

Global Perspectives on Volunteerism

Whether in developed or developing countries, we are all grappling with the following volunteer-related issues:

1. Definitions, vocabulary and stereotypes: What is *volunteering*? (The complexity and variety of volunteer activities.) Who's a *volunteer*? (From whose perspective?)
2. The problem of confusing volunteering with the "voluntary sector."
3. No useful baseline of data from the past—and almost none for today, either.
4. The effect of a national political system and the interrelationship of citizens with their government.
5. The traditional and current role of organized religion.
6. Traditions of helping family, helping others, and helping self.
7. Power vs. powerlessness. *Haves vs. have-nots.*
8. The role of women.
9. Economic development, the evolution/devolution of work, and where volunteering fits in the mix.
10. The connection between volunteering and citizenship, neighborliness, and "civil society."
11. The effect of mandates and coercion on volunteering, and the effect of money beyond reimbursement of expenses.
12. Envisioning the future of volunteerism.