



The Volunteer Movement: Goodwill is the Foundation of Humanity

Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Kingdom of Belgium

Today, the volunteer movement is an integral part of the social sphere, which provides gratuitous assistance to people in difficult life situations.

Uzbekistan is at the stage of active reforms. Large-scale transformations open new opportunities for solving actual socio-economic, socio-political, cultural, and humanitarian problems. One of the priority directions of development of Uzbekistan, in addition to

improving state and social construction, ensuring the rule of law, and reforming the judicial and legal system, developing, and liberalizing the economy, ensuring security, interethnic harmony and religious tolerance, implementing a balanced, mutually beneficial, and constructive foreign policy, is the development of the social sphere.

Today, the most active manifestation of volunteer activity is gratuitous assistance to those in difficult life situations - orphans, people with disabilities and lonely elderly people, immigrants, etc. The goal is to provide them with material and psychological support, to protect their legal rights, to open new opportunities for socialization.

Intensive development of the volunteer movement in the country necessitated the legalization of this direction. On December 2, 2019, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed the Law "On volunteer activities", the purpose of which is to regulate it.

The document enshrines the status of a volunteer and volunteer organization, reflects the goals and objectives, principles, and measures to stimulate volunteer organizations. The law defines volunteering as the implementation of voluntary activities by citizens, their groups, or organizations in the interests of individuals and (or) legal entities. Also given definitions of the concepts of "volunteer", "group of volunteers", "volunteer action", "volunteer organization" and others.

At the end of 2019, the I Republican Forum of Volunteers with the participation of more than 200 activists was held. The goal was to unite volunteers, explain the essence of volunteering in accordance with legislation, organizing a fair of volunteer movements for the exchange of experience, demonstrating the versatility of volunteering.

During the coronavirus pandemic in the Republic of Uzbekistan, volunteers working under the coordination of the Agency for Youth Affairs, as well as employees of relevant departments and organizations, played a special role in preventing and combating the further spread of COVID-19.

The youth agency launched the volontyor.uz platform. With the help of this platform, the registration of youth of the republic as volunteers was organized. They registered as social or health volunteers and worked in conjunction with the regional office and local offices of the Agency for Youth Affairs. As a result, a base of all volunteers of the Republic was formed and work to support their activities in each region was carried out.

During the quarantine period, 935 volunteers at charity focal points helped to receive appeals from the population in need, while 9.7 thousand young people provided charitable products to more than 500 thousand households.

Heavy rain and strong winds led to the collapse of a part of the Sardoba Reservoir dam in Syrdarya region, on May 1, 2020. The nearby settlements, communication networks and agricultural areas suffered great damage, residential buildings and other objects were

flooded. About 70 thousand people left homeless were evacuated to safe areas. In one day, compassionate citizens from all over the country collected hundreds of tons of food, clothing, various implements, and toys. Observing the quarantine requirements, the volunteers were engaged in sorting, loading, and delivering aid to the disaster area, and provided psychological assistance to the victims.

In April 2020, Bukhara and Navoi regions suffered from squally winds. The disaster damaged more than 45 thousand buildings and 42.4 thousand trees. More than a thousand volunteers along with OJSC "Uzbek Railways" employees and other state and non-state organizations in the Bukhara region took an active part in the repair work. By joint efforts in the Karakul, Jandar, Alat, Romitan, Peshkun and Shafirkan regions, renovated 45 thousand individual houses and 204 multi-apartments.

Youth organizations are actively working to implement the world's largest educational volunteer movement - scouting. In May 2021, Shrinat Tirumal Venugopal, Regional Director of the World Scout Bureau's Eurasian Support Center, paid a visit to our country. A Memorandum was signed between the Youth Union of Uzbekistan and the Eurasian Support Center on mutual understanding, which provides for interaction in the field of comprehensive development and education of children and youth, promotion of a healthy lifestyle, the formation of civic responsibility, support for children's and youth initiatives, as well as the implementation of active programs for the development of the volunteer movement in Uzbekistan.

“I met many creative young people who volunteer and are role models in Uzbekistan,” summed up his observations Shrinat Tirumal Venugopal.

On the eve of the election of the President of the Republic, volunteers are preparing to this important event: many of them will become interpreters for observers at polling stations, accompany guests. There is no such area where volunteers would not show themselves in any business, they are initiators of their own projects: they unite on social networks for the search for missing persons, fundraising for costly operations, environmental protection, or free transfer of knowledge, coordinate blood donation.