

Volunteers:
Their Reasons and Rewards



Volunteers: Their Reasons and Rewards¹

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Introduction

The potential effects of the organizational self-assessment project described in *Volunteers: Their Reasons and Rewards* by Charles M. Bonjean call to mind the image of a pebble dropped into a pool of water—the ripples never cease. As is often the case with new organizational endeavors, this self-assessment study owes its existence to a project that happened at the local level first.

In 1973, the Area V Council of the Association of Junior Leagues, which included the Texas Junior Leagues, approached the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health for assistance in developing a leadership seminar. One of the tools used in the seminar was a short questionnaire designed to sharpen members' insights into their organizational behavior and to provide them with a better understanding of their relationship to various components of the organization. Response was enthusiastic, and members indicated that they felt the tool would enable them to understand themselves and their organization better, as well as to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in both.

At the request of the Council, the self-study session was developed further and was offered as part of another areawide seminar the following year. I had the good fortune, as president of the Association, to be invited to participate in this exciting meeting and then to assist the Council in arranging to have it repeated in 1975 at the League's annual conference. Two months later, the Association asked the Hogg Foundation to study all components of its organizational structure.

As a result, the Junior League and the Foundation have been working together continuously on this research and the development of the self-study packet for the last decade. The "pebble" that was dropped by a group of 10 enthusiastic volunteers, with professional assistance from the Hogg executive staff, started

ripples that spread from the Junior Leagues in Texas to 251 Junior Leagues in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The Organizational Self-Assessment packet that was the product of the study can be used periodically by an organization that wishes to evaluate its internal structure and its members' attitudes within a relatively short time frame and without the expense of an outside consultant. It is now available to all associations in the independent sector; this dynamic project and the OSA packet will engender ripples that never cease.

Mary D. Poole
President, 1974-76
Association of Junior Leagues

Volunteers: Their Reasons and Rewards

Like most other developed societies, the United States has relied more and more on large, complex, and usually successful agencies in meeting both the routine and the special needs of its citizens. This is true not only in the area of the physically and mentally handicapped, but also in related areas such as child development, family welfare, health, education, criminal justice, urban planning and countless other social services. Yet it would be an illusion to believe or assume that our large array of public agencies has fulfilled or could effectively fulfill society's needs by themselves. A unique and major strength of American society is that private initiatives have always played an important role in these areas.

Often referred to as the "independent sector," private activities in support of public purpose are of five major types:

- ◆ individually volunteered time and energy,
- ◆ work of voluntary non-profit organizations dedicated to a cause,
- ◆ individual gifts of money or material goods,
- ◆ gifts by business and industry, and
- ◆ gifts by private foundations.

The collective impact of these efforts is significant. In 1982, private giving in the United States—including individual, foundation, and corporate gifts—totaled \$60.4 billion. Even more impressive, however, is the estimated dollar value of time volunteered by Americans in a variety of social and community services. This effort was estimated at \$64.5 billion in 1981. In short, the role of the private or independent sector in helping to meet human needs is not a small one, and the nature and quality of public-private cooperation is critical in meeting our present needs and in planning for the future.

Nonetheless, knowledge of the private sector—philanthropy and voluntarism—is somewhat meager compared to what we know about the public sector. Self-assessment or internal evaluation in the world of voluntary associations is also infrequent and usually not rigorous or extensive. This paper summarizes a joint endeavor of the Association of Junior Leagues and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, which was an effort to (1) learn more about volunteers and their organizations and (2) make it possible for voluntary associations to engage in periodic, valid self-assessments on their own. Although this paper describes only one international voluntary association, it is safe to say that some of the findings and many aspects of the self-assessment packet developed are relevant to other organizations.

The following discussion presents some of the major findings of the study of the Association of Junior Leagues. Specifically, it focuses on what volunteers hope to experience through their participation, what pleased them most and least in their volunteer experiences, and their perceptions of the most appropriate roles for their organization in meeting community needs. The discussion concludes with a brief overview of the development and usage of the organizational self-assessment packet which grew out of this research effort.

