may be that the proportion of students in a minority situation, which increases the involvement in voluntary groups, is the highest in the Ukrainian sample and the lowest in the Hungarian one. Another explanation could be that in Ukraine, since the Orange Revolution, there has been an upswing in civic movements (organizational membership, volunteering, donations, etc.) as a reaction to the improper functioning of the state, whereby people compensate deficiencies through greater civic engagement (Worschech, 2017).

Conclusions

We have seen that young people’s civic engagement and volunteering in Central-Eastern Europe is relatively low, although positive changes have occurred (which we have addressed in our first hypothesis). We have shown as well, that volunteering has a positive impact on its participants, target group, and environment. We propose that higher education institutions in Eastern European regions should rely on the potential in students’ volunteering formally, that is, in an organized way or by awarding it with credits. Our data clearly show that in Romania, where volunteer work has been recognized as a form of internship since 2014, the rate of volunteering has increased significantly. Institutions could employ a dedicated professional to coordinate volunteering and “discuss” experiences. The activities offered to students in that way may also provide them with knowledge and with a variety of soft skills, which are less “transferable” by higher education institutions. In addition, it is important for policymakers of education and higher education institutions to take into account our findings on subgroups of students, which display lower civic engagement so that promoting volunteering and organizational participation among them becomes a priority.

Acknowledgements

Project no. 123847 has been implemented with the support provided from the National Research, Development, and Innovation Fund of Hungary, financed under the K_17 funding scheme.

References


Mabry, B.J. (1998). Pedagogical Variations in Service-Learning and Student Outcomes:


Pusztai, G. (2015). *Pathways to student success*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang


