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AVA ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

The Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) is the professional association for those working in the field of volunteer management who want to shape the future of volunteerism, develop their professional skills, and further their careers. Members include volunteer program administrators in a wide variety of settings, agency executives, association officers, educators, researchers, consultants, students—anyone who shares a commitment to the effective utilization of volunteers. AVA is open to both salaried and nonsalaried professionals.

AVA also has a special membership category that enables organizations with mutually-compatible goals to AVA to become Affiliate Members. Affiliates range from local associations of directors of volunteers, to statewide volunteerism groups, to national organizations. Affiliates, each with its own membership base, broaden the networking possibilities open to all AVA members.

AVA is an association run by its members. Active national committees include: Public Information; Professional Development; Resource Development; and Public Policy. Members also plan the annual "National Conference on Volunteer Administration," a major event held each year in a different city in the United States or Canada. This Conference provides participants the opportunity to share common concerns and to focus on national issues of importance to volunteerism.

AVA is divided into twelve geographic regions, each of which develops a variety of programs to serve its members. These can include annual regional conferences, periodic local workshops, newsletters, and informal "cluster group" meetings.

Two major services that AVA performs, both for its members and for the field at large, are Certification and Educational Endorsement. Through the Certification process, which recognizes leaders of volunteer programs who demonstrate professional performance standards, AVA furthers respect for and appreciation of the profession of volunteer administration. Similarly, AVA Educational Endorsement is given to those workshops, courses, conferences and training events that provide opportunities for professional growth in volunteerism.

Finally, AVA produces publications, including several informational newsletters and booklets, and THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION.

For further information about the ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION, contact AVA, P.O. Box 4584, Boulder, CO 80306.

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ABSTRACT

Two hundred sixty-eight volunteer managers in five northwestern states and two Canadian provinces were surveyed to: (1) determine the demographic characteristics of volunteer managers, (2) characterize the positions in which they work, (3) compile information about the organization for which they work, and (4) estimate the gap between current and desired levels of management competency for the volunteer managers. Findings show a diverse group of volunteer managers who need different kinds of in-service training based on education level and years of experience.

Northwest Volunteer Managers: Their Characteristics, Jobs, Volunteer Organizations and Perceived Training Needs

Marsha A. Appel, Ronald M. Jimmerson, Nancy Macduff and James S. Long

"The largest impact on masses of citizen volunteers may be had through appropriately training directors of volunteers (Wilson 1979)."

INTRODUCTION

While the importance of people who manage/direct volunteers has been recognized for several years, little concrete information is available about these volunteer managers. Who are they? What are their characteristics? Whom do they work for? What are their job responsibilities? What education and training do they have? How do they perceive their skills as managers and what competencies do they need to improve?

These are some of the questions raised by the Regional Council of the Pacific Northwest Region of the Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA). Answers to these questions could help establish base-line data and plan continuing education programs for volunteer managers. These questions also interested faculty members in the Department of Adult and Youth Education (AYE) at Washington State University who train current and potential volunteer managers. A study sponsored by AVA, the Washington Center for Voluntary Action and the Department of AYE was undertaken to help answer these questions.

PURPOSES

The purposes of this study were to: (1) find out who the volunteer managers are, describe the positions in which they work, and identify for whom they work; and (2) estimate the gap between the current and desired levels of management competency for the volunteer managers in the Pacific Northwest Region (Region X) of AVA. Region X is composed of the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington from the United States of America and the Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

More specifically, the objectives of the study were:

1. Identify significant demographic characteristics of volunteer managers.
2. Identify significant job characteristics concerning the positions in which volunteer managers work.

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3. Identify the types of organizations for which these individuals work.
4. Assess the gap between the volunteer managers' perceptions of current and required competencies in their current position to determine training needs.
5. Determine if the gap in skills level differs when volunteer managers are compared by years of experience, by education level, by gender, and by ethnic or racial identification.
6. Make general recommendations for in-service training based on study findings.

METHODOLOGY

A review of the literature determined general categories of skills related to managing volunteer programs. Writings and research concerning volunteerism and adult education were analyzed including the following: Boyle (1981), Brookfield (1983), Brown (1982), Carter (1984), Conrad (1976), Darkenwald & Merriam (1982), Haines (1977), Knowles (1975, 1973, 1981), Macduff (1985), Moore (1985), Navarre (1985), Naylor (1976), Schindler-Rainman & Lippit (1977), Scheier (1978), Sheridan & Shannon (1979), Vineyard (1984), and Wilson (1979, 1981). A strong pattern emerged which indicated the major skill areas for a volunteer manager could be grouped into seventeen categories as follows: (1) market research (2) advertisement and promotion (3) program planning (4) program evaluation (5) volunteer training (6) volunteer evaluation (7) reward and recognition (8) group facilitation (9) job description (10) interviews, applications and contracts (11) motivation (12) recruitment (13) supervision (14) money management (15) legalities (16) site planning and maintenance (17) interpersonal skills and general skills. Sixty-eight competencies within these seventeen categories were identified.

A mailed instrument was developed to allow respondents to rate on a six point scale their current and needed competency levels for each of the sixty-eight skills. Respondents also provided information related to: (1) personal demographic characteristics including: gender, age, marital status, level of education, (2) the position in which they worked, and (3) the organization for which they worked. The questionnaire was reviewed by AVA Region X Council members to help ensure content validity and reliability. A pre-test was conducted with fourteen volunteer managers in Washington State and each Council member in Region X.

Since the population of volunteer managers in the Northwest was not known, a purposive sampling procedure was used. The sample was selected from the mailing list of Region X of AVA based on the following: (1) the study's sample size from each state or province was in proportion to that state/province's population, (2) each major service category of volunteer programs was represented, and (3) total sample size was large enough to represent volunteer managers in Region X.

A total of 269 surveys was completed and used in the data analysis (although not all 269 managers responded to each question). While this was only about 48% of those distributed, the researchers felt the respondents were representative of volunteer managers in Region X. Many organizations and individuals on the original mailing list could not be reached or felt they could not accurately complete the questionnaire because they were not in a volunteer manager position. Data were compiled as follows: (1) data related to demographics, job characteristics and organizations were summarized by frequencies and percentages; (2) the mean, standard deviation and *t* value were computed for scaled responses to current and needed levels of skills; (3) an index of need for all competencies and selected sub-groups was developed based on mean differences between current and needed competency levels. The index determined high priority training needs of the volunteer managers within Region X.

FINDINGS

The findings are presented under headings related to each study objective.

Demographic Characteristics

Table I summarizes respondents' demographic characteristics. The majority of volunteer managers who responded were white (97%), female (78%) and married

Table I

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Frequency*	Percent
Gender		
Male	60	22
Female	208	78
Marital Status		
Married	187	70
Not Married	80	30
Race		
White	257	97
Nonwhite	9	3
Age		
20-29	25	9
30-39	108	40
40-49	87	33
50-59	40	15
60+	9	3
Education		
High school	11	4
Some college	80	30
Bachelor degree	71	27
Some graduate school	43	16
Graduate degree	62	23
Years as a Volunteer Manager		
0-4	104	40
5-9	82	31
10-14	32	12
15-19	26	10
20-24	9	3
25-29	7	3
>30	2	1
Second Job		
Yes	58	22
No	208	78

*Frequencies may not add up to 269 in each category because not all respondents answered each question. Percentage is based on total responses to each question.

(70%). About 73% of the volunteer managers were 30-49 years old, although the ages ranged from 20 to 71 years. All respondents had at least a high school education with 66% having a bachelor degree or higher. Approximately 40% of the respondents had fewer than five years experience. About 71% had less than ten years experience. Twenty two percent indicated they had other employment (*i.e.*, a second job other than the job in which they manage volunteer programs).

These data suggest that programs designed to meet the needs of educated, married, middle-aged females with moderate experience in their jobs will be appropriate for most volunteer programs. They indicate a fairly high turnover rate for volunteer managers indicating a need to repeat training programs at regular intervals.

Current Position

Information related to the current posi-

Table II

RESPONDENTS' CURRENT POSITIONS

Proportion of time in position	*Frequency**	*Percent*
Full time	193	74
¾ time	17	6
½ time	31	12
Other	21	8
Percent of position managing volunteer programs		
0-49%	94	38
50-99%	73	29
100%	82	33
Years in present position		
0-4	159	61
5-9	71	27
10-14	13	5
15-19	10	4
20+	6	3
Paid staff supervised		
0-4	6	4
5-9	114	68
10-14	19	11
15-19	13	8
20+	15	9
Volunteers supervised		
0-49	1	
50-99	113	47
100-399	95	40
400+	31	13
Household income from position		
0-49%	81	34
50-99%	84	35
100%	74	31

*Frequencies may not add up to 269 in each category because not all respondents answered each question. Percentage is based on total responses to each question.

tion of those who responded is shown in Table II. Seventy-four percent of volunteer managers surveyed worked full time, and only one third devoted all their job time to managing volunteer programs. About 61% had been in their present position for fewer than five years while only 11% had held their positon ten years or more. Most of the managers who responded (68%) supervise five to nine paid staff with nine percent supervising twenty or more. The number of volunteers supervised was fifty or more for all but one respondent. Six respondents reported supervising over 1000 volunteers each. Of those who receive compensation for their position (sixteen percent do not receive compensation), 34% earn less than 50% of the household's total income, 35% earn 50 to 99%, and 31% rely totally on this source of income.