Most people have some degree of familiarity with the Association of Junior Leagues, Inc. It is a federation of 251 Junior Leagues located throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico with a combined 1981 membership of more than 140,000 women. The official purposes of the Association and its member Leagues are "to promote voluntarism; to develop the potential of its members for voluntary participation in community affairs; and to demonstrate the effectiveness of trained volunteers."

From a structural standpoint, the Association has three major levels: the 251 local Leagues; six geographic Areas, each coordinated by an Area Council; and an Association Board and headquarters based in New York City. From a member's perspective, it might make more sense to see the organization as having four, rather than just three levels, since each local League also has its own board.

Local Leagues are usually "all volunteer" organizations, with members handling all administrative and policy-making duties. Members are also involved in many different types of community action "placements" and may serve as representatives of the League on other community boards. They are also involved in advocacy activities. League size varies considerably from as few as 100 members to three Leagues which have more than 2,000 members each.

Although Association-wide projects are fairly common, local Leagues exercise considerable autonomy in setting up specific goals and projects appropriate for their own communities. Local Leagues tend to be quite similar in their administrative structure, with a Board of Directors comprised of 20-30 officers and committee chairs who are recognized as wielding the most influence over *local* League affairs.

The Leagues generally identify candidates for membership through the sponsorship of several current members, a process which has become more "open" in recent years, and in some cases now even includes advertising in the community for interested candidates. Nonetheless, with few exceptions, League members do tend to be relatively homogeneous in terms of several demographic characteristics. They are usually white, well-educated, affluent women in their thirties. The vast majority are married and have children. In recent years, the major change in membership has been a significant increase in the proportion of employed women.

While, from one standpoint, the homogeneity of this "sample" may seem to limit the generalizability of the findings, from another it offers the opportunity to study somewhat intensively the type of person who is most likely to be involved in voluntarism.

Indeed, the recent Gallup poll on voluntarism suggests that those who are most likely to volunteer are females, those with fairly high incomes, people with children under 18 in the home, and those who are well-educated. In short, while the League sample is somewhat homogeneous, it does include the type of person in our society most likely to join a voluntary association.

The Study

The findings to be summarized are based on two representative samples of League members. The first is a sample of 1,830 members from 12 Leagues studied in 1976. The second set of data comes from responses of 913 members in five of the original 12 Leagues which were restudied in 1979-80.

In developing the study, the Foundation and the Association worked on the premise that organizational effectiveness and individual self-expression are intertwined. One cannot be achieved without the other—especially in voluntary associations. This finding, in turn, led to an emphasis of the following three major topics:

1. What do women expect from their volunteer activities and why might they select one organization over another?
2. How satisfied are Junior League members with their organizational participation and what aspects of participation are most likely to lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction? Is satisfaction related to other indicators of enthusiasm and commitment? What is the relationship between members' perceptions of the structure and their level of satisfaction?
3. What do League members see as the most significant problems in their communities, the relevance of these problems for organizational activity, and how willing are they as individuals to devote their own time and effort to these problem areas?

These are by no means the only topics covered by the research or in the self-assessment packet, but these were investigated in considerable detail, and they seem to be topics that would be of concern to voluntary associations in general, not just to the Association of the Junior Leagues.

Members' Expectations

Preliminary data gathering yielded a list of 18 general reasons for membership in voluntary associations (Figure 1). In the final version of the questionnaire, each respondent was asked to rate the importance to her of each of these reasons for membership. Analysis of these reasons suggests that the 18 specific reasons for membership may be collapsed to represent five more general motivational clusters. That is, there are five *general* reasons why the women in the samples joined voluntary associations and why they may have selected one organization over another.

