

# Youth Volunteering in Sport: A Case Study of The Benefits of “The European Voluntary Service” for a Sport Organization

## Authors' contribution:

- A) conception and design of the study
- B) acquisition of data
- C) analysis and interpretation of data
- D) manuscript preparation
- E) obtaining funding

E. Esra Erturan-Ogut

*Gazi University, Turkey*

## ABSTRACT

The European Voluntary Service of the European Union is thought to play a key role in promoting and encouraging volunteering among young people. Integrating the social work of EVS volunteers into activities through sport organizations is believed to help develop the perception of volunteering as an element of social commitment. The aim of this study is to therefore examine a case of youth volunteering practice in an EVS project in Turkey within the context of the benefits of volunteering. Data was collected using various tools. These included semi-structured interviews, participant observation (non-structured), and document analyses. Content analyses were applied to the interview data. The study established that the EVS is a beneficial channel for youth volunteering and provides benefits for each of the parties: the volunteers, the organization, and the sport participants.

## KEYWORDS

volunteering, youth, volunteering in sports, european voluntary service, social exchange theory, serious leisure theory

## Introduction

In Europe, volunteering is a widespread civic engagement phenomenon. To illustrate: analysis showed that from 92 to 94 million adults (22% to 23% of the adult population) volunteer in the European Union (EU) (European Union, 2010). Volunteering in sport organizations is the most popular segment of this participation. As a matter of fact, sports governance in Europe is based on community sports clubs, which depend on volunteers and enable the sharing of sport's social, educational, and cultural benefits. In Germany, for example, 2.8 million citizens participate in voluntary services in sport clubs (Breuer, 2007). Approximately 10% of the population in Finland and 25% of the population in Holland volunteer in organizations related to sports (Groll et al., 2008).

Furthermore, prior to the pronouncement of the year 2011 as the *European Year of Volunteering*, volunteering was frequently mentioned in recent EU works and papers as playing a key role in community-based sport in Europe. According to volunteers in the Amsterdam Declaration in 1997, there were several analyses and promotional actions, such as the Nice Declaration in 2000 and the decision to establish 2004 as the *European Year of Education through Sport*. Eventually, the EU released the *White Paper* on sports in 2007, which can be seen as an overall set of guidelines regarding sports policies in the EU. Article 2.4, which in the *White Paper* is entitled *Promoting volunteering and active citizenship through sport*, is directly related to volunteering in sport. According to the *White Paper* and the following the action plan *Pierre de Coubertin*, volunteering in the EU will be supported both by developing an exchange of information and best practices related to volunteering in sport, and by launching a study on volunteering. The EU published the aforementioned study in February 2010. It introduced the landscape of volunteering in the Member States; the social and economic dimensions of volunteering; and the current challenges of volunteering in the EU with appropriate recommendations (European Union, 2010). Overall, all of these working papers of the EU suggest that young people be encouraged to volunteer in sports through the European Voluntary Service (EVS).

Actually, the EVS is one of the sub-programs of the *Youth in Action* program of the EU. The EU set up the project-based *Youth in Action* program for young people. It aims “to inspire a sense of active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future” (European Commission, 2011c). Youth in Action is a program with five defined actions: 1 - Youth for Europe, 2 - European Voluntary Service, 3 - Youth in the World, 4 - Youth Support Systems, 5 - Support for European cooperation in the youth field (European Commission, 2011c).

Open to all people aged 18 to 30 years, Action 2: European Voluntary Service is believed to play a key role in promoting and encouraging volunteering among young people. Allowing young Europeans “to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country within or outside the EU” (European Commission, 2011d), the EVS works through projects requiring close co-operation of three parties: a sending organization, a host organization, and a volunteer. An EVS project could be short-term (2–8 weeks) or long-term (2–12 months). During the project a volunteer receives room and board, insurance, allowance, as well as a return of travel costs (European Commission, 2011d).

The database system of the EVS projects defines two themes for sport: “Education through Sport” and “Sport and Outdoor Activities” (European Commission, 2011a). However, this classification of project themes does not limit the project to include only sport-related activities. Therefore, a young volunteer can choose among thousands of sport-related projects according to their interests, skills, and professions in sport.

Hosting the EVS projects began in June 2004 in Turkey. In 2007, a total of 431 EVS projects were accepted by the Turkish National Agency, the government institute of EU relations (Youth General Coordinator, 2007). According to the *Youth in Action* report from 2009, Turkey is ranked first for young EU volunteers with a total of 569 (Turkish Presidency of European Union Education and Youth Programmes, 2010). However, considering the population of the country, it can be assumed that hosting European volunteers in Turkish EVS projects remains under development.

