuanian historical past, the days, when there have been killed many intelligent and talented Lithuanian people. There was interesting discussion that touched Greek and Lithuanian past. We watched many historic photographs, historical books of memories. I think that Greeks had very valuable touch to our past. Even the real participant of these events told us interesting historical facts and details about that time.

In Taurage rehabilitation centre, one more place, that the Greek volunteers visited, was organized an educational seminar, together with us there were mentoring people, too. The guests, six Greek volunteers told about Greece very imaginatively, starting from the earliest antiquity to nowadays. After the lesson of history they taught us to dance Greek dances, and they also were interested in our folk dances. I should tell about nice impression of the foreign country Greece, too. I had very realistic touch to all this. So when we arrived to Greece, we were greeted by very warm weather and for our eyes different nature and magnificent mountains. It was the suburb of Athens. The nature was changing, travelling by bus to the city Volos, where we lived.

While driving, the eyes saw every scene in the nature, – it looked impressive: architecture, nature, the sea and the local people. The manager who met us in Greece and was together with us all the travel time, told us and introduced us into a full Greek life. It was very interesting to live and to be involved, better learning the culture, customs, on history of Greek nation. We got a wide range of experience that will stay long in our memories.

Volunteering is not just assisting to somebody, but also a huge spiritual enrichment for us. That’s why I am very grateful to the
project, and its leaders that I had the opportunity to get all these values, and also to give my knowledge and to reveal myself, empowering in the activities, that I liked so much” (Volunteer Z.).

2012 has been a very special year. After nearly a year of preparation for volunteering in Lithuania with the help of our Lithuanian mentor, we have spent the entire month of August in Greece, Volos. Hot Greek sun greeted us just after landing at the airport. The sun and nice olive plantation guarded us throughout the journey. And there was no time for thinking about our home and the family members we have left there. All the month we participated in the volunteering program, full of impressions. We have learnt the history and culture of the surrounding area, that we visited the decorative churches and traditional monasteries. We had the possibility to communicate with Greeks, learned some Greek words, we felt the care of the Greek mentor. We carried out voluntary work, different activities, helping to prepare for music festival weeks. The whole month has passed like one day. But the most wonderful memories remained with us. Warm, helpful and smiling volunteering in Greece (Volunteer J.).

After the analysis of the volunteers’ reflection, it became clear how enriched they felt socially, culturally, personally, getting new skills, competences, self-knowledge.

2.2.4.4. The “MAP” of Lithuanian senior volunteers’ activities in Greece

The senior informants experienced the world holistically. A person usually uses both hemispheres of the brain in the creative process. The right hemisphere usually deals with imagination, conceiving colours, sounds, visual proportions and space. The left hemisphere deals with logical decisions, numbers, words, notions, details and gives analysis (Tereseviciene ir kt, 2004). So for the formation and classification of the ideas, the volunteers analyzed their experience, trying to conceive the very mechanism and got involved into the learning process. Projecting the scenario of the activities, they created reflexive activity map in the full context (see figure 6).
Figure 6. Reflective activity map

The map is a visual product, showing the ties between parts of information, helping to create a system and arrange everyone’s thoughts. The map was created step by step, using computer technologies with the title “Volunteering activities”. Using imagination, different ideas and symbols, they created the full view.

While creating the map, the seniors shared:

*In the evening at the mentor’s room we discussed the collected materials, had discussions (Volunteer J.).*

*Made photos of pants and buildings, put the photos on computer and create a map of our impressions (Volunteer L.).*

*The mentor creates the map, and we divide the materials. We have a lot of photos because everything was so interesting (Volunteer J.).*

*We are discussing the map, adding new photos (Volunteer V.).*

Lithuanian volunteers in Greece felt like meditating Faust’s words about the stopped blink wishing it would never end. They experienced constant surprise looking around the magnificent views, watching wonderful colours, smelling various flavours, meeting the smiles of friendly people.

FLORA AND FAUNA. Greece is famous for the beauty of nature and vegetation. There were wonderful plants and blooming flowers.
Hot climate has influence on the Greek’s mood. They said:

*The flora of Greece is wonderful! There are so many flourishing plants, trees, bushes and flowers (Volunteer V.).*

*All the plants are very different from those in Lithuania. The flavours of the blossoms are very strong (Volunteer L.).*

*The air is full of various odours (Volunteer J.).*

**FOOD (National dishes).** As most of the southern countries, they have different food. Lithuanian seniors liked it. It is affected by a hot climate.

*We liked Greek food very much. It is very delicious with a lot of fresh vegetables and fruit (Volunteer J.).*

*We tasted different national dishes and enjoyed them very much. The food is very light, not fat, and very suitable for the hot climate (Volunteer L.).*

*But sometimes we missed our traditional Lithuanian dishes (Volunteer V.).*

**ARCHITECTURE.** They got acquainted with Greek architecture, historical buildings, living houses, monasteries. They noticed a very specific style of the architecture. They spoke:

*We were impressed by a very specific architecture of Greek buildings, especially on the Pelion mountain. The materials for construction were used from the local rocks and built in a very unique way. Some buildings look like fortresses that were common in ancient times. The narrow roads are also built using local stones similar to marble (Volunteer R.).*

**INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES.** They got acquainted with folk traditions, christening customs, religious celebrations and festivals, people’s appearance. They described local people like this:

*Greek people show respect to their national customs and follow ancient traditions. They love meeting together, talking, discussing (Volunteer L.).*

*They are quite religious people following and attending Greek Orthodox Church, christening their children and celebrating weddings (Volunteer V.).*
HISTORY. The historical part of the map is rather wide. They had a lot of excursions, visited some museums. During the period they had several trips. Every Sunday they visited Catholic Mass. They described their impressions in such a way:

We travelled around the big Pelion mountain watching gorgeous views, walking along an old narrow railway, visiting an old church with impressive paintings on the walls depicting a person’s whole life with the views of paradise and hell (Volunteer Z.).

We stopped at St John’s village and were very happy to swim in the waves of the Aegean Sea and collected nice white pebbles on the sea shore (Volunteer V.).