For League members in general, *in order of importance*, these reasons are the following:

1. EASE OF PARTICIPATION. The vast majority of volunteers want their organizational activities to mesh with their own schedules and interests. Apparently they also see the time they can devote to voluntarism as limited, and thus they are especially interested in a streamlined organization where they can have input, but where as little time as possible is spent on administrative routine and decision making details. Items 16, 17, and 18 on page 10 in Figure 1 all represent various aspects of ease of participation.
2. Almost as important as ease of participation is OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRIENDSHIP AND GROUP INTERACTION. Almost 90 percent of

A.
Importance
To You

Figure 1

B.
Satisfaction
With Experience

Extremely Important	Important	Makes Some Difference	Makes No Difference		Completely Satisfactory	Satisfactory But Could Be Better	Barely Satisfactory	Completely Unsatisfactory
				1. Obtaining training to develop my skills in leadership and administration.				
				2. Working with congenial, interesting women.				
				3. Helping handicapped, underprivileged or disadvantaged groups in the community.				
				4. The opportunity to identify and/or pursue interests and training related to a career.				
				5. Doing interesting things that enable me to escape the routines of housework.				
				6. Fulfilling the expectations of my family and friends.				
				7. Playing a part in encouraging positive changes in my community.				
				8. A sense of prestige from my membership in the organization.				
				9. The opportunity to develop friendships.				
				10. Being able to identify major community problems and then doing something about them.				
				11. Associating with people who are of potential help to my husband or me in business or professional pursuits.				
				12. The opportunity to experience a variety of training opportunities for self development.				
				13. Exercising my own leadership and administrative talents.				
				14. The opportunity to improve myself by following the example set by other members.				
				15. Acquiring more knowledge about the community and how it operates.				
				16. Participating in an efficient organization which transacts its business with a minimum of wasted time and effort.				
				17. Being able to choose the activities that I want to engage in and/or the time I spend on them.				
				18. Participating in an organization characterized by a minimum of friction among its members.				

respondents rate item 2, "working with congenial, interesting women" at least "important," and over 80 percent consider item 9, "the opportunity to develop friendships," to be "important."

3. LEADERSHIP AND SELF DEVELOPMENT is the third most important reason for participating in organized voluntary activity. This response is represented by items 1, 4, 12 and 13 on the detailed list. While a vast majority of members rated these items as at least important, the percent endorsing them as "extremely important" was much smaller than was the case with the ease of participation and friendship and group interaction items.
4. Ranking 4th, and almost as important as Leadership and Self Development, is COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. Playing a part in encouraging positive community change (item 7 in the detailed list); being able to identify major community problems and then doing something about them (item 10); helping handicapped, underprivileged, or disadvantaged groups in the community (item 3); and acquiring more knowledge about the community and how it operates (item 15) are by no means unimportant to the volunteers in the sample, although, as was the case with leadership and self development, fewer of them rated these items as "extremely important."
5. The fifth reason for membership is PERSONAL GAIN, and it characterizes only a small minority of the volunteers we studied. In general, the women in our samples do not see the Junior League as a means to fulfill the expectations of family or friends (see item 6). Nor do they seek to use it to gain prestige (item 8) or as an aid in business or professional pursuits (item 11).

These then are the major reasons for voluntary association activity among the 2,743 members constituting the two representative samples of League members in the study. How applicable are they to other organizations? For general-purpose, community,

voluntary associations such as the Junior League, Junior Service League, Women's Clubs and others, they probably are quite applicable. While all five reasons for membership are probably more or less applicable in all voluntary associations, at least one other would seem plausible for special interest organizations such as the Mental Health Association or the American Cancer Society, for example. In such organizations, personal experience or close ties with others who have experienced the problem with which the organization is concerned would also seem to be a major reason for active participation.

So far, the portrait painted is a general one. Clearly, not all of the volunteers studied would rate these five general reasons for membership in the same order. Indeed, variations were found by age, employment status, duration of membership, leadership status, and family status. In more broadly-based organizations, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic status differences would also be important ones to identify.

Some variations were also found among local Leagues themselves. In one, community involvement tied for a first ranking with friendship and group interaction. In others, there was a reversal between leadership and self-development and community involvement. In short, while there are some advantages to be gained by looking at the central tendencies of an organization's membership, the possible diversity among types of members and between local affiliates may be equally important.