In general, volunteering is also a developing social concept in Turkey. Certainly, each society has charity and solidarity in their own cultures; Turkey, with its long historical background of civilization, is no exception. Yet in the modern age, the Turkish social pattern might be defined as an adapting society of a developing country facing economic, political, and social challenges due to interaction with global powers. Hence, it wouldn't be wrong to state that volunteering and its modern notion among societies face economic, political, and social challenges almost parallel to the country's status in the world. Volunteer rights, for instance, are not defined in the legal system in Turkey as they are in Belgium, Spain, Hungary, and Italy (European Union, 2010).

Compared to the United States and Europe, the insufficient number of NGOs is another problem that causes the absence of a channel for volunteering. For example, comparing the number of sports clubs can provide a clue about the difference between Turkey and European countries. There are approximately 9,000 sports clubs in Turkey; by comparison there are around 90,000 sports clubs in Germany, 150,000 in France, and 170,000 in England. Financial worries, political pressure, and the misperception of the volunteer's role in the society might be pointed out as the other obstacles in the development of volunteering in Turkey.

In fact, the results of some studies support the arguments above. According to the findings of a research by the Education Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV, 2008), only 5% of *urban youth* participated in voluntary work in the last year. The remaining 95% of urban society did not take part in social commitment through voluntary activities, which was defined as proof of the problematic image of volunteerism in Turkey (TEGV, 2008).

Another study shows that 66.9% of the participants have never participated in voluntary work in their life (Özel Sektör Gönüllüler Derneği, 2005). The study also shows that the volunteers who attended the voluntary work were doing education (49.2%), environment (26.8%), health (23.2%), and culture (18.4%) (Özel Sektör Gönüllüler Derneği, 2005). Sport was not evaluated in this research as a significant type of voluntary participation.

While studies in Turkey demonstrate a lack of volunteering in the society, a study in Germany shows that the concept is not strange to Turkish people. Study highlights that two-thirds (64%) of Turkish people living in Germany take part in voluntary work actively in Turkish and German associations, federations, groups, or initiatives (Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2005). This finding of the survey leads us to consider the importance and promotion of social policies and social awareness. It can clearly be assumed that the barriers blocking the development of volunteering may not be related to the national characteristics of the public but instead to other segments of the development, such as building a good social policy and social awareness of the impact of volunteering. Programs such as EVS that encourage social awareness are thought to contribute to the improvement of the idea of volunteering in the society. Hence, the present study aims to examine a case of youth volunteering practice in an EVS project in Turkey within the context of the benefits of volunteering.

## Theoretical Background

Social Exchange Theory (SET) considers social relationships in terms of rewards and costs. Although its roots can be traced to the 19th century, it was originally suggested by George Homans (in 1958) and followed by Emerson (1962) and Blau (1964). Thus, alongside its social concept, the theory also has roots in the psychological studies of Homans and in technical-economic analysis through the work of Blau (Emerson, 1976). Basically, the theory posits that people judge all relationships to determine the rewards that can be acquired. According to Blau (1964),

*“the rewards an individual obtains from a social association cost him the opportunity to devote the time (and other limited resources) spent on another association where he could have obtained rewards”* (p. 101).

SET argues that people evaluate the worth of their social relationships by balancing the rewards and costs of the relationship, and prefer to receive the rewards in a relationship rather than to face the costs. The rewards vary on a wide scale. They can either be individual rewards, such as self-determination, self-satisfaction, self-confidence, and personal development, etc., or social rewards, such as social acceptance, social interaction, social learning, and so on. On the other hand, there are the costs of social relations. Those also vary and include money, effort, energy, time, and other types of personal input, such as devotion, experience, skills, etc. Therefore, the worth of a relation can be formulized as “*rewards – costs = worth*”.

As Sherr (2008) states, SET has a strong relation with the concept of volunteerism. SET suggests that the satisfaction of all parties in a social relationship depends on reciprocal advantages and an exchange of

benefits. Because voluntary commitment is linked with the concept of reciprocal benefits, a social reward might indeed be considered one of the key elements of this exchange.

By all means, voluntary work of the public in sports is an exchange of benefits for both parties: the volunteer and the association for which they volunteered. The relationship between these parties brings highly valuable social rewards: personal development (as cited in Wang, 2004; Hoye et al. 2008), social interaction (i.e., Srujlal & Dhurup, 2008), self-confidence, and/or good status in the society.

The relationship between social rewards and volunteer work was also examined in Serious Leisure Theory (SLT) by Robert Stebbins. Stebbins (2001) states that “fulfilling the potential, expressing the skills and knowledge, having cherished experiences and developing a valued identity” (p. 54) are the rewards of serious leisure in which the volunteers take part.