These findings suggest that the volunteer manager is well-educated, middle class, and has diverse job responsibilities. To reduce obstacles to learning, training programs need to be short, concise, inexpensive, and close to home in order to fit into the restraints of the volunteer manager.

Table III

CHARACTERISTICS OF VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

Largest Area Served	*Frequency**	*Percent*
Community/City	101	40
County	66	26
Multi-county	49	19
State/Province	22	9
Regional	15	6
Organizational Affiliations		
State/Province	103	30
National	113	33
International	40	12
None	87	25
Profit/Nonprofit Status		
Profit	5	2
Nonprofit	260	98
Sources of Income for Volunteer Program		
Local	102	14
State/Province	139	19
Federal	102	14
Individual	158	22
Foundation	103	14
Corporation	70	10
Other	53	7
Groups Served		
Senior Citizens	213	33
Adults	222	34
Children/Youth	216	33
Services Provided		
Health	113	19
Education	131	22
Government	35	6
Housing	32	5
Transportation	26	4
Nutrition	50	8
Mental Health	66	11
Safety/Security	42	7
Employment	25	4
Professional	13	2
Other	72	12

*Frequencies may not add up to 269 in each category because not all respondents answered each question or indicated more than one response to the question. Percentage is based on total responses to each question.

Characteristics of Volunteer Organizations

The characteristics of the volunteer organizations for which respondents worked are summarized in Table III. The typical organization served a local community or city, was affiliated at the state or province level and was run for nonprofit purposes. Most organizations received funding from more than one source, with private individuals and states/provinces listed most often as funding sources. Most organizations

Table IV

TOP 20 TRAINING NEEDS OF VOLUNTEER MANAGERS IN AVA REGION X BY EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION LEVEL, 1986

Competency Category and Skill	Overall Rank	Yrs. Exp.		Ed. Level	
		<5	≥5	<BA	≥BA
Group Facilitation					
Ability to apply conflict resolution to group facilitation.	7		X	X	X
Ability to utilize knowledge of problem solving in groups.	10	X	X	X	
Ability to use a wide variety of presentation methods effectively.	14		X	X	X
Ability to guide individuals through the problem solving process.	18	X	X	X	
Recruitment					
Ability to identify potential volunteer markets and recruit from specifically.	1	X	X	X	X
Ability to make effective use of volunteers to recruit other volunteers.	2	X	X	X	X
Ability to recruit and retain volunteers with the necessary skills.	5	X	X	X	
Advertisement/Promotion					
Ability to design and use promotion, publicity, and public relations strategies effectively.	3	X	X	X	X
Ability to use marketing research in the advancement/promotion of the program I manage.	4	X	X	X	X
Program Planning					
Ability to determine the effect of outside forces on the organization and manage them constructively.	6	X	X	X	X
Ability to effectively involve volunteers, boards, and others in the planning process.	19	X		X	
Interviews, Applications, Contracts					
Ability to identify needed attitudes and behaviors of volunteer applicants.	12	X			X
Ability to identify volunteers with skills needed to achieve program/services goals.	17	X	X		X
Money Management					
Ability to get resources (money, people, materials, etc.)	8	X	X	X	X
Market Research					
Ability to use appropriate methods to identify the special characteristics of your volunteers.	15	X			X
Program Evaluation					
Ability to conduct formal program reviews.	16	X	X	X	X
Volunteer Training					
Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of training methods, techniques or devices.	11		X		X
Volunteer Evaluation					
Ability to provide constructive ongoing feedback to volunteers.	13		X		X
Legal					
Ability to analyze and interpret legislation affecting volunteer organizations.	20	X		X	X

served all three client groups: senior citizens, adults and children/youth as indicated by the high frequency levels. On a percentage basis all three groups were equally served. The services provided by the respondents' organizations were diverse, with education and health-related services the most frequently identified.

These data indicate that while volunteer organizations offer diverse services there is much common ground in services provided and areas and client groups served, as well as in sources of income, affiliation and non-profit status. This suggests that existing organizational networks could be utilized to promote program offerings attractive to organizations that offer services to a diverse group of individuals. Plans need to be flexible in order to meet the organizations' particular needs and expectations.

Index of Need

The respondents rated their current and ideal competency levels in 68 skills using a six point Likert scale where 0 = low competency and 5 = high competency. Mean scores for current competency and ideal competency were computed for each of the 68 competencies. T scores based on the difference between the mean for current competency level

and the mean for ideal competency were computed for each of the 68 skills. An index of need was computed utilizing the *t* scores. On the basis of the index score for each skill, all skills were ranked.

The respondents were divided by: (1) gender (2) level of education (3) marital status and (4) number of years as a volunteer manager to determine whether there were substantial differences in their needs. There were significant differences in the needs only for those with less than and more than five years experience and for those with less than and more than a bachelor degree.

Table IV shows the 20 top-ranked training needs of volunteer managers by their years of experience (less than 5 years and greater than or equal to 5 years) and by their education level (less than bachelor degree and greater than or equal to a bachelor degree). The skills are grouped within the skill areas discussed earlier. An x indicates competencies ranked within the top twenty for each subgroup.

The table illustrates a strongly felt need for an increased level of skill in the areas of recruitment and advertisement/promotion since the top five competencies overall are from these areas and these are in the top 20 for all subgroups. In addition, three other skills are in the top 20 for all subgroups. These are (1) ability to determine the effect of outside forces on the organization and manage them constructively, (2) ability to get resources, and (3) ability to conduct formal program reviews. These competencies were respectively ranked 6th, 8th and 16th overall.

It is important that for other competencies, program planners carefully discriminate the training needs according to their target audience. For example, those volunteer managers with less than five years experience did *not* place four of the overall top twenty needs (*i.e.*, those skills ranked seventh, fourteenth, eleventh and thirteenth overall) among *their* top twenty. This suggests avoiding topics related to these skills for this subgroup or helping this subgroup recognize these as high priority needs.

DISCUSSION

While self-ranking of competencies by volunteer managers is a useful tool for those who plan training programs, it should be used in conjunction with other needs assessments. For example, perceived needs of managers might be quite different from how volunteers view their manager's competencies. Also, more experienced managers might have better perceptions of their shortcomings than less experienced managers. For example, ability to apply conflict resolution to group facilitation was ranked second by those with more than five years experience, seventh overall and twenty-eighth by those with less than five years experience. It is not likely that those with less experience are more skilled in applying conflict resolution; they might simply not recognize the need in their current position or see other needs as higher priorities.

SUMMARY

This study provides an initial view of volunteer managers, their personal demographic characteristics and a view of their job responsibilities and organizations they work for. It provides data regarding volunteer managers' perceived needs for professional development based on their current and ideal competencies for the jobs they hold. These data can be viewed as a starting point for better understanding volunteer managers and their training needs.

The range of job responsibilities which can be carried out by volunteer managers suggests that employers examine carefully the specific competencies needed in their organization as a basis for recruiting, placing and orienting new volunteer managers. The emphasis of this study was on understanding the needs of volunteer managers in their current positions. The data show a diverse group of volunteer managers who need different kinds of inservice training based on education level and years of experience. Employers need to encourage their volunteer managers (through release time and other support) to participate in relevant continuing education activities. AVA and other agencies/organizations need to be aware of these diverse needs in order to plan the most appropriate continuing education programs.

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C.O.N.N.E.C.T.: A Training Program for Volunteers Who Work With a Communicatively-impaired Population

Frances Gitelman and Theresa Martico Greenfield

THE NEED

"I'm a Resident at The Jewish Home and Hospital for Aged.

"I know what I'm thinking. I know what I need. I know who you are. I know who I am.

"BUT

"I can't talk. I may say some words—even a phrase. You can't understand, even though I know you're trying because you like me, because you are my volunteer."

These might be the thoughts of the elderly, communicatively-impaired residents of a nursing home, or any other health facility where one sees victims of stroke, Parkinsonism, Alzheimer's, cerebral palsy—and on and on.

BACKGROUND

Depending upon which research study you read, the percentage of elderly in nursing homes who are communicatively impaired can vary from sixty to ninety-two percent, a very significant statistic. Studies show that the mental health of the elderly is significantly enhanced when communication skills are maintained. As mental health improves, the aged person will often participate more actively in rehabilitative therapy and activities which frequently restore a degree of independence directly related to physical improvement.