On Sundays and the Feast of Assumption we had a privilege to take part in the liturgy of the Catholic Church. Though the liturgy was in Greek but everything was familiar to us. We took part in the liturgy of Baptism even twice. The priest is very nice, creating a very friendly atmosphere of the community. We were invited for a cup of coffee after the ceremony and took photos with the priest (Volunteer J.).

MEETINGS. They visited one the Thessaly university buildings to sign our documents. The other buildings are scattered all over the city. Also they were impressed by the visit to the mentor’s house. They shared:

Our mentor invited us to his place. We liked his ecological garden, olive tree garden, grapevine bower, a big bush of rosemary next to the house. A nice turtle came to greet us and a white cat showed she is the master of the house. Maria, a very sincere mentor’s wife, invited us for dinner with traditional Greek dishes (Volunteer V.).

LEISURE TIME. The volunteers described the way they spent their leisure time. They were writing a diary, swimming in the sea, reading books, making discussions. It is clear from the map that besides volunteering they had a good free time. They spoke:

We had a wonderful possibilitiy to have a good rest swimming in the sea, sunbathing, visiting museums, walking around the place, meeting friendly people, listening to festival music on the Lavrentia Mountain (Volunteer L.).
The seniors expressed many ideas about volunteering activities:

*Participating in voluntary activities we had a possibility to communicate with different groups of people, as well as with the volunteers. We were empowered facing with different situations, participating in various activities, to manage with the tasks. Integration into Greece everyday life and activities, feeling the specific of the foreign culture, was a great challenge full of experience and valuable memories (Volunteer J.).*

The reflexive map showed that seniors used every day very creatively in Greece. They gained experience and got involved into the activities. Creating the map, they used active thinking, remembering and felt close to each other.

Summing up the volunteering activities of both Lithuanian and Greek volunteers, it should be said that volunteers took part in volunteering by their own will, all of them agreed about very useful experience they gained and understood that volunteering is one of the ways to solve different social problems. They also experienced how respect for the rights of other people, their dignity and culture help to feel common parity

### 2.3. Evaluation of volunteering experience

A person participating in volunteering seeks to improve and gain experience. In changing society seeking to qualitatively perform any activity particularly relevance becomes the competencies. A person is also able to adapt to the new environment and to successfully participate in lifelong learning. Participation in voluntary activity increases volunteer self-esteem (one of the most satisfactory upper A. Maslow pyramid needs – to respect).

Informal, respect based communication, freer expression of opinion, emotions, the possibility to become a responsible, active member of the society – these features of voluntary activity also demonstrate that voluntary activities are satisfied by A. Maslow identified the higher human
needs: security, social needs, respect, freedom of expression (Plužek, 1996).

Results of the research in the needs for adults to take part in volunteering have revealed that the majority of the respondents have an expressed will to be involved into volunteering and work with young people and children. More than half of the respondents acknowledge the need of volunteering. The majority of the respondents would choose to work in charities, public institutions, religious communities, associations and centers and hope they would acquire new competences in volunteering. According to the respondents, volunteering gives elderly people a possibility to socialize and take active part in social life.


Results of the qualitative research in expert opinions ground the use of volunteering. According to experts, volunteering might be developed by institutions affecting political decisions, non-governmental institutions, public and business enterprises. Importance of volunteering may be promoted by people of influence, kindergardens, schools, the Church, local authorities and mass media. Experts also highlight possible ways of recognition of volunteer competences including worldwide acknowledged certificates, participation in international programs and cooperation with international volunteer organizations. Results of the content analysis reveal that improvement of volunteering activities depends on availability of quality training courses. Rendering power to volunteer organizations
gives them a possibility to take part in the formation of volunteering policies and affect decisions of local authorities. The focus on the benefits of volunteering, public interest, funding of NGO’s, involvement of volunteers into discussions and participation of public institutions in volunteering activities are typical measures to encourage volunteering. The content analysis allows highlighting the importance of professional competences in volunteering. A profession that volunteer has may help to become a good specialist in volunteering and is an important criterion in the appointment of mission to the volunteer. Professional skills manifest in volunteering via the nature of volunteering activities. Results of the content analysis lead to a conclusion that volunteering activities may be classified as to the corresponding professions and may be one of the criteria in the choice of volunteers for individual activities.

According to Ražanauskaitė and Kanišauskaitė (2008), volunteers implement necessary principles for human development such as productivity, equality, citizenship, continuity. Volunteering is one of the ways in which different nationalities, religions, socio-economic backgrounds and ages can contribute to positive change.

Jordan, Ochman (1998) defines volunteering as an opportunity for everyone, regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion, political belief, age and health, use your skills and experience, learn new skills, make friends, get involved in the work and change the social life.

Contemporary society faces a range of social, economic and political transformations. With the growth of population the number of individuals who need social support augments. Volunteering brings out the first social problems and address issues related to the individuals’ needs (Ellis, 1985; Noyes, 2005).

According to the European Economic and Social Committee, the motivation which underlies voluntary activity, that is the desire to make a contribution on one’s own initiative to the common good and to help shape society, promotes values such as altruism and solidarity and thus forms a counterweight to increasingly widespread isolation and egoism in modern societies.
NGO task is to motivate volunteers to voluntary activity that this activity is not boring for them, but stimulates them to stay longer in the organization and work for it. On the basis of one of the most famous staff motivation theories to Frederick Herzberg’s two factor theory of motivation, satisfaction of the work affects the factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Satisfaction factors directly affect the feeling of satisfaction for the work. The interest for volunteering is shown in various non-governmental organizations. According to Leliūgienė, non-governmental organization without government is a self-created and working institution acting in accordance with the law. Its main features are following: voluntarism, no public grants and subsidies; active participation in solving problems of the State (Leliūgienė, 1997).

Voluntary activity also promotes personal development: the development of social awareness on the one hand and, on the other hand, the development of key competences and skills, making volunteers more employable and enhancing their active participation in society.

As regards voluntary activities, we need to remember that various activities are often carried out in social, environmental, non-formal education organizations (Mokymosi visą gyvenimą memorandumas, 2001). To carry out the voluntary activity, legal environment is necessary, which ensures a secure and flexible volunteering, convenient to a volunteer and the host organisation.