Stebbins (2008) explains the concept of Serious Leisure as: “systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial, interesting, and fulfilling for the participant to find a (leisure) career there acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (p. 336). He categorizes leisure activities as serious, casual, and project-based. Project-based leisure, particularly the “one-off projects,” may involve volunteering for sporting competitions (Stebbins, 2008) and, as we can assume, for the support of sport associations. A project like EVS could then be considered a serious leisure project in which the volunteers can use their combination of skills in exchange for some social and personal benefits such as career, experience, and so on.

In fact, it would not be wrong to claim that there is an invisible link between the two theories above, as both of them suggest some costs in return of benefits/rewards. In terms of benefits, here volunteering can be a tool of exchange of social benefits and a goal for a career in society. EVS, which is the focus of this study, is an opportunity for European youth to consider these advantages of volunteering. Moreover, in terms of human resources, EVS provides the advantage of working with young volunteers in organizations. Taking both of the theories into account to construct a comprehensive explanation was necessary for the study. While SLT provides an explanation to volunteering in the social system with a wide scope of benefits, SET assumes the individual reasons for social attendance to be simply the balance of costs and rewards. Therefore, SET is used in the study to explain the worthiness of the EVS in terms of the acquired benefits, while SLT is used for opening a planned leisure perspective and comparing the received benefits with the theory’s assumptions.

## **Method**

The current case study has a holistic character and is a single-case analysis. A single case is one that is considered “unique, prototypical, salient, or revelatory to the understanding of a phenomenon or problem” (Scholz & Tietje, 2002, p. 11). As Yin (2003) states, a single case is typically different from multiple cases in terms of the logic of replication, since the former may not be suitable for research replication.

The object of the research is to determine how the involved parties benefit from the European Voluntary Service in sport organizations in Turkey. Following, the sub-problems below are determined:

1. How is the EVS project being executed in sport organizations?
2. What are the benefits of the project for each party?
3. What are the issues that occur in the project?

The reason for asking the first and the third question was to achieve a clear understanding of the history, environment, and the conditions of the project, thus allowing for the preparation of a better analysis. Therefore, the main focus of the study is to determine the benefits of volunteering through the EVS (second question). The execution of the project and the possible issues in it are also found to be important and require examination.

The subject of the research analyses is the Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports (PDYS), which runs an EVS Project as a part of their organization. PDYSs are the governmental bodies of sport management in Turkey. Their main task is to develop and organize physical activities for the local population. As the EVS regulations indicate, they need an accreditation process to receive the right to open an EVS project. After searching the EVS database on the Internet (European Commission, 2011a), it was found that there were four PDYSs that run an EVS project in Turkey. Phone calls to the directors of the PDYSs revealed that there was only one PDYS that was running an EVS project with volunteers at that time. The other PDYSs declared that their project was approved, but not yet initiated. Hence, through this sampling process, the Amasya Directorate of Youth and Sport (ADYS), which started the project five months ago with two Italian volunteers, was chosen as the typical case sample.

ADYS, like the other provincial directorates, is responsible for the promotion of sports in the area (Province of Amasya) and organizing sporting activities and courses for various sport disciplines. During the research, table tennis, tennis, swimming, basketball, volleyball, camping, and trekking activities were available for adults, and summer schools in 33 different disciplines were available for children.

The individuals involved to the research were determined to be:

- The Provincial Director of ADYS,
- Volunteers ( $n = 2$ ),
- Sport participants in ADYS ( $n = 14$ , chosen at random).

The data was collected using different tools. These included semi-structured interviews, participant observation (non-structured), and document analyses.

After analyzing the related documents, three different interview forms were prepared for the parties:

1. The volunteers' form,
2. The organization manager's (director's) form,
3. The sport participant's form.

The interview forms were prepared mainly to investigate the research objectives. Hence, to explore the first sub-question, three questions were included in the forms. These questions concerned the initiation process of the project, the criteria to choose candidates and be chosen for the voluntary work, and the efficiency of the volunteers. No. 3 simply asked the contribution of the volunteers to their daily activities in ADYS in order to gather the participants' idea on the executing process of the project. The second sub-question of the study was to define the benefits of volunteering. This question is directly included in all interview forms, as it is the main focus of the study. Both theories of the study (SET and SLT) suggest that benefits are possible in social interactions. Volunteering in the SLT has an especially important position, as it is a channel for social and personal benefits. But since it was not possible to find a match between these theories in terms of the types of benefits, this was an open question and did not include any additional questions. Then the question "What kind of benefits did you gain from this project?" was added to all the interview forms. The last sub-question "the issues in the project" was also included in all forms. The idea of each party about the possible issues in the course of the project seems important to control the validity of the study. This question is asked to each party in order to make them verify each other. In other words, if there was a common, unsolved problem in the project that some of the interviewees hid, this might be an indication of a significant cost that some parties pay, a possible exaggeration about the benefits in the interviews, or something else.