When a person becomes older, the social network becomes especially important. It serves as a vital support system. Communication is the main vehicle for making use of this social network. Therefore, it becomes obvious that since communication skills are part of maintaining a social network, and since communication skills are often impaired in the elderly, enhancing these skills is a crucial ingredient to maintaining the highest level of mental health in the individual.

In 1985 The Jewish Home and Hospital for Aged (JHHA) in New York City began to address the need to help residents with communicative impairments. We began to do this by helping those who interact with the residents to improve their understanding of communication and their skills in coping with problems that involve communication such as stroke, depression, memory disorders, etc.

Initially, we designed Communications Need Not Ever Cease Totally (CONNECT) for family members. In the Spring of 1986, 30 family members participated in the first series of workshops.

This program received the 1986 Innovation of the Year Award from the American Association of Homes for the Aging (AAHA). The Home made a commitment from the beginning to offer this communication skills training program to volunteers and staff.

With funding from The United Hospital Fund of New York, CONNECT was then adapted to address the need for training in communication skills for volunteers who work with the communicatively-impaired elderly. Volunteers in long-term care settings play a key role in contributing to the comfort and peace of mind of

An active volunteer concerned with health and education while raising a family, *Frances Gitelman* became a director of volunteer services in 1972. Professional experience includes directing programs in acute and long-term care health facilities and as Project Coordinator for the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial (MRFIT), a study to test prevention of heart attacks by treating major risk factors. Ms. Gitelman is a frequent contributor to *The Volunteer Leader*. *Theresa Martico Greenfield* is Special Assistant to the Executive Vice President of The Jewish Home and Hospital for Aged. She helped to develop the initial project for Family and Friends Group from which the volunteer training program evolved.

nursing home residents. In addition, volunteers establish friendly relationships characterized by concern and understanding. As "Chief Timegivers," volunteers make a special contribution to the quality of life of the institutionalized chronically ill.

Each volunteer understands that there are no miracles working with this population. The volunteer's satisfaction comes from mini-miracles—a smile, a song, a response, a CONNECTion with a resident.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

To provide communication skills training to strengthen the volunteer's ability to reach the communicatively-impaired.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

CONNECT consisted of a series of three workshops to address the following topics:

1. causes and nature of impaired communication in later life;
2. consequences of this problem for the older person in relating to others;
3. practical strategies to cope with specific problems which enable volunteers to improve communication with the residents.

Each workshop was two hours long and was designed to combine lecture, question/answer and role playing.

It should be noted that these skills also enhance volunteers' ability to communicate in other areas of their lives as well.

Role of Rehabilitation Nursing Team

This team coordinates all rehabilitation disciplines, giving team members first-hand knowledge of residents' communication and other problems. The team selected residents who, upon consent, could benefit most from visits by the specially trained volunteers. Team members attended the workshops and helped the volunteers identify the residents' communication problems. Then the volunteer would know which newly-learned tools to try to use with each resident. The Rehabilitation Nurses consulted and provided continuing support to volunteers and residents. They also served as liaisons between these volunteers and other staff and worked closely with the Director of Volunteer Services (DVS), particularly on follow-up and reporting results of when residents were helped most.

THE PROGRAM

Phase One

In the Summer of 1986, as part of their Summer Youth Program, twelve high school students were carefully selected to participate in the program. Their schedule of twenty-four hours per week for eight weeks was worked out so that they spent eight hours a week intensively implementing the training they received. They reported to the DVS and The Home's Rehabilitation Nursing Team who had referred the residents. Prior to the special training, the students completed The Home's Volunteer Orientation designed to sensitize all volunteers to the needs—emotional and physical—of the institutionalized elderly, basic skills, wheelchair/walker and general safety and management within a healthcare facility, bedmaking and feeding.

Phase Two

During March and April of 1987 all adult volunteers were invited to participate in the three session training. Thirty-seven adult volunteers participated and, as had occurred with the student volunteers, many received referrals from the Rehabilitation Nursing Team for friendly visiting to communicatively-impaired residents.

PROGRAM RESULTS

Youth

"I learned a lot from this resident."

"I'm the only one she (the resident) talks to."

"I can use this information the rest of my life."

"She (the resident) feels like I'm her grandaughter, and I mean a lot to her."

The instructors had anticipated that these high school volunteers, by virtue of their youth, would *not* come to the program with preconceived notions counter-productive to establishing better communication and relationships with the elderly. However, much to their surprise, at the outset they found that these young volunteers held fairly rigid views regard-

ing the elderly. The instructors learned this by reading the volunteers' responses to a 35-item "Yes/No" questionnaire and listening to their impressions during the first session. The volunteers interpreted much of what they saw in the elderly as stubbornness and/or lack of intelligence. Once these attitudes changed, the students were better able to carry out their training. The residents responded to the high degree of respect they were shown for their remaining abilities. There was a positive relationship between residents' renewed self-esteem and the training success rate. Clinical staff often recognized which residents had this additional assistance.

Ten of the twelve student volunteers (83%) selected to participate completed the communication skills training program. At the end of Workshop 3 the same 35-item "Yes/No" questionnaire was administered again to those who completed the program. The instructors analyzed the volunteers' responses in terms of whether they had changed in the desired direction. They found that an average of 71.9% (range 50% to 100%) of the responses indicated a change in the desired direction.

Factual questions were also asked, requesting the matching of terms to definitions. Before and after results were compared, and there was a 31.4% increase in the number of correct responses. We can say, then, that both factually and affectively the workshops resulted in significant positive changes. It was clear that by working with the elderly the volunteers had gained insight and flexibility in viewing them as people who have long, complex and often fascinating histories. They learned that the residents—and all older people—could have something to offer them, and to be more sensitive to individual and cultural differences and needs. They learned a great deal about interpersonal relationships among residents, staff and volunteers, and experienced being needed and feeling increased self-worth themselves.

Adults

After the end of the communication skills training program, the volunteers again showed a great deal of initiative by requesting a wrap-up meeting with the Director of Volunteer Services, the Rehabilitation Nursing Team, and The Jewish Home and Hospital for Aged's Assistant Administrator so that they could spend more time talking about their experiences with the residents. They were eager to share the happiness as well as frustration that accompanied their newly-formed relationships. The volunteers reported that many residents, given the head start by the students, were showing marked progress.

The mutual volunteer-resident positive effects were often the same as with the youth group whose comments ranged from "Mary said hello today" to "Louise said I looked just like her grandson."

During the adult volunteer training the first workshop began with a pre-test of the volunteers' knowledge regarding communicative impairments and ways to cope with them. At the end of Workshop 3 a post-test, identical to the pre-test was administered. The results of the pre- and post-test responses indicated that 75.4% of the volunteers' responses changed in the desired way. From comments written by the participants, it was also found that their patience, insight and flexibility regarding their communication with residents had increased. The volunteers also learned more about individual needs and cultural differences and how these needs and differences pertain to nonverbal forms of communication such as touch, eye contact and gestures. After the program ended, the volunteers established a follow-up support group so that they could continue to share ideas, frustrations and accomplishments that might occur from their daily interaction with residents. This worked so well that volunteers continued to meet informally either over lunch or formally with their own leader to continue the momentum.

Chris's story demonstrates the effectiveness of the program.

Janet (age 84) spoke so softly that no one heard her unless right beside her—as Chris had been doing for a while each day for six months. She continually urged Janet to speak louder; Janet whispered, "I can't." Everyone who had contact with Janet agreed she had a speech problem.

After the first training session, Chris began to use some of the techniques:

raising her own voice, distancing herself from Janet, insisting that Janet must talk louder or she might have to leave. She, of course, didn't leave and, in fact, had to move closer that day.

A few days later, as Chris approached, a loud voice said, "Oh, Chris, you made my day. You're back!" Now everyone knew Janet had nothing wrong with her voice—only her spirit!

Chris's newly-learned technique, her reinforcement, patience—her volunteer spirit—had worked.

After the second session where volunteers were urged to accept residents' limitations but to try to reach a little higher, Chris got Janet to go to the library. Janet looked through magazines. Then Chris pointed up to a print on the wall depicting a Roman scene. "I'll never go to Rome," she sighed. "I'll tell you about Rome," Janet responded, and did so vividly and *without* prodding. She began to talk about other travels, opening a whole new conversation field for both of them.

The training had given Chris the confidence to be a bit tough, to use the techniques, to look for a mini-miracle. From simple questions and answers, Janet now commands real conversation, giving her a sense of her worth.

ADAPTATION OF TRAINING FOR OTHER AGENCIES

Communicative impairment is not limited to the elderly. Neurological impairment, cerebral palsy, retardation, Parkinsons, hearing and speech impairment can strike all age groups. These populations can also benefit from having trained volunteers to reinforce the work of professionals.

Replication or adaptation of CONNECT[1] to one of these groups can be achieved at the outset with simple changes such as word substitutions "elderly population" for the client population, *i.e.*, "cerebral palsy victims." The causes and consequences would be slightly different, but the practical strategies would remain the same. Selections of candidates, task descriptions and general program would be carried out in the same manner. The handouts would be adapted to the population served, whereas the "Glossary of Terms" and "Helpful Hints" would be essentially the same.

