

Catalonia and the value of volunteering

Submitted by F Pere Tarrés on Dc, 01/10/2014 - 17:33

Catalonia means **volunteering**. We could verify that in the last Onze de Setembre (September 11th) demonstration, where in addition to the people taking part in it, lots of others were making the event possible. We can see this just by looking at the work camps taking place every summer here, or when Catalans go abroad to take part in other camps. We can see it when we perform **Els Pastorets** at Christmas, and **the Passions** and **Processons** at Easter at multiple places across the country. And also at the many "Day of..." events, carried out as festivals and cultural and commercial initiatives in many towns and cities in order to strengthen further related initiatives.

There is another kind of **volunteering**, perhaps not as publicized, perhaps not as striking. The volunteering done by people who work very hard to reduce the consequences and, if possible, also the cause of illnesses affecting their relatives. Or those who simply spend some time at homes for the elderly to keep aged people company. Or even those who devote a Saturday afternoon working as instructors in leisure time centres or schools.

These are all signs of hope, especially this last kind of discreet **volunteering**. Because actions are carried out on a voluntary basis, without expecting anything in return, based on pure altruism and generosity.

In fact, as a journalist, I've often had the opportunity to interview or portray these people who base their way of life on **generosity**, in many cases on a completely free and altruistic basis – yet again something else are those who do their job with generosity towards their colleagues and their environment, who are thoroughly praiseworthy, too. And in most cases, after making these interviews, these documentaries and pieces of work, I end up asking myself why there are **members of society**, who decide to overcome fear, laziness, shame... and put themselves at the service of others, without expecting anything in return. This is a great mystery which you can only solve – and even then just partly – by asking them directly. And I say just partly, because most of them answer quite enigmatically: "It just comes out that way". Great! Chapeau.

Nevertheless, I'd like to claim that there is indeed one reason that moves these people to act the way they do: to strive. To make an effort to overcome laziness, fear, shame... and to put into practice this **generosity** I referred to. Possibly, over time, and many won't even notice, generosity – which is a possibility we carry in ourselves – may actually not be as important as egoism. Egoism as the will to strive to achieve something. To struggle to improve ourselves, to change, to act more as humans. This is what I still admire about volunteering. Because it's challenging. Because it takes a lot. So think twice whenever they tell you that "it just comes out that way". Volunteering is much harder than it seems, and it demands a huge commitment and mobilization.

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Resum:

Valors magazine explains that discreet volunteering exists in Catalonia and is sign of hope because actions are carried out on a voluntary basis, without expecting anything in return, based on pure altruism and generosity.

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