The researcher visited the province of Amasya to collect data for four days. The researcher conducted interviews and took observations. The researcher conducted interviews with the provincial director, two volunteers, and fourteen randomly chosen sports participants through the use of the semi-structure interview technique and by recording the interviews on a voice recorder. The two volunteers were interviewed in English and the rest of the interviews were in Turkish.

Observations were non-participant. The researcher sat in a far corner of the volunteers' working area during the observation and took notes about the atmosphere of the activities and the behaviors of the volunteers and the participants. All the necessary documents were also requested and received from the directorate for further analyses. These documents consisted of the overall schedule of the volunteers' work during the project and their CVs.

When analyzing the collected data, the researcher followed the following guidelines:

- Only necessary data is taken into account;
- Content analyses are applied to the interview data. In this process, the assistance of a philologist was provided in the cases of issues connected with language. When analyzing the Turkish interview texts, the coding is in Turkish, which is the researcher's native language. The aim was to prevent any loss of meaning in translation. Later, a translation into English is prepared. The researcher and two other experts conduct all the thematic coding manually. The theme pools of the overall coding are then compared, identical themes are included, and similar themes are redefined. After preparing the final theme pools for each item in the semi-structured interview form, themes are grouped according to their relevance and organized into sub-categories and categories;
- Observations are evaluated descriptively and provided in the report according to the relevant topic. Observations are also considered to support the reliability of the interviews, since the use of multiple data sources is accepted to enhance data credibility (Yin, 2003);
- Document analyses are provided while reporting the findings;
- The literature and the findings are compared in the "discussion and conclusion" part.

## Findings and Discussion

The aim of this part of the study is to find answers to the research questions. "Execution of the project," "benefits," and "issues in the project" are the main dimensions. Taking these dimensions as a frame and supporting it with the observations – and in some parts with document analyses – the interview findings that are analyzed by means of content analyses and provided in order. Discussions that include literature comparisons, theoretical relations, and critical analyses take place subsequent to the presentation of the related findings.

### *Executing an EVS project in a sport organization*

In the first part of the inquiry, the operation of an EVS project is examined. Firstly, *the initiation of the project*, then *choosing criteria for the participants*, and finally *the efficiency of the participants* in the project were explored.

The volunteers generally described the execution of the project as satisfying. The volunteers' answers on the **initiation of the project** mentioned two reasons for participation (Table I. The Initiation Themes and Codes). These were: "goals for improvement" and "opportunity to visit a new country." Certainly, these thoughts of the young volunteers are similar to the purposes of the EU's Youth in Action Program. The EU defines the benefits for the young volunteers as developing new skills and improving personal, educational, and professional development (European Commission, 2011c). Hoyer et al. (2008) claimed that "personal development" is one of the aspects of the volunteers' motives. In the current study, the volunteers' goals for improvement can also be interpreted as a motivation for personal development.

There are similar goals for the local communities to benefit from the EVS as well. The analysis of the interview with the director of ADYS also showed "*the goals for improvement*" as a pattern in the decision process of the project (Table 1). These goals consist of sub-categories of contribution to the EU validation process of Turkey, athletes' development, sports' development in the province, and organizational development.

Table 1. The Initiation – Themes and Codes

	Questions	Categories	Sub -categories	Themes
Volunteers	Why did you decide to participate in an EVS project in Turkey?	Goals for improvement	-	learning a new culture learning a new language learning another country good opportunity to develop skills
		Opportunity to visit a new country		interested in going to Turkey wanted to spend 5–6 months in Turkey EVS is a good opportunity Turkey is a big, different country
Director	Why did you decide to initiate an EVS project in Amasya?	Goals for improvement	To contribute the EU process	The aim of contributing the EU process
			To contribute athlete development	We recruit athlete students from the villages Students have language problems The need to solve the language problem of the students Wanting the students to have a broader vision 25% improvement in English grades
			To contribute sport’s development	The aim to encourage sports Amasya is a little province
			To contribute organizational development	The aim for institutionalization Improving the institution The atmosphere in the organization is different when a foreigner works in it

Among these goals, the director emphasized the contribution to young athletes’ development as the most important. To illustrate, he stated:

*“there is a hidden problem in our organization: we recruit athlete students from villages and the countryside where they don’t have good opportunities for learning a foreign language. They have bad grades in English (...). We thought that if we could accomplish the EVS project and make the athletes interact with foreign volunteers, they would develop a passion for learning a foreign language”.*