Member Satisfaction and Its Correlates

Member satisfaction is an important aspect of all types of organizations. Some organizational theorists have suggested, not surprisingly, that satisfaction is a consequence of the members' perceived rewards for their organizational efforts in the context of

the costs of those efforts. These rewards may be extrinsic to organizational tasks themselves—for example, pay, promotions, fringe benefits, and recognition—or they may be intrinsic, that is, a part of organizational experience itself.

Voluntary associations have fewer extrinsic rewards at their disposal than do most other types of organizations. In the volunteer setting, perhaps the most common extrinsic reward is recognition—identification and praise for outstanding volunteers or their elevation to positions of leadership. The latter, of course, could also involve increased personal costs. Other types of extrinsic rewards allocated by voluntary associations are prestige, access to social events, contact with valued others, or sense of collective good produced by the organization. Much more important in voluntary associations, however, are intrinsic rewards—factors tied to the organizational activity itself. Ease of participation, working with congenial co-members, challenge and control over what one does in the organization, and a feeling that the organization's major goals are consistent with the individual's values are all good examples of intrinsic rewards that could be offered by any organization.

In voluntary associations where members are not paid—that is, not usually given many extrinsic rewards—intrinsic rewards are especially critical. Moreover, in voluntary associations, high levels of satisfaction are especially important in recruiting new members, retaining present members, and in motivating them to meet or exceed minimal standards of performance as specified by the participants' role requirements.

This finding suggests the need for voluntary association leadership to understand what is important and not so important to their members—or, to assess the reasons why members join and why they continue to participate, as was done in the case of the Association of Junior Leagues. It also underscores the need to examine relative satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each of these reasons, especially the more important ones. It is known, for example, that the motivation and retention of members of the League is much more dependent upon ease of participation than it is upon factors associated with personal gain. Simply asking

individuals a general question about how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with Organization X would obscure this fact and would provide no knowledge about *why* individuals were satisfied or dissatisfied or what aspects of the organization they liked or disliked. Thus, Figure 1 illustrates the attempt to assess not only the importance of various aspects of organizational experience, but also the degree to which participants were satisfied with each.

Satisfaction among members was found to be quite variable from several perspectives: (1) members in general were more satisfied with some aspects of participation than they were with others, (2) the members in some Leagues were generally much more satisfied with most aspects of their participation than were members of others, and (3) some types of members in all Leagues displayed more satisfaction than other types of members.

The five more general reasons for membership can be ranked by the level of satisfaction reported by the 2,743 members making up the two representative samples. In both the 1976 sample and the 1979-80 sample, the levels of satisfaction with these organizational characteristics were the same. Members were **very** satisfied with their friendship and group interaction experiences; they were **moderately** satisfied with personal gain, ease of participation and leadership and self-development experiences; and they were **least** satisfied with their community involvement experiences.

These findings do suggest a dilemma for most voluntary associations. On the one hand, volunteers are attracted to organizations and will be likely to continue to participate in them if they have considerable freedom of choice in their selection of activities and the time and times they participate. Yet effective organization—in terms of its results—always requires the surrender of some personal choice. Too much individualism results in disorganization and the inability to achieve large goals which require collective action—goals such as effective community involvement and impact. In short, beyond a point, ease of participation may be inconsistent with the effective fulfillment of organizational goals such as community impact. Resolving this

dilemma will not be easy for Junior Leagues or for other voluntary associations.

Satisfaction varies not only by organizational characteristic, but it also varies from one local organization to another. Among the 12 representative Leagues studied, satisfaction in general could be described as quite high in four, moderately high in four others, and relatively low in the other four. As might be expected, Leagues that were characterized by problems with low membership satisfaction were also beset by high resignation rates, high rates of absenteeism, problems in recruiting new members and difficulty in meeting organizational goals. It is also significant and perhaps ironic to note that the more important community involvement was to members of a specific League, the lower was the overall satisfaction of the members of that League.

Finally, some types of members displayed consistently higher satisfaction than others. Older members, those who have belonged to the organization for some time, those who have held office, those who have school age children are the most likely to rate their League experiences as rewarding. By contrast, younger and newer members, those who have no children, and women who are employed have more reservations concerning the value of their organizational experience.

