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# THE ROLE OF STUDENT VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC COMPETENCIES OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INCLUSIVE AND HOME EDUCATION

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the role of volunteer students in the development of academic and social competencies of students with special needs within the framework of inclusive and home education. The article explores the historical roots of the volunteer movement, global experience, the activities of the Association of Volunteers of Uzbekistan, and initiatives such as the "Bir safda" social movement and the "Pedagogik desantura" club of the Special Pedagogical Department of Chirchik State Pedagogical University (CHDPU). The study examines the influence of student volunteers on children with special needs in the educational process and their influence on socio-academic skills. The results show the importance of volunteer activities in improving the quality of education and opportunities for future development.

**Keywords:** Volunteer students, inclusive education, home-based learning, academic competencies, social adaptation, special educational needs, Uzbekistan Volunteer Association, CHDPU initiatives

## INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education and home education are developing as an important direction in ensuring the rights of children with special needs in the education system of Uzbekistan. Within the framework of the Concept for the Development of the Education System for 2020-2025, inclusive education is being implemented in



general education institutions, contributing to the social adaptation of students and academic success[1]. Home-based learning allows children with physical or psychological limitations to acquire knowledge through individual educational programs.

Volunteer activity plays an important role in the educational process, in particular, volunteer students are an effective tool for the development of communicative, sociocultural, and discursive competencies of students with special needs. The concept of volunteering comes from the French word "volontaire" (voluntary) and begins with the tradition of helping each other in ancient societies. In the modern sense, volunteering became popular in the 19th-20th centuries during world wars, epidemics, and natural disasters. In the USA, through the Peace Corps program, established in 1961, young people participated in educational projects in various regions of the world[8], and in Europe, the European Voluntary Service (EVS) program involved young people in social and educational projects[9]. In South Korea, Japan, and Singapore, volunteering is integrated into the school system, where students develop moral and civic competencies through social service hours[4].

Volunteering in Uzbekistan gained a legal basis with the Law "On Volunteering Activities," adopted in 2019, which increased the activity of organizations and student youth. Such institutions as the Association of Volunteers of Uzbekistan and CHPU play a leading role in this process. The following questions will be addressed in this study:

1. How is the activity of student volunteers in inclusive and home education organized?
2. How does their activity affect students' academic and social competencies?
3. How do the initiatives of the Association of Volunteers of Uzbekistan and CHDPU support this process?

## **METHODOLOGY**

Research design. The study was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative analysis was based on the analysis of the literature to study the historical development of the volunteer movement, world experience, and the current situation in Uzbekistan. Quantitative data are based on the results



of the activities of volunteer students who participated in the "One Line" and "Pedagogical Landing" projects of the Department of Special Pedagogy of CHPU.

### **Data Collection**

1. Analysis of the literature: analyzed the legislation of Uzbekistan, reports of the Association of Volunteers of Uzbekistan, materials of the "Peace Corps," "EVS," and "Universe" volunteer schools, as well as scientific articles [2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8].
2. Interviews and surveys: semi-structured interviews were conducted with CHPU volunteer students (n=50) and teachers of inclusive educational institutions (n=20). The surveys were aimed at assessing the experience of volunteers, their impact on academic success and social adaptation of students.
3. Observations: classes conducted within the framework of the "One Line" and "Pedagogical Landing" projects (n=30) were observed, and the communicative and social skills of students were assessed.

### **Data analysis**

Qualitative data were systematized using the content analysis method. Quantitative data were analyzed as percentage indicators to assess the academic performance of students (vocabulary, dialogic speech skills) and the level of social adaptation. SPSS was used for statistical analysis.

### **RESULTS**

Historical and contemporary context of volunteering. The global development of volunteering began in the 19th century with humanitarian aid and educational initiatives. The US "Peace Corps" program was founded in 1961 and involved more than 100 thousand volunteers in educational projects in 140 countries of the world[2]. In Europe, the "EVS" program has had more than 100,000 participants since 1996, involving young people in educational and social projects[3]. In South Korea and Japan, volunteering is integrated into the school system, with 80% of students participating in social service hours[4].