In addition, benefitting from volunteers is a very common human resource management strategy in the sports organizations of developed countries. Countries such as Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and most of the countries in Europe have well-developed volunteer management programs and initiatives. The importance of the retention of volunteers has been recognized by them (Taylor et. al 2008). Therefore, the contribution of the volunteers to the economy is highly important. In an EU Report (European Union, 2010), the economic value of volunteering is estimated to be more than 2% of GDP in the UK, Finland, and Denmark, and between 3% and 5% in Austria, the Netherlands, and Sweden. The director’s goals for improvement included the “contribution to the EU validation process of Turkey.” It can be said that

his perception of Turkey’s poor understanding of volunteering in contrast to the EU’s wide-spread volunteer concept was appropriate. In other words, the director’s perception forced us to think that promoting youth volunteering across the country might indeed contribute both to the economy and the social values of moving closer to the EU.

To examine the execution of the project, the **criteria of qualification** of young candidates to be chosen for the project were also explored. The EVS is a project open to any young European, and the criteria of qualifications required from an EVS volunteer are not defined in any regulation. However, hosting organizations have the right to choose the most proper volunteers from among the applicants.

In the current case, the director defined the criteria of choosing the volunteers for the project in three different categories (Table 2). The first one is the “criteria of eliminating the applicants” (the unwanted qualifications), in which he stated that, because of conditions of accommodation in the male wrestler’s dormitory where the volunteers would be staying, they prefer to eliminate female applicants in the first place. Of course, this approach might result from the Islamic cultural roots. Since Islamic law requires an unmarried woman to be kept away from the men’s living area, it would not be wrong to assume that social and cultural perception of the public was influenced by that law. However, the director stated that:

*“next year, the female applicants will also be evaluated. But since this year is our first experience, we decided not to involve them”.*

Therefore, it can be assumed that, for the executives of the project, the cultural borders were not very tight and may flex in time.

Table 2. The Criteria – Themes and Codes

	Questions	Categories	Themes
Volunteers	Which of your qualifications do you think was the reason of your acceptance for the project?	Specific skills that fit to the project’s need	Basketball skills Working with disabled people Sport skills Like sports Like youth activities Capoeira
Director	What type of qualifications did you look for before accepting the volunteers to the project?	Criteria to eliminate the applicants	Cultural problems Difficult for a woman to stay in wrestlers’ dormitory Advantage for the institute
		Criteria to choose the volunteers	Eliminated the 14 applicants first Older Mature Experienced CVs Active work of Pasquale Activities of Paolo Men Gender Age Qualification
		Specific skills that fit to the project’s need	Swimming certification Education in Spanish dance

The other two categories were “the criteria of choosing the volunteers” and “specific skills that fit to the project’s needs.” Here, the qualifications of the volunteers were evaluated and volunteers themselves considered the arguments for being eligible for this project in terms of their “specific skills that fit to the project’s needs.” Sport skills, being able to work with people with disabilities, and enjoying youth activities were some of the reasons that the volunteers figured to support their acceptance by the project managers.

In SLT, Stebbins (2009) claims that career volunteers are a part of serious leisure because they use their specific skills, knowledge, and experience in the activities. In the current study, both the volunteers’ and the director’s perceived qualifications were sought in volunteers as specific skills. Therefore, it would

not be wrong to figure that the two young volunteers in this study were career volunteers who are expected to obtain various collective and individual rewards from their planned leisure. Their experience in this project will most likely contribute to their career in sport, aside from any other benefits they gain.

The **efficiency of the volunteers** in the organization is also examined in order to understand the execution of the project and the efficiency in activities found to be related to the volunteers' specific skills mentioned above. During the observations of the activities that the volunteers take part in, the researcher noticed the good motor skills of the volunteers in activities such as playing tennis, table tennis, swimming, and so on. Likewise, in their statements during interviews, the volunteers considered themselves more effective in "youth and sport activities" such as playing basketball with children and the walking activity on Sundays. (Table 3). The directorate's opinions agreed that the volunteers were more efficient in "youth and sport activities" as well as "language teaching activities" and "project-writing activities."

Table 3. The Efficiency – Themes and Codes

	Questions	Categories	Sub- Categories	Themes
Volunteers	In which duties do you think that you are more efficient?	The activities that the volunteers are more efficient	Youth and Sport Activities	Youth activities Basketball with kids Walk on Sunday morning
			Activities of teaching language	Teaching English Italian course Organizing courses
		The benefits through the activities		
Director	In which duties do you think that the volunteers are more efficient?	The activities that the volunteers are more efficient	Youth and Sport Activities	Sportive activities Summer sport school Work in 33 branches Supporting personnel in sportive activities Assistant instructor in sports Supporting position
			Activities of teaching language	Modeling in language development Italian course
			Activities of writing a project	Education of writing a project
		The benefits through the activities		

In addition to their efficiency, the sports participants evaluated the volunteers' performance as high in contributing to activities such as swimming and basketball (Table 4). Here, their athletics skills, which were the criteria for being chosen for the project at the beginning, seem to correspond with their efficiency in sports activities.