According to Ru kus (2012), volunteering is learning a new language, culture, skills and experiences. As we are speaking about voluntary activity in non-governmental organizations, so we would like to underscore non-formal learning but not non-formal education. For non-formal learning in the voluntary activity of non-governmental organisations are assigned courses, seminars, conferences organized at the same or another organisation or at a neutral environment, but you cannot forget that learning takes place and within the same voluntary activity. Training courses and seminars for volunteers are emphasized as the opportunity to self-knowledge, focus on developing the capacity ‘to participate’ (share,
collaborate) to acquire social skills (Europoje vyraujančių savanorystės modelių analizė, 2011).

Gaining new professional skills as a process the constituent parts of which are individual spheres and activities of volunteering that are typical in volunteering and require possession or acquisition of certain competences. No professional development is possible without a significant change in individual competences and practices taking place at the same time as corresponding structural changes (Perrenoud, 2007). It has to be noted that professionalization may not occur overnight and is a long term process that allows sufficient time for professional development and updating of competences of volunteers. An individual who embarks on volunteering sacrifices his/her time in expectation to accelerate personal development, acquire professional experience and benefit spiritually. On the one hand, non-governmental organizations (NGO) make a perfect opportunity for elderly people to involve into learning as volunteers, materialize their competences, share ideas and socialize. On the other hand, diversity of volunteer activities gives elderly people a possibility to improve the quality of their life. The theological discourse allows to speak about love of neighbour and charity, a testimony of Christian way of life that binds to serve an individual as a neighbour and follow Christian commitment to love and to support those in need. It has to be stressed that volunteering contributes significantly to industrialization and national development and promotion of human rights and democracy. In today's changing society, elderly people are able and have to adapt to changing circumstances and find ways to realize their ambitions and achieve happiness. Conception of World Health Organization (2002) presents the phenomenon of active aging as a system of implementation of the social policy that enables optimization of physical and functional state of elderly people and their participation in a range of social activities.

Volunteering is an opportunity for everyone, regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion, political views, age or health, to use one's skills and experience, gain new skills, make friends, engage in work and change the social life of the country. Voluntary activities promote
personal development; expand social benefits, general human capacity. It is time devoted for the benefit of other activities and the opportunity to exercise, improve one’s personal, professional and social competencies. Volunteering is one of the ways where people of different nationalities, religions, social and economic environment can be positively affected.

The motives of voluntary activity are important before starting the activity in non-governmental organizations. They often depend on the human aspirations to acquire voluntary competence or discover their professional way. A number of volunteers participating in voluntary work, looking for values, so rarely found in everyday life (sincere relations between people; helping the community).

Interviews of Lithuanian and Greek senior volunteers reveal that Greek respondents take lifelong learning as mutual support and a possibility to learn at any age more frequently than Lithuanian respondents do. Greek seniors notice that an individual develops personally and professionally through continuous learning. Seniors from both countries state that: the most important thing in volunteering is inner motivation and a sincere willingness to help; along with knowledge in volunteer activities, foreign languages and computer literacy are equally important; benefits of volunteering associate in the first place with communication and the ability to share; senior volunteers take participation in international volunteering as an opportunity to communicate and cooperate, explore cultures and share experiences. The research revealed that seniors are needed to work in volunteering because they have big life experience and can do the assignment which need trust, experience and empathy.

**Conclusion**

In today's continuously changing society, elderly people have to adapt to the changing life and discover new ways to realize themselves and feel happy. The current European Union labor force is constantly getting older, chances of finding work for people aged 50 years, is decreasing, thus too early people lose their human resources, spending more money
on social security, unemployment and health care. This challenge has led to an “active aging” concept. Active aging in contemporary European societies needs to be seen in two ways: as an objective and inevitable demographic and economic factor caused by the vital need, and as new options for older generations to chose new forms of development.

The adults involved in volunteering by their own free will, devote their time for socializing, but also seek personal development in order to gain experience. On the one hand, a non-governmental organization (NGO) is a great opportunity for older adults to integrate and engage in learning volunteering to realize their abilities, to share ideas, values, and communication. On the other hand, through participation in various voluntary activities adults have the opportunity to improve the quality of their life.

After analyzing both countries, senior volunteers’ diaries showed that participation in volunteering enriched their personal characteristics, helped them to identify themselves more.

After the Lithuania and Greece seniors were interviewed, a survey showed that the Greeks more than Lithuanians understand lifelong learning as assistance to each other, and as an opportunity to learn at different age. Seniors Greeks observed that the evolution of human life personally and professionally is improving in constant learning. Volunteers of both countries, said:

Internal motivation is the most important in participation in volunteering an, a special desire to help others and to do what gladdens others, the knowledge of how to perform voluntary activities. However, for everyone it is important to know a foreign language and manage e to work with a computer, to experience volunteering as both personal experience and professional activities. After analyzing the activity map, it was noticed that the seniors in Lithuania were very creative. Volunteers in Greece have collected experience, which fully involved them into activities. Volunteers have gained social and cultural experience. They also have known each other better and become mutually communicating more kindly. The detailed map of volunteering activities showed the diversity of their skills.
Santrauka


Savanoriška veikla dažniausiai analizuojama socialinės psichologijos, sociologijos, istorijos požiūriais. Užsienio autorių tyrimų duomenimis, savanoriška veikla dažniausiai analizuojama socialinės psichologijos, sociologijos, istorijos požiūriais.


Savanoriška veikla – tai kiekvieno piliečio visiškai laisvai savo noru pasirinkta veikla, už kurią nėsitikima ir negaunama finansinio atlygio. Ji didina bendrauj gėrį ne savo šeimos ar artimųjų naujų, o yra naudinga kitam žmogui. Savanorištės
pagrindu grindžiama veikla laikoma vienu iš pilietinės visuomenės pagrindų, kyla iš asmeninė iniciatyvos, paties žmogaus pastangų, ji labiau vertintina už veiklą, primetamą kitų asmenų arba prisimamą verčiant išorės veiksniams – kitų asmenų ar organizacijos liepimui ar raginimui.