The goal is identical for all: to increase knowledge of normal communication skills and the strategies for improving these through social interactions to enhance the volunteers' and/or staff's work. This is particularly important for the mental as well as the physical well-being of the patient.

The volunteers' satisfaction has been apparent here as they report the mini-miracles they witness when the techniques begin to work. It cannot be emphasized too often that the trained volunteers, particularly those in new programs, have most about which to feel good.

The Director of Volunteer Services must convey to volunteers in training that in addition to all of their other responsibilities, they can be communication partners with the people they serve, and in that way contribute to their overall mental health.

The three tapes are designed to address six objectives.

The *first* objective is to highlight the role of communication in daily living, so that everyone knows how important it really is.

The *second* objective is to describe the changes in communication that come with aging, disease processes and institutionalization.

The *third* objective is to define the role of the volunteer as the facilitator of communication.

The *fourth* objective is to increase knowledge regarding normal communication skills. In this way, abnormal communication skills can be better understood.

The *fifth* objective is to increase knowledge regarding communication disorders. Only with a clear understanding of what the nature of the disorder truly is can someone be expected to manage it effectively.

The *sixth* objective and the most important, is to familiarize the volunteer trainer with a series of strategies designed to facilitate communicative effectiveness.

During the training program volunteers received affirmation of what they were already doing correctly, as well as new infor-

mation to help them achieve even greater satisfaction for the residents and themselves from whatever CONNECTions they could make. They saw and heard the connection with a resident. They saw and heard the smile, the song, the gestures—not just the words.

FOOTNOTE

[1]A training kit is available from JHHA, 120 West 106 St., New York, NY 10025 to those who would like to replicate the program. The kit has two components—a manual and three audiocassette tapes—and was designed to train the trainers, primarily Directors of Volunteer Services in health care facilities. Other agencies which rely heavily on volunteers might also offer this training.

ABSTRACT

It is frequently said that the "anti-poverty" programs of the 1960s were liberal attempts at solving social problems by "throwing money at them." The present study suggests that at least one of these programs was very successful and, therefore, government officials quickly moved to reduce its effectiveness. This paper reviews the historical circumstances surrounding the Volunteers in Service to America *from its inception in 1965 to the early 1970s, by which time the program had been altered so that it was unable to fulfill its original objectives. The concluding section discusses what the* VISTA *experience may say about the possibilities of government-sponsored efforts at achieving egalitarianism.*

The Early Years of VISTA: The Political Alteration of a Successful Public Policy

Kenneth Oldfield

INTRODUCTION

> VISTA *came on as an aggressive, groovy, alive, and action-oriented operation.* VISTA *was to be the domestic* Peace Corps, *spared from the* Ugly American *image.* VISTA *was going to be relevant, meaningful, and challenging.* VISTA *was to be the program which would enable young* Americans *to do their thing.* VISTA *would continuously remind middle-class, white youth that if they were not part of the solution then they certainly were part of the problem. The volunteers took the message seriously* ... (*Gottlieb*, VISTA and Its Volunteers, *p.* 112).

> *They* [VISTAs] *could not have known of the potential danger they represented to local citizens whose power and income came from the exploitation of the poor* ... *They* [VISTAs] *could not have imagined the type of repercussions their activities might have among political leaders at the local, state, and federal level* (Ibid., *pp.* 112-113).

In the late 1950s and early 1960s America "rediscovered" poverty. There were several reasons for this reawakening. Primary among these were: 1) publication of Harrington's *The Other America* (1962) and Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* (1963); and 2) John Kennedy's travels in West Virginia during the 1960 Democratic primary (White, 1965).

After his election Kennedy began planning a government-sponsored anti-poverty program. The President was particularly interested in establishing a "domestic Peace Corps," similar to his highly successful and popular foreign volunteer program (Murphy, 1970). He wanted to recruit young Americans to serve as volunteers in poor areas, just as they were combating poverty overseas. Before Kennedy could enact his program, he was assassinated in Dallas.

President Johnson quickly moved to both expand and enact many of the late President's anti-poverty ideas. In 1965 he signed a bill creating the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), which was designed to bring the nation's poorest 20% into the main stream (U.S. Congress (House), 1964).

THE PROGRAM'S INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS

In the planning stages of OEO Johnson had sought the ideas of many people, both inside and outside government. Among others, these included then Peace Corps director Sargent Shriver, who had a reputation as an idealist "who gets things done;" Daniel Patrick Moynihan from the Labor Department; James Lundquist from Agriculture; and Adam Yarmolinsky from Defense (Donovan, 1967, p. 29). Before the final bill went to Congress, the Administration released a list of 137 names representing a partial

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record "of people Mr. Shriver consulted in developing the poverty program (Donovan, p. 31)."

It was the general consensus of this "team of Eastern liberal intellectual-politicians" that any anti-poverty program would have to directly address the specific cause of American poverty, *i.e.*, powerlessness (Donovan, pp. 41-43). Because their social position was usually inherited, the poor could not understand or influence the procedures, policies and objectives of the organizations and institutions that affect and control their welfare (Donovan, p. 43). Redistributing power was one way to break the poverty cycle. This line of reasoning was apparent from Johnson's comments about this plan for the "Great Society." The President said, "The act does not merely expand old programs or improve what is already being done. It charts a new course. It strikes at the causes, not just the consequences of poverty (*Congressional Record*, 1964)."

THE PRESENT STUDY

In the following paragraphs it will be suggested that: 1) at least one part of OEO, the Volunteers in Service to America program, was an efficacious and efficient approach to treating the *causes* of poverty; and 2) because of its successes, it was rendered ineffective (in relation to its original objectives) through a series of gradual, systematic, ingenious and effective "reforms." The question implied throughout this study is: to what degree were policy makers and elected officials *really* committed to Johnson's goal of creating a more egalitarian society?

VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE TO AMERICA

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) was one component of OEO. It was designed to attract younger, middle-class individuals who would serve one year working directly with the poor. To ensure that younger, energetic people were attracted to VISTA: 1) early recruiting efforts focused on more liberal college campuses; and 2) volunteers were given a one year draft deferment. Although VISTAs (*i.e.*, VISTA volunteers) were recruited, trained and assigned by the newly established Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, most volunteers received their local direction from a neighborhood Community Action Program (CAP). Most CAPs were located in large cities and served as a "home base" for volunteers.

Before beginning their assignments, recruits underwent a four to six week training program (Phillips, 1966, p. 10). These sessions were usually "conducted by universities and colleges and some non-profit private groups familiar with the problems of the poor (OEO, VISTA *Questions* . . ., p. 5). Training usually included workshops, discussions, and field work where volunteers were instructed in the principles of community organizing and other forms of social and political action. A later analysis reported that these programs effectively met their learning objectives (Balzano, 1971).

IN THE BEGINNING

During its early years, VISTA performed as its designers intended. Volunteers began by politicizing the poor. In large urban areas, where concentrations of the poor are frequently found, they initially applied the old adage "power in numbers." Often VISTAs successfully organized these people against the local power structure (Jackson, 1971). Specific targets were chosen, such as schools, housing, unemployment, and, of course, the lack of basic city services (*The New York Times*, Feb. 12, 1969, p. 37). Volunteers found that confrontations and public demonstrations brought the quickest response. Challenges to unfair credit practices, rent strikes, boycotts and voter registration drives soon followed.[1]

AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZING

Ironically, one of the most famous community organizing cases occurred in rural Pike County, Kentucky, where poverty workers waged what was, for a while at least, a successful campaign against local coal mining interests. Local residents had sold the mineral rights to their land in the early 1900s, assuming that only deep mined coal would be removed. They had not anticipated that the coal companies would later use these "broad form" deeds to strip coal from the surface. This strip mining destroyed both the land and buildings on it. In the 1950s several resi-

dents asked the courts to outlaw certain destructive stripping practices. The Kentucky Supreme Court ruled in favor of the companies, stating

> *. . . that as long as the stripping operator does not demonstrate wanton, arbitrary, or malicious conduct toward the surface owner or his property, his right to excavate for the coal is absolute and he is not liable for the surface destruction* (*The* New *York* Times, Jan. 15, 1967, p. 64).

The destruction worsened, as larger earth moving equipment was introduced. According to one source, the land had become "so scarred and acidic that only rodents could live there (*Time* March 22, 1971, p. 47)." The sedimentation level of the once clear streams increased thirty thousand times, destroying not only the aquatic life but also local agriculture, for which this stream served as the main water source (Good, 1967).

In 1967, with the assistance of several anti-poverty workers, local residents asked the Kentucky Court of Appeals to suspend the companies' mining rights under the broad form deed. Judge Cornett, speaking for the majority, ruled that such mining practices were illegal (*The* New *York* Times, Jan. 15, 1967, p. 64).