Moreover, as the director states, the language of the participants and the athletes developed via the invisible support of the volunteers. By being informative, speaking English, and being a role model in the sport disciplines in which they excelled, the volunteers were considered to have provided learning opportunities in the activities they attended. Indeed, the researcher observed that the synergic work of the volunteers motivated the participants. The children, for example, were making jokes, laughing out loud, and singing during their swimming course in which Pasquale was the monitor. They watched him carefully.

Overall, all the parties found the performance and efficiency of the volunteers in the project satisfactory. This could be considered an indication of good execution of the project in general terms.

**Benefits**

In this chapter, it is sought to determine the benefits of being a part of a project such as the EVS . According to the interviews, the benefits of the project (they could be called rewards) appeared to be reciprocal.

Content analyses of the interviews with the volunteers and the directorate led us to two mutual dimensions of the benefits (Table 4). The first one is “social benefits,” to which both parties agreed. The director’s clear statements, such as “socialization is the biggest contribution of the volunteers”, addressed those social benefits/ rewards. The second mutual benefit was found to be “learning and improvement”, which could also be considered an element of personal rewards. Both parties agreed that the exchange in language learning was a particularly satisfying reward. The researcher observed that the volunteers spoke Turkish most of their spare time whenever they were among Turkish people and communicated with confidence.

Table 4. The Benefits – Themes and Codes

	Questions	Categories	Themes
Volunteers	What kind of benefits did you gain from this project?	Social benefits	like Turkish people like being in Turkey fun with friends met with new friends
		Learning and improvement	learned Turkish learn about Turkey
		Cultural benefits	opportunity to travel opportunity to see around in Turkey discovering a new culture
Director	What kind of benefits did ADYS gain from this project?	Social benefits	Engagement of the volunteers with the directorate’s employee Social contribution Socialization is the biggest contribution
		Learning and improvement	Guiding the kids to the institute to learn language Language development of the kids
		Organizational benefits	The one and only directorate having foreigner volunteers We are proud Increasing sensibility of the society for the institution The emulation among the organizations The positive feedback of public Increasing expectation of public The institute as a center of attraction The prestige of the Directorate

The volunteers’ statements pointed out another dimension, which was defined as “cultural benefits.” Discovering a new country and travel opportunities were evaluated by the volunteers as important advantages of the project. Paolo (age 22), for instance, states: “I had the opportunity to travel and sightsee around Turkey. It is a strange culture, but I like it”. Pasquale (age, 20) states:

*“having this opportunity led us to discovering a new culture, learning about Turkey”.*

Actually, according to Stebbins (2009), volunteers providing services or benefits to others also benefit and receive various rewards (it can be associated with SET): social interactions, self-enriching experiences, and contributing to and sharing a group success. Indeed, in this study, the benefits to the volunteers emerge as social benefits, learning and improvement (which can be considered personal rewards as well) and, since it is a cross-cultural experience, cultural benefits. The social benefits included making new friends and having fun with friends, which corresponds to Stebbins’ social interactions. Learning a new language, discovering a new culture, etc., are the other benefits of volunteering that correspond to the SLT’s self-enriching experiences. Comparisons could be varied. In the same way, numerous studies found in the subject

literature support the aforementioned findings of this study. Clary et al. (1998) determined that the motivational functions of volunteering in their inventory are the protection and enhancement of one's values, understanding, social benefits, and career-related benefits. These personal and social motives are generally supported by other studies. For example, Doherty (2009) found that social enrichment, community contribution, and a positive life experience were the benefits that the volunteers obtain from a sports event. Parallel to this study's findings on social and personal rewards, Surujlal and Dhurup (2008) claimed that "social interaction, skill enhancement, personal rewards, and personal enrichment" were the four dimensions of the benefits that the volunteers derive from volunteering. Supporting the study's findings, Bradbury and Kay (2008) also mentioned "personal and skill development" and "social connectedness" as the two elements that benefit young people who volunteer. In brief, confirming the SLT's assumptions and the related literature, the current study exposed varying social and personal benefits of the volunteering practice.

