

SHORT KEY FINDINGS – Focus group and online quiz report

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Key findings Solidarity FGD`s

In order to contribute to the understanding of solidarity in Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary, Macedonia and Poland, the Foundation Ana and Vlade Divac with partner organizations from these countries has implemented the project "Celebrating Solidarity", supported by the program "Europe for Citizens". The main objective of this project is to contribute to the understanding of European values and the importance of solidarity for both socioeconomic and political development. In addition, the project aims to:

1. To improve conditions for direct civic and inter-cultural participation of citizens,
2. To explore solidarity on a transnational level, in different occasions and times, with focus on intergenerational solidarity,
3. To contribute to better understanding and discuss the value of solidarity in different times of crises and from national point of view,
4. To promote and advance solidarity within societies and on EU level.

Previous studies have pointed to a variety of problems in all countries related, inter alia, the lack of tolerance and solidarity between people. There is a lack of studies in the field of solidarity, though all countries even though citizens of all countries are generally recognized as generous and tolerant people. Young people have the potential for the development of solidarity and therefore young people can be seen as the driving force for the development of solidarity in society.

To further examine the perceptions and attitudes of young people on this subject the partners from every country have organized two focus group discussions, by country, through which the opinion of young people was heard directly, especially the young people who are turned towards the values of solidarity. In each country, two focus groups were conducted, one FGD with younger people (15-20 years of age) and the other with slightly older participants (21-30

years of age). Total number of participants in all countries were 85, of which 44 in younger group, and 41 in "older" group. In addition, the aim of the discussions was at the same time to raise the awareness of the various aspects of solidarity at the same time.

Key findings Solidarity online quiz

Second way to understand solidarity in in Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary, Macedonia and Poland, was with conducting on-line quiz in those countries. Participants in quiz were younger people who are using internet. There were 7096 quiz participants in total 18 to 30 years of age, number of participants by country is: Serbia (1034), Poland (1062), Macedonia (1012), Hungary (1901), Bulgaria (1054) and in Albania (1032).

Around 4/5 of population in total who took part in on-line quiz have said that Government should manage aid or be responsible for removing poverty and inequality in society. They recognize people in need, orphans, people with disabilities, and victims of natural disasters as most likely to stand in solidarity with.

When thinking whom would they help first, respondents from all countries put victims of natural disasters, cataclysms or war as people they would help first – around 44%, next are members of close community (21%) and people from their country (15%).

When asked would they contribute personal time, in average respondents would allocate around 10 hours monthly for the solidarity cause they support. If there were natural disaster most participants would collect food or shoes/clothes for people in need.

Respondents think that the time or money is well spent when they see obvious progress on issue they stand in solidarity with, and when they see that the ones they helped are happy.

Conclusion

The research, through all countries that conducted FGD-s and on-line quiz, has indicated that solidarity is an important topic among young people and that the participants, especially, in focus groups were very involved in this regard, they feel empathy with people who are in some kind of trouble.

When it comes to how they recognize the crisis, poverty and vulnerable groups, we can conclude that a great deal of these concepts is associated with a lack of money. Even when they break down the terms to "superficial" and "deeper" poverty, the crisis on the "lack of something" or "long-term problem"- in the end, participants across all countries, point out that most vulnerable groups are some of the poorest, Roma, older people and people with

disabilities. Participants, when they talk about possible solutions, to the greatest extent point out the possibility of doing any jobs that again indicates the possibility of earning money.

Then, when it comes to direct actions which are related to other, their or institutional solidarity actions, we can point out that FGD participants, and on-line examinees, are largely engaged and try to be involved to the extent their free time allows.

In order to raise awareness, it is important to show young people a clear interpretation of the word solidarity, especially from the aspect of common good, through all countries. Considering the fact that vast number of focus groups' participants' perception of solidarity equals to individual stories, without the perspective that it should serve the common good of the society. Humanitarian actions should not be just reaction to crisis. Solidarity should be part of everyday life and sent towards all the individuals in the society, with an emphasis on common good.

Government involvement in solving issues is necessary, however citizen, community and NGO actions are seen as more effective in solving problems.