Tarptautiniu požiūriu, įvairiose valstybėse savanoriškai skirtingai, bet savanoriškos veiklos procesas yra panašus. Savanorystė ypač svarbi valstybės ekonomikai, nes be didelių išlaidų sukuriamas vidaus produktas, suteikiamos žinios, atliekamas tarpkultūrinis švietimas. Savanoriškos veiklos deklaracijoje pabrėžiama, kad savanorystė – neformalūs mokymo procesai: „Savanorystė suteikia neoficialaus ir neformalaus mokymosi galimybės, o gyvenant Europos Sąjungoje – tai vėl reikalingas instrumentas mokymosi visą gyvenimą strategijoje“ (Savanorystės Europoje deklaracija, 2005).

Pasaulinė sveikatos organizacija susirūpinusi, kad vis daugėja pagyvenusių žmonių, ir kelia valstybių politikams įvairių klausimų: Kaip padėti visiems žmonėms su amžiumi išlaikyti autonomiją, išsiskirti savarankiškiai ir aktyviai? Kaip sustiprinti senovės amžiaus žmonių funkciją sveikatą ir ligų prevenciją? Kaip padidinti senų žmonių gyvenimo kokybę, jiems gyvenant vis ilgiau? Šiuos klausimus savo sveikatos organizacija užduoja valstybės visų lygių politikams, atsakingiems už senųjų politikos formulavimą ir programų rengimą (World Health Organization, 2002).

Europos Sąjungoje darbo jėga nuolat sensta, tačiau žmonėms, sulaukusiems 50 metų, vis mažėja galimybių rasti darbą, nes reorganizuojant įmones vyresni darbuotojai paprastai atleidžiami pirmiausia, o darbdaviai nėra linkę samdyti pagyvenusų asmenų. Šitaip per anksti ir suvokti prarandamas žmogiškasis kapitalas, išleidžiama daugiau pinigų socialinei apsaugai, nedarbui ir sveikatos priežiūrai. Šis

poreikiu dalyvauti savanoriškoje veikloje nacionaliniu bei tarptautiniu lygmenimis. Pasitelktas tarptautinis savanoriavimo atvejis Graikijoje ir Lietuvoje. Savanorių patirčiai matuoti:

• aprašytas savanoriavimo proceso atvejis,
• transkribuoti dienoraščių tekstai,
• turinio (angl. content) analizės principu interpretuoti interviu – apklauosos rezultatai,
• pristatytas savanoriavimo veiklų žemėlapis.

Tyrimo metodai:

• rašytiniai teksta, pusiau struktūruotas interviu, turinio (angl. content) analizė.


Socialinio konstruktyvizmo atstovai pasaulio pažinemą sieja su socialine aplinka ir bendradarbiavimu. Žmonės yra priklausomi nuo socialinės aplinkos ir nuo kolektyvinių reikšmių sistemos, kuria dalijasi tarpusavyje. Mūsų gyvenimo aplinką apibūdina arba „sudaro“ tai, kas esame iš tikrųjų (Berger ir kt., 1999).

Dalyvavimo savanorystės veikloje samprata

Žmogus iš prigimties yra visuomeninė būtybė, be santykių su kita negali nei gyventi, nei plėtoti savo gebėjimų. Iš visuomeninio žmogaus pobūdžio aišku, kad jo asmens plėtotė ir pačios visuomenės pažanga priklauso viena nuo antros. Žmogus gimsta, auga ir bręsta, tuo pat metu plėtojami jo prigimties glūdintys poreikiai ir galimybės, t. y. asmens saviraiška. Jos pagrindas yra tiesa, gėris, grožis, tobulumas, kūryba, pilnavę bei asmenybės saviraiškos ir elgesio būdai, tokie kaip giliai, gyva, nesavanaudžiška patirtis, atvirumos potyriams; pasirinkimes, padevantys asmenybei tobulėti; savastis, kuri turi būti aktualizuojama; atsiskleidžia autonomiškumas, unikalumas, identiškumas; atsakomybės priėmimas, abejonių nebuvinimas, didelis spontaniškumas, ekspresyvumas; įsiklausymas į savo gyvenimo misiją ir užduotį, asmenybės integralumas ir vienybė; nuolatinis savo galimybų plėtojimas, atgaiva kuriand; kulminacinių potyrių, kaip trumpalaikiai saviraiškos momentai, skiriantys asmenį nuo kitų gyvūnų.
Augdamas ir bręsdamas asmuo pereina į suaugusiųjų gyvenimą, kuriame prisiima vis daugiau atsakomybės, išgyja profesiją, pradedá dirbti ar sukuria šeimą. Tačiau gyvenimas sukurta taip: jeigu žmogus gimė, vadinasi, jis auga, bręsta, tobulėja, išgyja patirties ir tuo pat metu keičiasi, t. y. keičiasi išvaizda, mintys ir kūrybinė galios – žmogus sena. Vyresnio amžiaus žmonių skaičius snaigios augimo tendencijos rodo, kad ateitįje didėtų dalį mūsų visuomenės sudarys pagyvenę ir seni žmonės. Todėl tiek bendrą šalies gyvenimo lygį, tiek mūsų gyvenamos aplinkos mikroklimatą, pagaliau, visuomenės stabilumą smarkiai paveiks šios visuomenės grupės gerovę.


Savanoriška tarnyba suteikia žmogui galimybę bendrauti, leidžia dalyvauti visuomenės gyvenime ir teikia lavinamąją patirtį. Neformalai mokomas galime būti teikiamas darbo vietose, juo gali užsiimti pilietinės visuomenės organizacijos ir grupės (pvz., profesinės sąjungos, politinės partijos), taip pat organizacijos bei

Savanorystė skatina bendravimą ir bendradarbiavimą, dalijimąsi su kitais ir buvimą tarp kitų. Kaip teigia įvairios teorijos, savanoriška veikla suteikia asmeniui galimybę bendrauti, leidžia dalyvauti visuomenės gyvenime ir teikia lavinamąją patirtį (Rotolo, Wilson, 2006; Williams, 2005; Clary, Snyder, 1991; Ellis, 1985; Patterson, Tremper, Rypkema, 1994; Stallings, 1998; Payne, 1993; Jonutytė, 2000; Štuopytė, 2002).

Savanoriams siūlomas labai platus veiklos spektras: darbas su vaikais, su jaunimu, su pagyvenusiais asmenimis, su neįgaliusiais, stovykle, bendruomenės centruse, pagalbos telefonu linijomis, pagalba renginių metu, pagalba saugusiajų švietimo srityje, aplinkosaugos sferoje, meno ir kultūros srityje, renginių organizavimas kultūros bei rekreacijos srityse, kova su rasizmu, diskriminacija, dalyvavimas vaikų smurto, nusikalstamumo prevencijos veikloje.

**Suaugusių savanoriavimas kaip mokymosi forma**

Suaugusiajų šiandien labiau nei bet kada anksčiau siekia siekti dalyvauti ir planuoti gyvenimą, nes jis tampa sudėtingesnis tiek socialine, tiek politine prasme. Iš vyresniojo amžiaus piliečių tikimasis aktyvios visuomeninės veiklos. Tiek jaunai, tiek brandaus amžiaus žmonės turi nuolat mokytis, nes gyventi pakitusioje

Savanorystės reiškinys išpopuliarėjo ne tik dėl galimybės būti pilietiškam, teikti pagalbą kitiems, reikšti tarpusavio sąveiką tarp įvairaus amžiaus suaugusiųjų, bet ir dėl galimybės mokytis. Savanorystė – itin svarbus mokymosi visą gyvenimą strategijos įgyvendinimo Europos Sąjungoje instrumentas. Kita vertus, ji suteikia galimybę suaugusiajai įsitraukti į neformalųjų mokymą, per kurį atsiveria galimybės asmeninius, socialinius ir profesinius gebėjimus. Tačiau reikia pažymėti, kad savanoris natūraliai įsitraukia ir į savaiminių mokymą. Priklausomai nuo jo motyvacijos dalyvauti, didėja profesionalumas, nes dėl dalykų atkūrimo, išmokta patirtis kartais ikvėpia į tave, dėl to atkūrimo galimybės gali pritaikyti savo gyvenimą taip patitį. Be abejo, užimtumo galimybės galima pagerinti įsitraukus į darbo rinką, kitaip tariant, plečiant galimybės įgūdžių darbui, nėra galimybės kartu konkurcengas darbo rinkoje.

Dalyvaudamas savanorystės procesuose, suaugęs asmuo turi galimybę mokytis tris gebėjimų charakteristikas:

- **asmeninę**, susietą su asmens vidine motyvacija ir asmeninių poreikių tenkinimu. Tik iš asmeninio interesu ir vertybių raiškos suaugusysis siekia kažką naujo, kažko vertingo padėdama kitam ir kartu realizuodama save;
- **socialinę**, atsirandančią savanoriams veikiant grupėje – tai gali būti veikla, kuria vieno asmens pagalba teikiama kitam, ir aplinka, kurioje gyvena pagalbą gaunant asmuo, ir pati savanorių besimokanti grupė;
- **profesinę ar veiklos**, glaudžiai susijusius su mokymosi ir kvalifikacijos tobulinimo procesais, kaip su profesinės kvalifikacijos ir patirties dalimi. Jaunesnio amžiaus savanorai mokymasi per savanorystę naudoja kaip galimybę įgyti profesinių ar veiklos įgūdžių dar prieš pradedant darbo karjerą.

Šios trys gebėjimų charakteristikos glaudžiai susijusios su pagrindiniais savanoriavimą bruožais – **mokymusi, tarpusavio santykiais ir sąlygomis**, kurie skatina savanorjų ugdyti savanoriavimą patirtį būti aktyviam, dalyvaujančiu mokymosi visą gyvenimą procese.

Kurapkaitienė ir Borovskaja (2007) išskiria tris pagrindinius darbo su savanoriais principus, lemiančius savanorio įsitraukimą, augimą.

**Sąlygos**. Tai materialinės ir struktūrinės sąlygos, kurias suaugusios savanoriai įsitraukia, augia.
tiesioginę įtaką savanorio įsitraukimui į organizaciją ir jo motyvacijai atlikti darbą. Pagrindinė sąlygų užduotis – užtikrinti augimą savanoriškoje veikloje.

**Santykiai.** Tai organizacijos, į kurią patenka savanoris, santykiai, sąmoningai ir nesąmoningai išsivysčiusi santykių struktūra bei tarpasmeniniai procesai, vykstantys organizacijoje. Atėję į organizaciją savanoriai palaiko santykius su trimis svarbiausiomis grupėmis – darbuotojais, klientais ir kita savanoriais. Svarbu suvokti ir padėti atrasti palaikančius ir skatinančius santykius. Būtent dėl jų savanoriai dažnai išgali lieka organizacijoje ir būtent jie tampa vienu stipriausių savanoriškos veiklos motyvų.

**Mokymasis.** Savanoris patenka į naujas mokymosi galimybių ir patyrimo aplinkas, kurios įgalina jį išmokti ne tik techninių ar mechaninių, bet ir socialinių, profesinių bei asmenybės kompetencijų (Kurapkaitienė, Borovskaja, 2007).

Autorės (Kurapkaitienė, Borovskaja, 2007) pabrėžia: nepriklausomai nuo to, ar organizacija sudaro sąlygas neformaliajam mokymuisi, ar nekreipia į tai jokio dėmesio ir mokymasis vyksta savaime, savanoris patenka į tam tikrą mokymosi kilpą, kuriuo vyksta bent minimalus, o kartais ir labai ryškus pokytis. „**Kilpa** – tai savanorystės laikotarpis, tam tikras išėjimas į įprasto gyvenimo, kuriamo viskas nustatyta, ašišku ir apibrėžta. Ji turi ašišką pradžią ir pabaigą. Mokymosi **kilpa** gali būti didesnė ar mažesnė, priklausomai nuo asmens atvirumo mokymuisi ir nuo organizacijos indėlio į mokymosi sritį“ (Kėžaitė, 2007).

