

Voluntary Work and Social Work: Two Activities Encountering Human Rights Issues

An Abstract of the Thesis By
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Our world has always been confronted with challenges. In the previous years, the refugee crisis was considered to be one of most urgent issues worldwide. Germany was one of the countries which hosted a large number of refugees, hence social work and voluntary work were the backbones of countering this crisis. However, something was missing. This research aims at understanding this blank, this space that is missing something, in order to enlighten the working process of social and voluntary work as well as to understand what the position of being both a refugee and a volunteer could teach us. During my research, I found that both social workers and volunteers agree that something is missing, i.e. well-structured projects that go beyond the basics and focus on fundamentals. My research provided an explanation of intersections among social and voluntary work, illustrating the fact that they are two connected activities, one with a structural starting point and the other with a practical one. An explanation of the position of a volunteer, who is at the same time a refugee, was presented reflecting the need to question our perspectives towards refugee volunteers and the huge impact their work can have. The importance of these findings lies in the fact that such research can help us understand the current situation of social and voluntary work. It is an eye-opening approach to answer the most pressing questions of today, hence helping to evaluate what has been achieved so far. It is an important step not only for today, but for future studies to put more effort into social and voluntary work. In our globalized world, migration didn't and won't stop. That leaves us with the question: how can we learn from our current experiences and make sure we are prepared for future changes?