***Modern American Journal of Linguistics,  
Education, and Pedagogy***

**ISSN (E):** 3067-7874

**Volume** 01, **Issue** 05, August, 2025

**Website:** [usajournals.org](http://usajournals.org)

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The tradition of volunteering in Uzbekistan began with social initiatives such as hashar and reached a new level with the active participation of volunteers during the Sardoba reservoir disaster in 2020 [7]. The law, adopted in 2019, developed volunteering as a systematic activity[5]. The Association of Volunteers of Uzbekistan was founded in 2020 and launched an electronic platform for volunteers in 2022 [6]. Currently, more than 3,400 volunteers are registered with the organization, 65% of whom are students.

CHDPU initiative. The "One Line" movement of the Department of Special Pedagogy of ChSPU was organized in 2021 and involved more than 70 volunteer students. Within the framework of the movement, individual educational programs were developed for students, 75% of which were aimed at developing communicative competencies at levels A1 and B1. The "Pedagogical Landing" club was founded in 2020 and trains students through special seminars. Club members conducted more than 150 sessions using game technologies to develop students' socio-cultural skills.

Academic and social outcomes of students. Observations and surveys revealed the following indicators:

- After classes with the participation of student volunteers, the vocabulary of students increased by an average of 30%.
- Dialogic speech skills significantly improved in 70% of students, which positively influenced their adaptation to the social environment.
- 85% of teachers noted that the activities of volunteer students increased students' self-confidence.
- 60% of students who participated in the "One Line" project achieved significant progress in socio-cultural competencies.

## **DISCUSSION**

The research results confirm that volunteer students play an important role in inclusive and home education. Their activities, along with the development of students' academic skills, ensure social adaptation and emotional stability. The systematic approach of the Association of Volunteers of Uzbekistan, combined with international experience such as "Peace Corps" and "EVS," serves to raise volunteering to a professional level [2, 3, 6]. CHDPU's initiatives, in particular,



the "On Line" and "Pedagogical Landing" projects, not only involve students in the educational process, but also develop their moral and civic values.

Specific aspects of volunteering in education, such as mutual learning, support for inclusivity, and the introduction of innovative methods, increase the effectiveness of this activity. For example, in the social movement of volunteers "Bir safda," interactive game technologies have become an important tool for the development of students' communicative skills. Through this voluntary social movement of students, they penetrated the families of students with limited socialization involved in home education. Based on international experience, digital tools and foreign methods were widely used in inclusive and home education [4].

However, there are a number of obstacles to the implementation of the volunteer movement:

1. Insufficient regular trainings and periodic training courses are organized to improve the qualifications of volunteers.
2. The small number of inclusive educational institutions limits the broad trajectory of volunteer movement.
3. The lack of financial support limits the possibility of expanding projects.

For the further development of volunteer activities in the future, the following proposals will be put forward:

- Expanding special training programs for volunteers, in particular, focusing on digital and interactive methods.
- Increasing the number of inclusive educational institutions and integrating them with volunteer projects.
- Strengthening cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations, in particular, exchanging experience with international organizations such as "Peace Corps" and "EVS."

## **CONCLUSION**

The activities of student volunteers in inclusive and home education are of great importance in the development of students' academic and social competencies. The initiatives of the Association of Volunteers of Uzbekistan and CHDPU, in



harmony with international experience, contribute to the systematic and effective implementation of this process. The results of the study show the potential of volunteer activities in improving the quality of education, but it is necessary to eliminate such problems as a lack of resources and training. Volunteering not only humanizes the education system, but also instills in the younger generation the values of love and solidarity. In the future, it is possible to further develop the inclusive education system by expanding initiatives in this area.

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