The residents' victory was short lived. Local officials began referring to these successful anti-poverty activities as "communist" (*The* New *York* Times, Sept. 12, 1967, p. 38). The volunteers' actions, it was alleged, were designed to "... create turmoil among the poor ..." (Goodman, 1971) and "... overthrow the government of Pike County" (*The* New *York* Times, Nov. 1, 1967, p. 32). These officials complained to Governor Breathitt, who telephoned OEO Director Shriver to request that economic support for the volunteers be withdrawn immediately. Shortly afterward, Breathitt and Shriver issued a joint announcement that federal funds would "no longer be available to the anti-poverty workers in Kentucky" (*The* New *York* Times, Aug. 19, 1967, p. 12).

A PROGRAM THAT WORKED TOO WELL

These organizing activities were exactly what the program's founders had anticipated when they established VISTA. However, their abstract aims had serious "real world" consequences. Although the volunteers were still far from eliminating poverty, they were doing what the program was originally designed to do—in a very small way, power was being redistributed, actions Williams and Evans (1969) were later to call pretty "heady stuff."

According to Moynihan (1969), it soon became apparent that OEO's framers had a naively philanthropic view of public officials' motives and the Federal Government's ability to alter local "power structures." In describing these problems, Ferman (1969) has argued that people with entrenched political power do not easily submit to either moral suasion or more forceful means; power, once acquired, is rarely conceded without a fight. The powerful and their allies retrenched to battle these government-sponsored threats to their well-being. They demanded that OEO, and especially VISTA, be disarmed.[2]

The nullification of VISTA started shortly after it became evident that the program could successfully mobilize the poor. Through a series of imaginative steps, its capacity to threaten the powerful was quickly stymied. The following section presents a sampling of these reforms. This analysis focuses on the period from 1966 to the early 1970s, after which VISTA's impact was effectively minimized.

THERE WERE SOME CHANGES MADE

Mayors

Shortly after its inception, several of the nation's mayors criticized VISTA's anti-poverty activities. Pike County volunteers had complained of being "... red bait[ed] ... all over the mountains (Goodman, 1971, p. 50)." Other officials used similar tactics. Democratic Mayor John Shelly of San Francisco charged VISTA with sabotaging local government integrity "by organizing the poor into militant, politically active groups (Donovan, 1967, p. 55)." Later, at the annual Conference of Mayors, Shelly and Los Angeles Mayor Sam Yorty presented a draft resolution critical of OEO activities. They accused programs such as VISTA of "fostering class struggle" and "creating tensions among the poor (*Ibid*, and *Congressional Record*, 1967, p. 36464)." They complained that these volunteer activities were making excessive demands on local budgets (*Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1965, p.

408). William Walsh, of St. Petersburg, Florida, in voicing his agreement with the resolution, argued that militant anti-poverty groups were urging the poor to "storm city hall." The mayors requested that local officials be given more control over the program. This request was soon granted.

Legal Sanctions

Shortly after these local complaints started surfacing, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey met with a group of mayors concerning possible ways to alter VISTA. This meeting, and others like it, eventually led to several structural changes in the program. For example, to encourage enlistments, early volunteers were not restricted in their organizing activities or political persuasions (Levitan, 1968, p. 16). They were only required to affirm their loyalty to the Constitution (U.S. *Statutes at Large*, 1967, p. 977).

This laissez-faire approach was quickly abandoned. In 1966 Senator Harry Byrd, Jr. (D-Virginia) sponsored legislation requiring that funding and services to anyone "inciting or carrying on a riot or who was a member of any subversive organization" be discontinued, (OEO, 1966, p. 1). In 1967, Senator John Sherman Cooper (R-Kentucky) introduced legislation calling for intensive screening of prospective volunteers. All applicants were to be given attitude tests, as well as be personally interviewed by program sponsors. This procedure, combined with tougher personnel standards, guaranteed that "undesirables, such as subversives," would be screened out (*The New York Times*, Sept. 29, 1967, p. 34). According to Cooper,

> I *believe my amendment would assure that qualified people are appointed and would insure that the situation* [*Pike County*] *which has taken place, bringing widespread criticisms on* OEO, VISTA, *and the volunteers, would not arise again* (Congressional Record, 1967, *p.* 27154).

Second, in 1966 VISTAs were declared Federal employees and were, therefore, subject to the Hatch Political Activities Act of 1939 which prevented volunteers from engaging in "partisan actions," the definition of which was left sufficiently vague so that most forms of community organizing were prohibited (U.S. Senate, 1966, p. 36 and OEO, 1968, pp. 21-22). In explaining these limitations on political actions, former program director William Crook stated that political organizing should not be

> *... done in a negative way by turning people against authority,* [*but*] *rather ... by rallying people around a common recognized need ...* [*such as*] *a stop sign on a street where children have been playing in jeopardy ...* (U.S. Senate, 1967, p. 3211).

In describing the effectiveness of employing this "non-political" approach, a Chicago VISTA was later to observe "... it is impossible to even brush your teeth without being 'political.' The Hatch Act Restrictions Drove Us Crazy." (Emphasis in original. Gottlieb, 1971, p. 159.) Eventually, the Supreme Court ruled that the Hatch Act was not a violation of free speech, saying that Congress can limit employees' political activities *in the interest of protecting the efficiency of governmental operations* (emphasis added. United States Civil Service Commission v. National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO, 1973).

Internal Composition

Another change involved discouraging (rather than encouraging) so many young visionaries. This shift required using several tactics. First, to dissuade these "amateur idealists, " as Representative Benjamin Rosenthal's (D-New York) citation referred to them, from joining VISTA, in 1967 Congress passed P.L.90-40, which eliminated the volunteers' draft deferment (*Congressional Record*, 1967, p. 15772). Senator Wayne Morse's attempt to preserve this exemption was rejected (*Congressional Record*, 1967, p. 12502).

A second reform involved shifting the program's focus toward job training, rather than political organizing. This also entailed changing volunteer recruitment strategy, namely by appealing to older Americans. Program officials also started recruiting *specialist* volunteers (Gottlieb, p. 80). These people usually had a master's degree in business and were supposed to help lower class entrepreneurs obtain loans to start enterprises that would otherwise be judged as "bad risks" (VISTA *Volunteer*, 1969, p. 3).

A related policy revision involved changing the tone of recruitment literature. Recruitment brochures were revised. Pamphlets now featured gray haired volunteers with captions like "Why Retire Your Talents? Join VISTA: Teachers, Lawyers, Craftsmen, Planners, Businessmen, Architects," or "Who will open this Child's eyes? Retired teachers have an opportunity to teach the forgotten through VISTA." The program would become more mature, through an increased emphasis on picturing clean-shaven, short haired, moderately dressed volunteers. The OEO *News Summary*, VISTA *Volunteer* and recruitment literature such as *The Ripples Reach All Shores* (1969) stressed how volunteers were: 1) not expecting overnight changes; 2) working "through the system" and 3) not engaging in confrontation politics.[3]

Third, to further avoid attracting younger people who might believe in political confrontation, recruiting at smaller, more conservative, less well-known institutions was stepped up (*New Republic*, 1970, p. 8). Conversely, schools such as Harvard and Berkeley which encouraged "social activism," received much less attention.

Fourth, program officials began enlisting volunteers from within poor communities through a new program called "Indigenous Volunteers." More anti-poverty workers would be the poor themselves, rather than middle-class "outsiders." The reasoning here was that "local people know their problems best—and are best able to develop solutions to these problems (U.S. House, 1967, p. 2400; VISTA *Volunteer* 6(6), 1970, p. 6; Murphy, 1970, p. 21). This new campaign also looked for people from poor communities who possessed the amorphous quality, "leadership skills (VISTA *Volunteer*, 6(6), 1970, p. 6)." Thus, eliminating poverty would involve having the government help poor people solve their own problems.

In one sense the four policy changes discussed above were effective. The program substantially increased the number of skilled (Murphy, 1970, p. 21) and older volunteers (*Congressional Record*, 114, p. 25431; U.S. House, 1968, p. 502; OEO, VISTA *Fact Book*). However, the emphasis on job training, entrepreneurship, and indigenous volunteers was less effective. These latter failures had a basis in simple logic. First, Brager and Purcell (1967, p. 334) have argued that programs like this are doomed from the start, since they assume that the poor know how to eliminate poverty simply because of their residence. However, it can reasonably be assumed that persons with leadership skills and/or the knowledge to overcome their own poverty would have already used such talents/information to escape the ghetto, or wherever they are living. In short, the program was looking for individuals with the kinds of abilities that would have, almost by definition, precluded their recruitment.

Lastly, the emphasis on skill training and entrepreneurial activities was doomed form the beginning. Skill training is only important when there are jobs available afterward, which according to Parenti (1977, p. 107), and Berg and Friedman (1965, pp. 115-119), is seldom the case. Furthermore, it is difficult to begin a business in a poor area when, again by definition, residents usually do not have enough money to purchase these goods and/or services. Nor is it realistic to assume that already existing businesses would passively accept government-sponsored incursions into their markets. Even if only for rhetorical reasons, one should ask whether the potential ineffectiveness of these new approaches came as a surprise to VISTA's reformers.