The importance of assessing membership satisfaction is underscored by its relationship to other indicators of enthusiasm, commitment and activity. In addition to the aggregate differences noted above when comparing Leagues with highly satisfied members with those Leagues having less satisfied members—in turnover, recruitment, absenteeism, and failure to meet stated goals—there were also important differences between individual members reporting high satisfaction and those indicating less satisfaction. High satisfaction was related to:

1. planning to remain active in the organization until reaching the age that League members are expected to go on to other types of community activities
2. rarely or never thinking about resigning

3. feeling that the League is well organized
4. believing that officers respond to members' desires and opinions
5. feeling that membership meetings are efficient and useful
6. strongly disagreeing with the notion that members are often treated as cogs in a machine
7. thinking that the organization is an open one in which new members can easily make friendships
8. having positive orientations toward the organization's officers
9. expressing good feelings toward other members
10. enjoying the work associated with the organization, and
11. devoting greater numbers of hours weekly to organizational activities.

In short, these data strongly support the notion that satisfaction is related to membership retention, active participation, and positive interpersonal relationships in voluntary associations.

There is also a relationship between members' perceptions of their own influence in the organization and their commitment to and enthusiasm for it. Perhaps more importantly, there is also a relationship between the "power gap"—the difference between perceived and preferred influence—and these same measures. Thus, members who see themselves as having little influence, but who desire more, are likely to respond more negatively to many of the same items indicating enthusiasm and commitment that were related to satisfaction. For example, the greater the difference between a member's perceived and preferred influence in the organization, the less likely she is to believe that the local board

is responsive to members' desires, the more likely she is to report that she becomes annoyed with the League's officers, and the more likely she is to report that she gets annoyed with other League members.

More directly, three of the four Leagues that were previously described as having high levels of membership satisfaction were also among the four Leagues whose members perceived the greatest amount of general membership influence and who indicated the lowest discrepancy between their perceived and preferred influence. The data suggest that members would prefer a more oligarchic or even distribution of power at the local level. But they also suggest that this should be achieved, *not* by decreasing Board control but rather by increasing the sense of membership efficacy. Local Leagues have reacted to this finding in a number of ways including efforts to include all types of members (younger and older, mothers and childless, employed and not employed, etc.) on their Boards, by limiting the number of terms or consecutive terms a member can serve on the Board, by delegating more decision making to committees, by offering the general membership alternative proposals rather than simply the opportunity to rubber stamp a Board decision and, in some cases, by reminding members that existing avenues for input are not being used. In short, as is the case with most perceived problems, there are two ways to approach them—either by changing aspects of the organization itself or, if appropriate, by changing members' perceptions of the organization through better information and educational efforts. The bottom line, of course, is whether the problems are real or simply incorrectly perceived.

Community Orientations of Members

A third research emphasis concerned the community orientations of League members and their perceptions of the most appropriate

roles for their organization in meeting community needs. During the research phase of the project, members were presented with a list of eleven community concerns ranging from cultural enrichment to minority groups.

A glance at Figure 2 indicates the types of concerns listed, although the list was revised and expanded for the packet described below. Room has been left for the addition of another area that may be equally or more important in some localities and to some local affiliates than those listed. Each member was first asked to rate the importance of each area in her community. For the sample as a whole, or for individual Leagues, these importance ratings may be converted into rankings. In 1976, child welfare was collectively considered the most important problem area across the 12 Leagues studied. This was followed in order by criminal justice, public education, and environmental issues. By 1979-80, unlike many other areas of inquiry, there were noticeable changes in members' perceptions of the relative importance of these involvement areas. Substance abuse (which has since been divided into a part of items 11—adult health and mental health, and 13, concerns of youth) was ranked first in 1979-80. This topic was followed by environmental issues, child welfare, and public education.