As another theory upon which the study is based, SET assumes that, in every social relationship, there are costs and rewards that depend on reciprocal advantages and an exchange of benefits. Simply and inevitably, the common costs for the volunteers in this case can be described as the time they spend away from their countries, the effort they make during activities, and the energy they expend for their duties in the project. Since the study focuses on the rewards (benefits) of volunteering, the costs of the parties are not examined in detail.

However, the rewards of the young volunteers were multifaceted. They might be summarized as *social* benefits (as supported in Bradbury & Kay, 2008; Clary et al., 1998; Doherty, 2009; Hoye et al., 2008; Stebbins, 2009; Surujlal and Dhurup, 2008; Wang, 2004), *personal* benefits (as in Bradbury & Kay, 2008; Hoye et al., 2008; Stebbins, 2009; Surujlal and Dhurup, 2008), and *cultural* benefits. These benefits for the volunteers are gained through relations with the organization members of ADYS and the sports participants. Since they are satisfied with the benefits and happy to be a part of the project, the rewards could be considered as bigger than the costs. Therefore, according to the SET's costs and rewards balance, the EVS is a worthy experience to have.

Another dimension of examining the SET's suggestion is examining the exchange between the organization and the volunteers from the ADYS's viewpoint. ADYS's costs in this project are thought to include the personnel's time and effort required for executing the project and the partial expenses of the volunteers remaining from the budget provided by the EU. However, the rewards are, again, multi-dimensional. The director's statements pointed out that there were *organizational benefits* in addition to the *social benefits* and *learning and improvement*. Here, social benefits indicate the socialization in the whole organization, while learning and improvement stands for the sport participants' learning. More importantly, the organizational benefits that the ADYS gained in the process include development, popularization, and the prestige of the institute. Indeed, during observations it was noticed that most of the sport participants tended to ask where the volunteers were and to choose an activity in which the volunteers took part. To illustrate, a 14-year-old interviewee stated that Pasquale was the reason for his attending a swimming course in the first place and that swimming exercises were more fun with the volunteer. Those rewards of the EVS are evaluated as resulting in the project being considered worth its total costs.

Studies on Serious Leisure also support the findings on organizational rewards. Misener et al. (2010) claimed that contributing to their sports organization was a reward for the volunteers and that there was an altruistic source of motivation for the volunteers, as SLT suggests. Similarly, Cuskelly et al. (2002) found that career volunteers of Serious Leisure tended to have more organizational commitment than the other (marginal) volunteers. As the studies point out and the current study's findings demonstrate, career volunteers develop strong relations with their organization, and this relationship results in significant organizational improvement. In the project, ADYS acquired benefits that enhance its internal and external environments through the strong social relationships of young volunteers with sport participants and employees in the organization.

The benefits for the third party, the sport participants, are similar to the benefits for both the volunteers and the organizations. Social benefits, as well as learning and improvement, are exactly the same categories that emerged from the themes and personal enjoyment is an additional category that stands for themes such as fun, happiness, and laughing (Table 5). Indeed, particularly children and young participants were observed to be having fun during the activities. Obviously, sport participants also had their exchange of costs and rewards in the project. Their costs can be outlined as their time, energy, and money required to enroll; their rewards can simply be categorized in terms of social and personal benefits. According to SET's balance of exchange, the participants seem to find the relations with volunteers beneficial.

Table 5. The Issues: Themes and Codes

	Questions	Categories	Themes
Volunteers	In your opinion, are there any issues with this project?	Issues due to Communication	3 directors don't speak each other directors don't speak English problems with communications
		Issues due to accommodation and subsistence	problems with Internet and washing machine problems with accommodation and food Dormitory is not satisfying. The food is not satisfying
		Issues due to the schedule	Activities are not enough if there were more activities I'd enjoy more my time
Director	In your opinion, are there any issues with this project?	Cultural and personal conflicts	The age of volunteers Cultural differences Being tardy Being absent Abuses Problems with being punctual
		Adaptation problems	Adaptation problems Adaptation problems when return from a bigger cities

### Issues

Finally, in this part attempts to determine the issues and limitations of the EVS project. A question was asked of the volunteers, the director, and the participants regarding the issues in the project (Table 5).

Overall, all the interviewees stated that there was no significant problem, but there were minor conflicts at the beginning of the project, caused by insufficient acclimatization of the volunteers. According to the volunteers, *communication* problems were caused by the fact that the three managers of the ADYS do not speak to each other about the volunteers' issues. Inglis (1994) reported five dimensions of volunteer needs in an organization: personal growth, responsibility, contribution, recognition, and relations. Relations are therefore important for the volunteers' satisfaction. Moreover, SET assumes that relations which are not satisfying may end. Therefore, it might be extrapolated that the young volunteers and the staff in an organization are expected to show respect for each other's benefits in their relations. In this case, the volunteers chose to stay in the project. Despite the conflicts with the personnel and the problems in communication, they declared that the problems were solved in time. This might account for SET's assumption of balance of costs and rewards. In other words, relevant to SET, since they chose to stay, the volunteers in this study must have found more rewards than costs in the project. Actually, the findings related to their benefits noted above support this opinion.