Siekiant sudaryti savanoriams mokymosi sąlygas, būtina nustatyti, kokios informacijos ir gebėjimų jie reikia, kad sėkmingai atliktų savanoriavimo darbą, ir kaip savanoris turėtų integruotis į savanorystę. Be to, svarbu išsiaiškinti jo motyvaciją. Tinkamai sukurto aplinkos sąlygos, pozityvūs santykiai ir nuolatinio mokymosi galimybės gali teigiamai veikti potencialių savanorių pasirinkimą sprendžiant, ar tapti savanoriais, ar ne, taip pat ugdytis ir plėsti naujas gebėjimus.

Kad gebėtų tinkamai integruotis į savanorystę, asmuo turėtų nuolat to mokytis. Savanorių mokymosi ir nuolatinio tobulėjimo klausimai analizuojami Europos Sąjungos dokumentuose, kuriuose galima įžvelgti šias nuostatas:

- reikalingų žinių ir įgūdžių savanoriai gyja iš pačios savanoriškos veiklos – jie neturi išankstinių pasirengimo socialinei veiklai;
- savanoriai iš anksto rengiami specifinei veiklai pagal kryptingas programas ir sisteminiai organizuojamus kursus, seminarus, konsultuojasi individualiai (Veiklus jaunimas 2007–2013 m., 2005)

Savanoriškos veiklos metu vyksta neformalus savaiminis ir patirtinis savanorio mokymosi procesas, kuris reiškiasi per santykius tarp organizacijos narių ir savanorio, savanorio ir kliento, savanorio su kita savanoriais, taip pat per asmeninį savęs pažinimą ir naujų profesinių žinių įgijimą. Labai sunku išskirti bendrus
gebėjimus, kuriuos išsiugdo savanoris, nes skiriasi savanoriškos veiklos aplinka, veikla, struktūra. Galima teigti, kad per savanorišką veiklą **skatinamas asmeninis tobulėjimas**, vystomas socialinis naudingumas, ugdomi bendrieji Žmogaus gebėjimai.

Per savanorišką veiklą įgytus gebėjimus galima priskirti prie Europos parlamento ir tarybos rekomendacijos išskirtų bendrujų visą gyvenimą trunkančio mokymosi gebėjimų. Rekomendacijoje išskirti aštuoni gebėjimai: bendravimas gmtaja kalba, bendravimas užsienio kalba, iniciatyva ir verslumas, mokymasis mokyti, skaitmeninis raštingumas, socialiniai ir pilietiniai gebėjimai, kultūrinis sąmoningumas ir raiška, matematiniai gebėjimai, pagrindiniai gamtos mokslų ir technologijų gebėjimai. Šie gebėjimai parengia žmones suaugusiųjų gyvenimui ir yra mokymosi visą gyvenimą pagrindas. Jie reikalingi asmeniniam pasitenkinimui ir vystymuisi, aktyviam pilietiškumui, socialinei integracijai ir užimtumui (Europos savanorystės manifestas, 2006).

Savanoriškoji tarnyba suteikia žmogui galimybę bendrauti, leidžia dalyvauti visuomenės gyvenime ir teikia lavinamosios patirties. Nevyriausybinės organizacijos taip pat skatina ir sukuria galimybes įvairaus amžiaus žmonėms įsitraukti į mokymąsi per savanorišką veiklą, realizuoti savo gebėjimus, dalytis idėjomis, vertybėmis, bendrauti.

Kalbant apie savanorišką nevyriausybinių organizacijų veiklą, vartojama neformaliojo mokymosi sąvoka. Neformalijam mokymuisi savanoriškoje NVO veikloje priskiriami kursai, seminarai, konferencijos, vykstantys toje pačioje arba kitose NVO, vykstantys neutralioje aplinkoje; tačiau negalima pamiršti, kad mokymasis vyksta ir vykdant savanorišką veiklą (Karasevičiūtė, 2013).

Apibendrinant galima teigti: savanorystė suteikia asmeniui galimybės praktiškai išbandyti save įvairiose veiklose, pažinti save, ugdyti savo gebėjimus, plėsti žinias, sustiprinti atsakomybės už save ir bendruomenę jausmą. Visa tai – universalūs gebėjimai, reikalingi kiekvienam žmogui, vystantys kritišką savimi pasitikinčią asmenybę.

Išvados

• Šiuolaikinėje besikeičiančioje visuomenėje pagyvenę žmonės turi pritaikyti prie kintančio gyvenimo ir atrasti naujų būdų, kaip realizuoti save ir jautis laimingi. Dabartinėje Europos Sąjungoje darbo jėga nuolat sensta, žmonėms, sulaukusiems 50 metų, vis mažėja galimybų rasti darbą – šitaip per ankstai prarandamas žmogiškasis kapitalas, išleidžiama daugiau pinigų socialinei apsaugai, nedarbu ir sveikatos priežiūrai. Šis iššūkis suformulavo **aktyvaus senėjimo sąvoką**. Šiuolaikinėse Europos visuomenėse į aktyvaus senėjimo būtinią galima
žvelgti dviem aspektais: kaip į objektyvių ir neišvengiamų demografinių bei ekonominių veiksnų sukeltą gyvybinę būtinybę ir kaip į naujas vyresnėms kartoms atsiveriančias pasirinkimo galimybes, kaip esminių žmogiškojo pasirinkimo galimybių bendrosios plėtros rezultatą.


- Išanalizavus Lietuvos ir Graikijos senjorų savanorių dienoraščius paaiškėjo, kad dalyvavimas savanoriškoje veikloje praturtino jų asmenybes, padėjo geriau save pažinti.

- Iš Lietuvos ir Graikijos senjorų apklausos paaiškėjo, kad mokymąsi visą gyvenimą graikai supranta kaip pagalbą vieni kitiems ir kaip galimybę mokytis įvairiame amžiuje. Senjorai graikai pastebėjo, jog asmeniškai ir profesiškai žmogus tik tobulėja nuolat mokymamasis. Abiejų šalių senjorai savanoriai teigė: dalyvaujant savanoriškoje veikloje, svarbiausia yra vidinė motyvacija, didelis noras padėti kitiems ir daryti tai, kas pradžiugintų kitą žmogų; reikia turėti žinių, kaip atlikti savanorišką veiklą, tačiau visiems svarbu mokėti užsienio kalbą ir gebėti dirbti kompiuteriu; savanoriška veikla naudinga tiek asmeninei patirčiai, tiek profesinei veiklai.