Asking members to rate community issues by general importance is not the same as asking them how their own organizations should relate to these issues. Some problems might well be inappropriate for Junior League action. The reasons for this may be several. The organization may not have the appropriate resources, including membership interest, or members may know that other groups—either national or local—are already working effectively in some of these areas. Thus members were also asked to rate each topic as to whether they believed *their League* had the capacity (human, financial, or technical) to contribute significantly to the community in that area. In 1976, there was no one-to-one relationship between those problem areas League members saw as important in their communities and those they believed were the most appropriate for League activity. At that time, only in regard to child welfare were the rankings of importance to the community and appropriateness for organizational activity the

A.
Importance

Figure 2

B. League Capacity
C. Personally Willing To Work In This Area

Critically Important	Highly Important	Moderately Important	Relatively Unimportant	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AREAS				Very Strong	Adequate	Limited	Very Limited	yes	no
				1. CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIME PREVENTION (e.g., rehabilitation, court volunteers, dispute settlement, juvenile justice, police relations, etc.)								yes	no
				2. ENVIRONMENT (e.g., environmental education, energy conservation, pollution and toxic wastes; also aquariums, zoos, parks, etc.)								yes	no
				3. URBAN REVITALIZATION (e.g., land use and zoning, transportation, housing, city planning and improvement, neighborhood development, etc.)								yes	no
				4. CULTURAL ENRICHMENT (e.g., arts and performing arts, library services, museums, historic preservation, films, and radio, recreation, etc.)								yes	no
				5. COMMUNITY AWARENESS (e.g., voluntary action centers, community festivals, local histories, guided tours, etc.)								yes	no
				6. PUBLIC EDUCATION (e.g., supplementing or improving educational opportunities in public schools at all levels, career counseling, tutoring, leadership training, VCD, scholarships, etc.)								yes	no
				7. MINORITY GROUPS (e.g., improving relations with the broader community, leadership development, job services, adequate housing, availability and awareness of health and social services, etc.)								yes	no
				8. CHILD HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH (e.g., prenatal care, screening and testing, child abuse, hospital services, substance abuse, suicide prevention, etc.)								yes	no
				9. CHILD WELFARE (e.g., adoption, day care, foster care, parenting, unwed mothers, child advocacy, youth groups, youth employment, etc.)								yes	no
				10. COORDINATION OF COMMUNITY EFFORTS (e.g., action through coalitions and collaborations to reduce duplication of services and to enhance effectiveness and efficiency)								yes	no
				11. ADULT HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH (e.g., emergency health care, family planning, hospices, nutrition, screening and testing, substance abuse, hospital and nursing home services, etc.)								yes	no
				12. ADULT WELL-BEING (e.g., consumerism, counseling, legal assistance, senior citizens services, VIE, job related programs, family welfare, etc.)								yes	no
				13.								yes	no
				14.								yes	no

same. Beyond that, there were significant departures between perceptions of importance and perceptions of appropriateness. Cultural enrichment was ranked the second most appropriate area for League activity, while coordination of community efforts (at least the coordination of voluntary activities) ranked third and public education fourth. In 1979-80, child welfare continued to rank first as the most appropriate area for League activity, while substance abuse jumped to second. Cultural enrichment and environmental issues tied for third. Thus, during the period between 1976 and 1979-80, members' perceptions in regard to the importance of community involvement areas and their opinions in regard to the appropriateness for organizational involvement became more consistent.

The third aspect of community involvement—whether or not members were personally willing to work in each of these areas of activity—was added between the 1976 and the 1979-80 surveys. This addition served to give League leadership a more direct indicator of the amount of time that might be available for projects in these various areas. Ranking these areas by the percent of individuals who would personally devote time to them in 1979-80 yields results not too different from the rankings for League appropriateness. Ranking first was child welfare, followed by cultural enrichment, public education and substance abuse.

By 1980, many Leagues indeed had projects in all of these areas. By contrast, in 1976, there were 54 active projects in the 12 Leagues studied and 30 of these were in areas that most members rated as being neither among the most important nor among the most appropriate for the Leagues. This finding, of course, offers another explanation for the lower satisfaction members expressed with community involvement, compared with other areas of organizational activity. It also suggests one of the reasons why voluntary association leadership should maintain awareness of members' orientations and preferences. And this discovery leads to the second major thrust of the Association/Foundation project—the development of the Organizational Self Assessment Packet.