Decentralization

In 1967 VISTA began to decentralize. The country was divided into seven districts. A major city in each area became regional headquarters (Which Way to Paducah, p. 29). In explaining his displeasure with VISTA, Joseph Barr, then Mayor of Pittsburgh and President of the United States Conference of Mayors, told the House Committee on Education and Labor, "The complaint is simply that Federal funds should be allotted to the local community to be used by that community as it sees fit with as few strings as possible" (U.S. House, 1967, p. 2404). Former director William Crook explained this further dispersion of power as follows: "By being in constant touch with the related

programs in their areas, the regional administrators would be able to deal efficiently and effectively with the problems in their region" (Which Way to Paducah, p. 29). In this same year the Administration-backed Green Amendment granted considerable power to local officials so that they could control the purse strings of local CAPs.

Under this new arrangement, local officials were given a stronger, more direct voice in VISTA administration. Volunteers would be recruited intraregionally, as opposed to the old practice of nationwide enlistments. Regional administrators were given the power to approve, amend, deny, review, supplement, enforce, suspend and terminate volunteer grants (OEO, I-47, 1967, p. 1).

In 1969 the number of regions was expanded to 10 and state and local officials were granted still more control over the program. Texas Governor Preston Smith explained that further decentralization would ensure "... that this program will not be used simply as an instrument for the opportunist who wishes to force radical political and social change (U.S. Senate, 1969, pp. 625-626)."

In this same year Congress adopted amendments that significantly increased the states' power over administration of VISTA (*Congressional Record*, 1969, p. 38871). These new regulations provided for State Economic Offices similar to the central agency, except that administrative responsibility was almost wholly in the hands of state and local officials. A move to turn the program over to the states in full was rejected. Some officials successfully argued that this would be VISTA's death knell. OEO Director Donald Rumsfeld and several influential politicians were able to block this amendment (*Congressional Record*, 1969, p. 38863; *The New York Times*, 1970, p. 24).

Program size

VISTA's opponents moved to control the program's size. Between 1965 and 1969 the number of volunteers grew as follows: 1965 = 1100; 1966 = 3600; 1967 = 4225; 1968 = 5032; and 1969 = 5692. By 1970 the program went into decline. The numbers for 1970 and 1971 were 4870 and 4371, respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Budget, 1970 and 1971).

Program budgets

Agency funding was used to gradually reduce VISTA's effects. After receiving substantial budget increases during its early years, the program's annual percentage increases began to shrink considerably. Between 1965 and 1971 VISTA was funded as follows:

VISTA Funding, 1965-1971[4]

Year	*Funding (in millions)*	*Percent Change*
1965	1.39	
1966	15.9	1043.88
1967	23.9	50.31
1968	30.0	25.52
1969	32.8	9.33
1970	34.2	4.27
1971	36.0	5.26

Although Donovan (1967, p. 122) has argued that most programs within OEO were never funded "at anything more than a pilot-project level," VISTA's "boat rocking" (Anderson, *et al.*, p. 137) assured that appropriations would remain low.

In late 1970 Nixon's Office of Management and Budget recommended that VISTA be disbanded (U.S. Senate, 91st Congress, p. 158). This effort was opposed by VISTA volunteers (*The New York Times*, July 28, 1970, p. 31), groups such as the League of Women Voters, and several influential Senators (U.S. Senate, 91st Session, p. 158). The Administration's reaction was to recommend reducing VISTA's 1972 budget to $33 million, $3 million lower than its 1971 appropriation (*The New York Times*, Jan. 6, 1971, p. 41). VISTA was not alone in its fight to survive funding cuts. Moynihan (p. 156) described the Nixon Administration's strategy as "... the systematic fiscal harassment" of the anti-poverty programs.

In 1973 President Nixon attempted to abolish OEO by failing to request appropriations for its continuation. However, Justice William Jones of the Federal District in Washington D.C. ruled that these actions violated the "separation of powers" concept. Since Congress had created the program, the executive branch could not

eliminate it by failing to provide necessary financial support.

ACTION

In 1971, even before Jones' decision, the President asked Congress for authority to combine VISTA, the Peace Corps and four other federal agencies into one large volunteer service corps (*The New York Times*, Jan. 15, 1971, p. 1). The new agency was given the oxymoronic title "ACTION." The Nixon plan, which was eventually accepted by Congress, marked the end of the "old program," since, under ACTION, VISTA would "disappear (*The New York Times*, March 12, 1971, p. 1)." It would be supplanted by the four new corps and "supporting services (*Ibid.*)." The new programs included health, ecology, public safety, and education. Perhaps not surprisingly, the goals of ACTION differed considerably from those of OEO. "Boat rocking" would be less of a problem. According to "knowledgeable officials," these corps "would embrace only a small part of VISTA's present activities in behalf of the poor (*Ibid.*)."

SURVEYING VISTA ATTITUDES

In the late 1960s OEO officials contracted with David Gottlieb, then of The Pennsylvania State University, to survey former volunteers regarding their personal backgrounds and opinions of the VISTA experience. This analysis involved persons who had served sometime between 1965 and 1969, inclusive. The final report, entitled VISTA *and Its Volunteers* (VIV), was released in 1971 and represented the views of about 3,500 respondents.

Gottlieb's data and discussion are consistent with the general argument that the program met most of its designers' original goals. Likewise, his report suggests that because VISTA was so effective and, therefore, "... enabled some ambitious community organizations to force their way into the chambers of the decision makers" (Anderson, *et al.*, p. 138) it had to be "reformed." The following paragraphs review Gottlieb's empirical findings in relation to the theme that the program's successes led to its undoing. All of the findings cited below are significant at the .001 level using the chi square statistic. The parenthetical page citations refer to Gottlieb's report.

VIV suggests that the program's original goal of recruiting well-educated, younger people was particularly successful. Ninety percent of males and eighty-five percent of females completed at least "some college (8)." Most had majored in the social sciences or liberal arts (15). In discussing family backgrounds, Gottlieb explained that VISTAs generally "... come from predominantly white collar, middle class homes [education] (10)", and "[it is clear] that few volunteers come from 'poverty backgrounds' [income] (11)." He also reported that most were drawn from larger urban areas (13). Originally, VISTAs were likely to have joined the program for the following reasons: "Help the poor;" Do something meaningful and relevant;" "Help fight social injustice;" and "Do something for someone else (38)."

The volunteers' reasons for leaving VISTA, as well as their opinions about its effectiveness and "sincerity," suggest that as the program matured, volunteers were more likely to leave because they were "Discouraged, disgusted, frustrated, lost job motivation." The percent marking this category grew steadily from 15% in 1965 to 31% in 1969 (52). During the same time the number who thought the program was not relevant rose gradually from 12% to 34% (58). Those who felt VISTA enabled them to have an impact on poverty declined from a 1965 high of 61% to 44% by 1969 (63).

Gottlieb summarizes his findings of volunteer attitudes as follows: "Many felt that VISTA said one thing about its goals and then prevented the volunteers from accomplishing them (*e.g.*, by penalizing them for community organizing) (65)." He continues, "... volunteers complained that their hands were tied by political restrictions and that it was impossible to accomplish the goal of helping the poor to help themselves without engaging in political action of some sort (73)." Not surprisingly, those who were suspicious about government-sponsored "social change programs" rose steadily from 31% in 1965 to 59% in 1969 (83), which, according to Gottlieb, "... is a sad commentary ..." on the VISTA experience (82). Volunteers also believed "... most college stu-

dents who were exposed to VISTA would become more critical of our society (92)."

Finally, and again not surprisingly, almost 90% agreed that "most decisions in this country are made by a relatively small group (90)," a majority thought that "America's poor are the result of years of economic oppression (90)," and more than half did not think "... that there is a real desire to wage an all out effort against poverty" (91). At the same time, VIV indicated that older volunteers were less likely to be cynical about either government-sponsored anti-poverty programs or its (the government's) commitment to the disadvantaged, and the older the respondent, the lower the level of cynicism (82). These findings suggest that the later emphasis on recruiting older workers had the desired effect of reducing the kinds of demands that "impatient" younger VISTAs were willing to make.

Gottlieb's data show that still another of the framers' goals was achieved: in the early days there were very few "conservative" volunteers, which, according to Gottlieb, "... is not surprising given the [program's] expressed purpose and scope ... (96)." Among "left-leaning" volunteers the program tended to drive many much farther to the left (96-98).