- Iš veiklų žemėlapio matyti, kad Lietuvos senjorai labai kūrybingi. Savanoriaudami Graikijoje jie kaupė patirtį, visapusiškai įsitraukė į veiklas, įgijo socialinės, kultūrinės patirties, labiau pažino vieni kitus, jų tarpusavio bendravimas tapo nuoširdesnis. Žemėlapėje detalizuota savanoriavimo veikla atskleidė Lietuvos senjorų gebėjimų įvairovę.
References


Annex

Annex 1

Gerb. Informante,

Siekiant atskleisti senjorų savanorių nuomonę apie savanorystę, maloniai prašome atsakyti į pateiktus klausimus ir išsakyti savo individualią nuomonę. Užtikrinaime Jūsų anoniminiškumą.

Tyrimą atlieka Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto Socialinių mokslų fakulteto Edukologijos katedros doktorantė Salomėja Karasevičiūtė. Dėkojame už Jūsų skirtą laiką.

Prašome trumpai prisistatyti:
Jūsų amžius ........................................
Jūsų lytis ...........................................
Jūsų profesija ............................................
Jūsų išsilavinimas ........................................

Savanorystė – tai veiksmai, kylantys iš valinio (sąmoningo) žmogaus noro atlikti tam tikra darbą nesitikint už tai gauti materialinės naudos. Žmogus, atlikęs tokius veiksmus, t. y. tam tikrus darbus savanoriškai ir nesitikėdamas už tai atlygio, vadinamas savanoriu.

1. Ar teko dalyvauti mokymuose per paskutiniuosius penkerius metus (pažymėkite)?
   Dažnai ............
   Kartais ..........
   Retai ............
   Niekada ...........

2. Kokiuose mokymuose teko dalyvauti per paskutiniuosius penkerius metus (pažymėkite)?
   Profesinėje srityje ...............................................................
   Asmeninėje srityje ...............................................................

3. Kaip Jūs manote, kas yra „mokymasis visą gyvenimą“. Apibūdinkite.

4. Ar esate dalyvavę Grundtvig programos projektinėse veiklose?


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5. Ar teko dalyvauti Grundtvig programos seniorų savanorių projekte?
...............................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

6. Ar turite patirties savanori koje veikloje. Jei „taip“, kokios?
...............................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

7. Kokių žinių Jums reikėtų atliekant savanorišką veiklą?
...............................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

8. Kokių gebėjimų Jums reikės atliekant savanorišką veiklą (pažymėkite)?
   kalbinių gebėjimų..............................................................................
   darbo su kompiuteriu gebėjimų......................................................
   tarpkultūrinio bendravimo gebėjimų..............................................
   tarpkultūrinio bendradarbiavimo gebėjimų....................................

9. Kaip savanoriškos veiklos patirtį panaudosite savo asmeniniame gyvenime:
...............................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

   profesiniame gyvenime:
...............................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

10. Kokie Jūsų lūkesčiai savanoriaujant Lietuvoje?
...............................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

11. Kokie Jūsų lūkesčiai savanoriaujant užsienyje?
...............................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

12. Kaip manote, kokios patirties įgysite savanoriaudama(s)?
...............................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
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Annex 2

Dear Informants,
In order to reveal the opinion of senior volunteers about volunteering, please answer the questions and express your individual opinion. We ensure your anonymity.

The study carried out by Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Education Salomėja Karasevičiūtė.

Thank you for your time.

Please, briefly introduce yourself:
Your age ..............................
Your sex ...............................
Your profession .............................
Your education .............................

1. Have you ever participated in training during the last five years (check)?
   Often ..............
   Sometimes .........
   Rarely ..............
   Never ..............

2. What training have you had to take part in the last five years (check)?
   Professional field ..............................................................
   Personal field .................................................................

3. What do you think is “Lifelong Learning”, describe it, please.
   ..............................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................

4. Have you ever participated in the Grundtvig program project activities?
   ..............................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................

5. Have you ever participated in Grundtvig senior volunteers’ project?
   ..............................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................

6. Do you have experience in volunteering, if yes, what?
   ..............................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................
7. What knowledge do you need in volunteering?
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

8. What skills do you need in volunteering (check)?
   Language skills.............................................................................................
   Computer skills...........................................................................................
   Intercultural communication skills............................................................
   Intercultural cooperation skills.................................................................

9. How are you going to use the experience of volunteering in your
   Personal life:
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................
   Professional life: ......................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

10. What are your expectations for volunteering in Lithuania?
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

11. What are your expectations of volunteering abroad?
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................

12. What experience do you hope to gain in volunteering?
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................
Annex 3