Another issue, according to the volunteers, was the physical conditions described as issues due to accommodation and subsistence. The volunteers were not satisfied with the conditions of the dormitory, food, etc. The hosting organization in an EVS project has the right to accommodate the volunteers in any place they can arrange. In this case, the ADYS designated the wrestler's dormitory as the place the where

volunteers were accommodated. Access to the dormitory's cafeteria, which serves meals three times a day, was provided to volunteers for food and beverage. The researcher visited the dormitory and had lunch in the cafeteria twice. Objectively, the food and the rooms were found to be of sufficient quality. To clarify, even though the physical conditions were already adjusted for young people's needs, they seem to have failed to meet the expectations of the two young volunteers.

A remarkable finding is that the volunteers wanted to attend more activities, while their schedule included only a few. They declared that sometimes they were bored due to a lack of activities appointed to them. Pasquale, for instance, stated, "the schedule must be reorganized again. And must be more organized." Paolo mentioned that they were happy with the schedule, which has changed recently, "but," he stated, "before the change, our program was a bit boring." The researcher analyzed the documents on the first and the last schedule of the volunteers and, indeed, found periods when the volunteers were kept inactive. The director explains this situation, saying that it was their first experience in EVS and that during their orientation the volunteers could not to speak Turkish. Paolo stated:

*"We prepared a flexible program at first. We wanted them to have free time to spend so they could adapt. But I guess they wanted to be more active".*

The schedule was finally changed according to the demands of the volunteers, and the leisure time and the off days were improved.

On the other hand, both the volunteers and the director stated that the issues were not significant and that they generally had good results from EVS. The volunteers were aware that these sorts of issues must be considered normal, and can be improved, as Paolo suggests in his statement:

*"We had problems, but we are the first volunteers in this program. So it doesn't mean that it will go on like this".*

To relate to SET, all the issues declared by the parties could be counted as the costs of the relations brought by the EVS. On the volunteers' side, having hard times in communication, disliking the food, or being bored; on the managers' side, spending extra effort to fix the schedules and conditions according to young people's needs could be a part of the costs. Yet the rewards, also known as benefits, must have been dominant in this case, so that the parties continue to take part in the project. As a matter of fact, even the problems themselves could turn into important experiences of individual development that can be treated as a reward from such a social interaction.

## Conclusion

The study has shown a wide array of benefits resulting from volunteering. Through the EVS project, sport organizations may show social improvement and organizational development through volunteering, while volunteers and sport participants receive benefits from participating in the form of social and personal rewards. These rewards are the result of a cost-reward relation according to SET. Because all the parties of the project are satisfied, rewards are considered as larger than the costs. Furthermore, the volunteers in this project are career volunteers as defined by the SLT; thus, they gain various social and personal benefits in addition to their career development. In short, a sort of "win-win" situation is observed in the course of the project. It is thought that youth volunteering projects providing this situation could improve individual development as well as social integration, social participation, and social awareness.

The EVS as a program both of the EU and volunteering itself are the concepts that are still in development in Turkey. The findings of this study may lead to an understanding of the importance of youth volunteering to both the society and the sport community, and result in a reconsideration of social policies in the sample country and in other states. Popularizing projects such as the EVS across the country is thought to help in implementing social policies in practice. The current study's findings on the benefits of volunteering may shed more light on those projects and encourage the policy-makers to pay more attention to the issue of volunteering.

This study had many limitations, beginning with a lack of literature and secondary data about volunteering in Turkey, following a lack of implementation of the voluntary activities into sports events and organizations. Furthermore, due to the case study character of the study, only one sample case was examined, so generalization on the basis of the results should be attempted with caution. Possible subjectivity in the interviews and in the researcher's observations should also be taken into account as uncontrollable factors influencing the research findings. Furthermore, in summarizing the findings, the benefits derived from volunteering are divided into generalized groups in this study.

Future research on volunteering in the context of its benefits could focus on the public's perception of youth volunteering in sport. Researchers could also focus on the relationship between social policies and youth volunteering. Finally, this study could be replicated in other instances of the EVS in Europe to generalize or compare their results.

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**AUTHOR'S ADDRESS:**

E. Esra Erturan-Ogut  
School of Physical Education and Sport  
Gazi University 06500 Teknikokullar, Ankara  
Email: erturan@gazi.edu.tr