In this light it is important to mention one other aspect of Gottlieb's study. Near the end of VIV he presents direct quotes from some of the surveys. Even though space permits listing only a few, it is important that some comments be presented, since they provide a necessary *qualitiative* perspective on the program. The following observations are typical of several that Gottlieb cites:

> *When a* VISTA *attempts to change the social structure, he is met with* "Nos" *and legalities and threats and cops.* (163, Female, *aged* 24, 1967)

> *Personal experience with the systemic failure to accomplish the basic needs of people caused me to see a need for radical changes in our form of government. I am principally disillusioned by the enormous power of certain economic groups and the difficulty of rearranging [the] power structure short of revolution.* ... (153, Male, 29, 1968)

> VISTA *is about to die because the government is about to discover that it has been running a school for radicals.* (167, Female. 21 *no date*)

> VISTA *has a nasty habit of firing people for being "too effective."* (160, Female, 20, 1968)

Gottlieb offers some concluding remarks that succinctly capture the spirit of a poverty program gone too far. He argues: "In a sense conflict was inevitable ... volunteers, in order to feel they were doing something of significance, would have to undertake activities which would upset the local and national power structure; (113)" and "VISTA officials, in order to maintain their program and in order not to embarrass the administration, would have to pacify and satisfy those who were being made uncomfortable by the activities and pronouncements of the volunteers (113)."

CONCLUSION

In a sense VISTA was an anti-poverty program that, although in an admittedly minor way, became a War on Wealth. It was, as President Johnson said at the start, part of a plan to treat the causes rather than the symptoms of poverty. The VISTA experience was, in large measure, a test of the country's willingness to significantly reduce large discrepancies in the distribution of wealth (meant to include power). The evidence suggests that the nation lacked the necessary resolve to meet this goal. At the same time, VISTA's early years indicate that at least this one enterprise defies some common notions about the social programs of the 1960s. VISTA worked and it represented a (temporarily) successful attempt to "throw money" at a public problem.

There are several ironies here. First, those who complain about the social programs of the 1960s usually use the same approach to solving "their" problems—once in office they throw money at them, either directly, through spending (*e.g.*, the Pentagon), or indirectly, through tax expenditures. Second, this dismantling of an effective social program occurred while the "New Left" was advocating "Power to the people." Although they might not have noticed, the government had al-

ready granted their wish. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your politics, the "activists" did not consolidate their gains. Third, notwithstanding the rhetoric of speechmakers, VISTA shows that not everyone wants government operations to be too efficient. Too much efficiency can cost people their jobs. Finally, President Johnson was probably right all along: the question of redistributing wealth (more equally) underlies any chance of achieving the "Great Society." The issue is whether the country is willing to mount and sustain programs committed to achieving this objective.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See, for example, Balzano; Piven and Cloward (1971); Levitan (1969); "OEO's Reprieve" (1973); "Death of OEO" (1973); Arnold (1974); Anderson, Brady & Bulloch; "Why Critics Lambaste Sam Browns's Agency," (1979).

[2]See, for example, Brager and Sprecht (1967), pp. 133-150; Moynihan, p. 163; Grosser, (1967), p. 249; and U.S. Congress (Senate), 1967, pp. 4781, 4786.

[3]See, for example, VISTA *Volunteer*, 5(5), (1969) p. 3; Murphy (1970), p. 21; VISTA *Volunteer* (1968) 4(4), p. 30; VISTA *Volunteer* (1968), 5(8), p. 30; OEO (1969); OEO (1970), p. 17; OEO (1969), p. 6.

[4]See *The Budget of the United States Government, 1966 through 1972.*

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Using Volunteers in a College Program

Arlene Wartenberg, Ed.D.

INTRODUCTION

Society's organizations and institutions agree that volunteers provide invaluable services. In public schools, for example, volunteers help children with their reading and arithmetic while their teachers are with other students. Volunteers, therefore, save institutions time and money while providing services that might not otherwise be available. But while it is common to see them in public schools and adult literacy programs, it is rare to see volunteers in institutions of higher learning. Volunteers, therefore, are an untapped and valuable resource for colleges and universities.

Volunteerism at a Small College

Beaver College, a small liberal arts college in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, like most colleges, has had little experience with volunteers. Until recently, volunteers were usually alumni who helped with fund raising or recruiting activities. However, in the fall of 1981, I began to use volunteers to design and manage a non-credit program for the community.

For a minimal fee, the College had been permitting men and women over 62 to audit (sit in on) classes, with verbal participation at the discretion of the instructor. The number of auditors had grown steadily; their enjoyment of the experience was evidenced by many positive comments and letters. The only negatives were that some auditors had already taken all the courses open to them and wanted the chance to take other classes; and they wished the opportunity to participate more fully in class discussion.

Beaver administrators were supportive of the auditing program because while the income generated was small, the program expenses were minimal and the free publicity in the community was a bonus. Therefore, when I suggested that there might be a community interest in an additional program for senior citizens, I was told to pursue the idea. Because of budgetary constraints, however, I was cautioned that if I started a new program, it must be self-supporting from its inception.

Undaunted by this qualified mandate, I decided to pursue the matter further and worry about financing a program later. To be certain I had an audience and to get some ideas about the direction the program might take, I mailed a questionnaire to the 150 senior citizens who had, in the past, audited Beaver College courses. In the questionnaire, I asked for demographic data, names of courses audited, and opinions about a possible program. While the response rate was only 35%, 92% of the people who completed the forms were interested in attending a non-credit daytime program at Beaver College.

The questionnaires proved to be an invaluable source of information. They contained suggestions about the kind of courses people were interested in taking and potential volunteers to help me start a program. From the respondents, I selected 15 men and women who, based on their past business, professional, and volunteer experiences, appeared to have the backgrounds to help develop an educational program.

I invited these men and women to attend a coffee-discussion; all but two of the 15 attended. At the meeting, I shared the results of the questionnaires; the attendees were very excited about the idea

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of a college-level non-credit program. It was decided to "test the waters," as one retired business executive said, by offering a summer mini-series. The rest of this first session was devoted to generating ideas for courses and instructors. I told them that Beaver was unable to help with program expenses. Undismayed, the group agreed that if they shared the work, the only program expenses would be faculty salaries and brochures, both of which could be paid for with the tuition collected.

This group of senior citizens, which named itself the Advisory Group, met frequently during the next three months to plan the mini-series, selecting and staffing five courses and writing publicity and a brochure. Sometimes they worked as a whole; other times they worked in committees. At this time, no formal committee structure was established. After the final trial class had met, the group evaluated the series and determined that it had paid its way. They decided unanimously to continue but expand the non-credit program which they named Community Scholars, offering liberal arts courses taught, whenever possible, by Beaver faculty.

Through the summer, the Advisory Group met to plan the first fall semester. On recommendation of the original members, a few new people were added to the Advisory Group, making a total of eighteen. As the group enlarged, I guided its members to determine the different tasks and develop a committee structure. The Advisory Group decided that each committee should have a chair who is a member of the Advisory Group but that non-advisory people could serve on committees. My role as program director was advisor, mediator, and college-policy representative.

At the time of this writing, Community Scholars is completing its sixth year. Each fall and spring, approximately fifteen courses are offered. Courses range from "The Wonderful World of Ancient Greece and Rome" and "Shakespeare: Humanistic Ideal of the Renaissance" to "Update on Developments in Psychology" and "Picasso . . . Picasso . . . Picasso." Although organized and designed by senior citizens, low-cost courses are open to men and women in the community regardless of age. Inexpensive trips and free concerts round out the program.