Organizational Self Assessment

Most of the 22 Leagues studied by the Foundation found the reports written for their organizations to be quite valuable for effective decision making and future planning. Yet, the variations observed among these 22 Leagues suggested that it would be inappropriate, if not dangerous, for any one of the other 229 Leagues to use the general findings for local planning. Because of this and widespread interest in the project, it was decided to prepare a packet that would give each local League the information and materials necessary for conducting a valid internal assessment on its own.

The first version of the packet was presented to the Association of Junior Leagues and made available for local League use in May of 1978. Since that time, about 200 of the local Leagues have used it, most with great success, in gathering and analyzing the same types of data discussed for their own organization and in writing a report similar to the ones written for the 22 Leagues studied.

About 20 of the Leagues have now participated in Organizational Self Assessment a second time, and many more are planning a second self-assessment. This enables them to go beyond the original reports or their own initial surveys in locating changes and trends among their members' orientations and attitudes. In some cases, it has afforded Leagues the opportunity to see whether or not planned organizational changes brought about their intended effects.

Not only does Organizational Self Assessment provide valid data in place of guesswork about members' attitudes and preferences, it also makes it less necessary for a League to hire a consultant to do this for them—a costly endeavor that some of the larger Leagues had experienced in the past. By contrast, the cost of doing an organizational *self*-assessment is surprisingly low, considering that the result is likely to be a thoroughly professional report meeting very high social science research standards.

In addition to being a relatively inexpensive internal procedure, the assessment is also an interesting and valuable learning

experience for the organization members responsible for conducting the study, analyzing the data, and writing the report, as well as for the officers who use the data to develop appropriate strategies for future planning. It can also be an interesting educational experience for an organization's general membership.

In most Leagues a committee of about five members is designated as an OSA Task Force. They are informed in advance that they should plan to be involved with the study for three to four months and that it will require a total of 80 to 100 *working days*—that is a total of 80 to 100 days for the entire group, not for each member. The best teams are comprised of members with some skills, collectively, in the following areas: *research*—either at the college level or in professional marketing or management; *computers*—some familiarity with coding, programs and statistics, or at least an interest in detail and numbers; *writing or editing*; *organizational structure or organizational development*, and *broad organizational experience* (at least one member should have served on the organization's executive committee—many Leagues selected a past president for this committee).

The Task Force is in charge of reviewing all materials in the packet which, in turn, suggests how to plan for modifying the questionnaire for their own organization, preparation for and administration of the questionnaire to the membership, and coding the questionnaires in preparation for keypunching. Next, the keypunched cards are sent to the Association office in New York for computer processing. A single computer program prepared by the Foundation is sufficiently flexible for use by all of the individual Leagues, and a staff person is in charge of processing the data at this point.

The computer printout is returned to the local Leagues where the Task Force then uses the manual as a guide for preparing tables, interpreting data, and finally writing up the findings in narrative form for use by the League. All of these steps and every imaginable problem the committee could face are outlined in detail in the 331-page manual. While the packet was prepared for

and on the basis of experience with a single voluntary association, there are many parts of it that are applicable—especially with minor to moderate variations—to all voluntary associations.

It is likely that the Junior League packet will be offered with a supplement that includes guidelines and suggestions in regard to how other organizations might find it useful and how it or parts of it could be modified for their use. Indeed, some national voluntary associations now have staff members with management, marketing, social science, and/or computer science skills. Moreover, many have members with these skills. Possibly the most successful adaptations of the packet for use by other organizations would be those undertaken by the staffs, officers, and members of those organizations.

The relationship with the Association of Junior Leagues has been a stimulating and rewarding example of cooperation by two components of the independent sector—an established, active, and creative voluntary association and a private foundation. This collaboration has been successful in increasing knowledge of voluntarism and in making it possible for local voluntary groups to systematically and validly assess their own strengths and weaknesses as well as for the national and local leadership of these organizations to obtain a better understanding of their members' perceptions, preferences, and satisfactions.