1 lentelė. 1 kategorija. Mokymasis visą gyvenimą

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kategorija</th>
<th>Sub-kategorija</th>
<th>Pavyzdys (lietuvių senjorų savanorių)</th>
<th>Pavyzdys (graių senjorų savanorių)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mokymasis visą gyvenimą</td>
<td>Dalyvavimas mokymuose</td>
<td>- Niekada (A, D, F).</td>
<td>Dažnai (B1, F1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Dažnai (B, E).</td>
<td>Retai (C1).</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Retai (C).</td>
<td>Kartais (A1, D1, E1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Profesinėje srityje (A,B,D,E).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tobulėjau asmeniškai (C).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Neteko tobulintis (F).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profesinėje ar asmeninė srityje</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tai yra žmogaus, kaip asmenybės, dvasinis tobulėjimas. Atsiranda galimybė sužinoti ir pažinti naujovių, išmokti spręsti problemas remiantis naujo pažinimo tiesomis, pažinti pasaulį, jo žmones, papročius ir kultūrą. Tai žinių atnaujinimas (A, E).</td>
<td>- Profesinėje srityje (B1, C1, D1).</td>
<td>- Tobulėjau asmeniškai (C1, E1, F1, A1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nuolatinis tobulėjimas, senų žinių atnaujinimas ir naujų įgūdžių įgijimas profesinėje veikloje ir asmeniniame gyvenime (B).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Kai asmenys padeda vientas kitam, asmenys tobulėja (A1).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Žmonės gali mokytis nepriklausomai nuo amžiaus (C1).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Aš visada mokiausi, kai buvau čia (E1).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Visas pasaulis nuolat keičiasi, vystosi, tobulėja, o žmogus yra pasaulio dalis, todėl irgi turi tobulėti ir fiziškai, ir dvasiškai.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tobulėjimas vyksta per pažinimą (D).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tai mokymasis nuolatos, gilinant žinias, išmokstant naujų įgūdžių ir gebėjimų, kurie reikalingi kasdieniame gyvenime (F).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2 lentelė. 2 kategorija. Savanorystės patirtis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kategorija</th>
<th>Subkategorija</th>
<th>Pavyzdys (lietuvių senjorų savanorių)</th>
<th>Pavyzdys (graikų senjorų savanorių)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Pavyzdys (lietuvių senjorų savanorių)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 3 lentelė. 3 kategorija. Savanorystės gebėjimai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kategorija</th>
<th>Subkategorija</th>
<th>Pavyzdys (lietuvių senjorų savanorių)</th>
<th>Pavyzdys (graikų senjorų savanorių)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savanorystės gebėjimai</td>
<td>Žinios, svarbios savanoriškai veiklai</td>
<td>- Atrodo, kad daug ką žinau, galbūt būtų įdomu patikslinti savanoriškos veiklos apimtį (A, B).</td>
<td>- Žinių turiu, tačiau svabu mokėti bendrauti ir mokėti užsienio kalbą (D1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Kaip galėčiau padėti žmonėms, kokia veikla galėčiau užsiimti, susijusia su senų žmonių slaugą ir globa, mokytis pasiaukojimo. Daugiau norėčiau sužinoti apie pačią savanorišką veiklą (B, D).</td>
<td>- Turiu socialinių kompetencijų, bendravimas ir bendradarbiavimas svarbiausia (F1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Kaip galėčiau padėti pasirūpinti tuo, kuriuo man pavesta rūpintis (E).</td>
<td>- Specifinei savanorystei yra reikalingos specialios žinios, tačiau pagalba vienas kitam labai padeda (B, C1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendrieji gebėjimai</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Kalbiniai gebėjimai, darbo kompiuterių gebėjimai, tarpkultūrinio bendravimo ir bendradarbiavimo gebėjimai (A, B, C, D, E, F).</td>
<td>- Kalbiniai gebėjimai, tarpkultūrinio bendravimo gebėjimai (A1, E1, F1, C1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Kalbiniai gebėjimai, darbo kompiuterių gebėjimai (B1, D1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kategorija</td>
<td>Sub-kategorija</td>
<td>Pavyzdys (lietuvių senjorų savanorių)</td>
<td>Pavyzdys (graišų senjorų savanorių)</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savanoriškos veiklos nauda</td>
<td>Asmenininė</td>
<td>- Papasakosiu savo šeimai ir artimiesiems. Stengiuosi sunkumus įveikti turėdama kitų žmonių pavyzdį. Bandysių įrodyti, kad reikia gyventi su džiaugsmu šiq dieną, o ne laukti ateityje kažko gero (A, B1, C1). - Iš šios patirties tikiuosi įgyti daugiau pasitikėjimo savimi, kuris su metais mažėja. Tai būtų teigiamas postūmis mano gyvenime (B). - Labai patinka bendrauti su žmonėmis (C). - Panaudosių įgytą patirtį savo asmeniniame gyvenime (D). - Pasidalysiu ja su savo kolegomis ir bendradarbiais (E).- Pirmiausia padėsiu tinkamai pasirūpinti savo artimaisiais, o vėliau perteksliai medžiagą ir žinias savo vaikams (F).</td>
<td>- Bandysių įrodyti, kad reikia gyventi su džiaugsmu šiq dieną, o ne laukti ateityje kažko gero (B1, C1). - Stengiuosi pati būti mandagi, švelni, suprantanti ir norėčiau padėti kitiems tokiems būti (A1, D1). - Papasakosiu apie savanorišką veiklą savo artimiesiems, draugams ir bendradarbiams (F1). - Padėsiu rūpintis savo šeimos ir bendruomenės nariais (E1).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5 lentelė. 5 kategorija. Savanoriavimo lūkesčiai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kate-</th>
<th>Subkate-</th>
<th>Pavyzdys (lietuvių seniorų savanorių)</th>
<th>Pavyzdys (graikų seniorų savanorių)</th>
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<td>gorija</td>
<td>gorija</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Užsie-</td>
<td>- Tikiuosi, bendravimas su užsie-niečiais yra lengvesnis, žmonės yra linksmesni ir geranoriškesni, labiau pasitikintys savimi, mo- kantys bendradarbiauti, labiau padėti vieni kitiems. Mokysi-mės iš jų ir įgysime patirties (A, B, D). - Susirasiu naujų bendraminčių (E). - Kuo daugiau noriu sužinoti, kaip ten yra organizuojama savano- riška veikla, kaip ji atliekama ir kokios priemonės tam yra naudojamos (F).</td>
<td>- Tikiuosi, kad surasiu galimybę pagal savo gebėjimus padėti fiziniuose darbuose, tikiuosi susipažinti su naujais žmo- nėmis, pagelbėti tiems, kuriems labiausiai reikia, pasidalyti savo pa-tirtimi (A1, B1, C1, D1, E1, F1).</td>
</tr>
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<td>nyje</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Research study “Senior Adults’ Participation in Volunteering” has been prepared from two parts. The first part of the study consists of a theoretical consideration about volunteering. Accomplished analytical work of various authors and sources which are analyzed and made some conclusions about the importance of volunteering in human existence. Volunteering reasons must occur in man, searching for the questions why and what man feels in contributing to the creation of the common goodness in society.

The second part of the study presents various empirical studies which were carried out through Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and the University of Thessaly (Greece), an international volunteer project “Communication, Empowering, Integration, Experience For Senior Age Volunteers (CEIES). Through volunteering due to the project, the elder (seniors) members of the society were able to realize themselves and acquire new competencies: to get deeper knowledge in knowing people and the world around, discovering new opportunities for communication, activities and the provision of assistance for others. These studies were carried out, interpreted and presented and they will be able to serve for all students in the all level of lectures, preparing the final works and scientific publications.