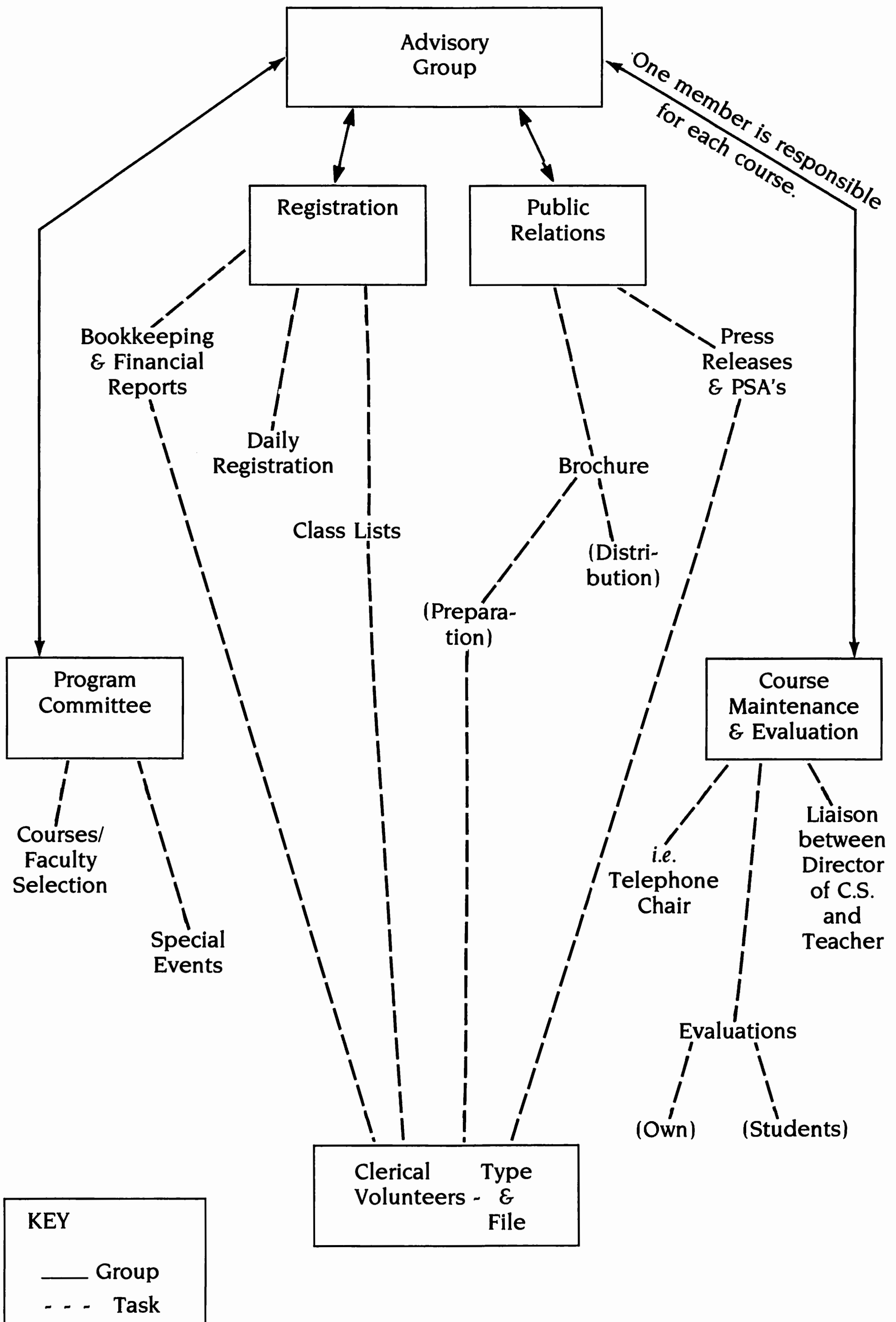
The Advisory Group, composed exclusively of volunteers, continues to be the program planners and implementers. It meets at regular intervals, usually once a month, to plan, share committee reports, evaluate courses and instructors, and participate in long-range planning activities. Committees met when necessary, frequently evaluating their procedures to help them become more efficient and effective. Once each semester, the need for volunteers is advertised in the Community Scholars' newsletter. As a result, the number of volunteers has grown; the Advisory Group now stays at twenty.

Because of the work of the volunteers, Community Scholars has been able to operate on a low-cost budget. The only paid employee is its part-time director and a student-helper. Other costs include instructors' salaries, layout and printing of the brochure, postage, and overhead. Each course generates sufficient tuition to cover the instructor's salary or it is cancelled. Most courses generate a surplus which, combined with money from a variety of fund-raising activities, helps Community Scholars be self-sufficient.

The volunteer system has been responsible for the rapid growth of Community Scholars. The members of the Advisory Group and its committees are typical of the people in the community who enroll in the courses. They not only know the interests of others in their age group but also register for courses themselves and bring their friends, spouses, and relatives. In the six years since its inception, the number of program participants has grown from fifty to five hundred; seldom, if ever, is a course cancelled for lack of enrollment—a record few programs can show.

Responsible and hardworking, the volunteers freely give their time and energy. There are, however, a few vital ingredients that have made the system function effectively. Primarily, Community Scholars' Advisory Group has had the autonomy to make the important decisions. As the College's representative, it is the director's role to offer advice about relevant college policies and procedures; members of the

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE – COMMUNITY SCHOLARS



Advisory Group function as decision-makers rather than as advisors.

Another important ingredient in the successful operation of this volunteer system is the decision-making process used. Decisions come from a consensus. While discussions can get heated at times, Advisory Group members know that ultimately a vote will be taken and the majority opinion will hold.

The availability of information is another important factor in the day-by-day operation of the volunteer system. Committee members need to understand their functions, responsibilities, and time lines. Advisory Group members need to have available to them data about the program and the college to help them make decisions. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Community Scholars' director to provide information and guidance, as requested. Full financial reporting provides important information that the Advisory Group needs if it is to be able to make decisions about the program's future.

Finally, as with all programs that use volunteers, all volunteers are recognized for their efforts and dedication. Volunteers are thanked frequently for their contributions to Community Scholars with thank you notes, individual recognition at meetings, volunteer luncheons, special events (concerts and trips), and mention in the newsletter.

There are some difficulties that have arisen with a program that depends too heavily on senior citizen volunteers. Bad weather disrupts meetings; errors result from weakened hearing and vision; arguments arise because of inflexibility or outspokenness. Several members have left the Advisory Group because of illness or death. But an important lesson was learned as several key Advisory Group members were no longer active participants and I left Community Scholars after four years as director: a strong group of dedicated volunteers can maintain a strong program.

The benefits of the Community Scholars' volunteer program have greatly outweighed the difficulties. The volunteers have had an opportunity to use their talents and intelligence in a life period not usually associated with opportunities for innovation. They are valued and needed, for without the senior citizens who volunteer, Community Scholars could not function. The program's participants enjoy a college-level program that meets at convenient times and locations. They are able to participate in a learning experience planned by their peers without having to take exams or write papers. And lastly, Community Scholars benefits Beaver College. The community has seen that Beaver College is committed to lifelong learning; the younger students have learned to appreciate the vitality of the older student; and the visibility and creativity of the institution have expanded. None of these benefits would have been possible without volunteerism.

A POST SCRIPT

If my description of how a group of senior citizen volunteers created a successful program has motivated you to consider a similar program, let me discourage you. Community Scholars was successful because the volunteers designed the program they wanted. I would suggest that you do not start with an outline for a program and look for interested people to help you develop it. Instead, I recommend that you look for a group of interesting people and let them determine what kind of program they want.

Every community is different. A program of liberal arts courses like Community Scholars, while appealing to you or your institution, might not be what your community wants. Seek out representatives of the community and let them determine what direction a program should take. Volunteers are easier to attract and maintain if they work with something they want.

Empowering a Profession: Seeing Ourselves as More than Subsidiary

Ivan Scheier, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION:
REGISTERING SOME CLAIMS

Volunteerism. I remember the dreams of a larger role in the betterment of society. But a funny thing happened on our way to changing the world; the world got to us first. It got to us by casting us (or encouraging us to cast ourselves) in subsidiary roles vis-à-vis current structures and concepts, rather than as change agents confronting the need for new structures and concepts.

Today, we seem to have our hands full just defending ourselves as a profession, never mind changing the world. As the first article in this series proposed: "For volunteer administration today, the number one challenge is to empower the profession (Scheier, 1988)." Essentially, empowerment is understood here as enhanced status for career leadership of volunteers and more generous resource allocation in support of volunteer programs and groups.

This first article looked at labels for what people who call themselves "Volunteer Administrators" actually do. In many cases, we found justification for broader, more inclusive, and hence more impressive titles such as "Community Resource Development," "Community Relations Coordinator," "Human Resource Development," "Community-Based Support Systems" and the like. In part, our disempowerment may result from allowing ourselves to be seen as too narrow in what we do, hence more expendable. Or so it was argued.

This second article pursues a parallel track in the importance of self-perception as a starting point for empowerment. Here, however, the polarity changes from "narrow-broad," to "subsidiary-autonomous." The argument, in a nutshell, is this: insofar as volunteer administration continues to see itself as derivative, passive and dependent, others naturally tend to see us that way, too. Beginning to define ourselves as powerful, active, and autonomous is the first step in becoming more so. Almost any victim of prejudice will tell you this and almost everyone can instance the phenomenon in her/his own experiences.

Thus, as many have remarked, John Kennedy convincing us that we *were* going there was the first step on the road to the moon. This is far more than a simplistic "wishing will make it so." It is instead a respectful variation on the poet Robert Burns in which we see ourselves as we would *like* others to see us. Nor is this a trick. Indeed, the special promise in reperceiving volunteer administration as more powerful and independent is that the factual basis for redefinition is already there. The old dependent perception is the one which most lacks reality reference and blocks seeing ourselves as we really are, or could be.

Thus far, I have only tried to be clear about what is being claimed. We now begin to examine the basis for the claim of disempowering self-perceptions in the field of volunteer administration. I'll also suggest some possible remedies in each case of alleged self-disempowerment.

NARROW VS. PART OF A LARGER WHOLE

As noted, the first article in this series (Scheier, 1988) explored a narrow-broad polarity in the self-labelling of people who work with volunteers; this proves to overlap our present somewhat broader concern with subsidiary-autonomous. The first article concluded that:

Over the past twenty-five years, *Ivan Scheier* has been a volunteer, a volunteer coordinator, director of a volunteer center, researcher, author, publisher and—both in North America and overseas—a trainer and consultant in the volunteer leadership field. He is currently Director of the National Center for Creative Community in Santa Fe, New Mexico and President of Yellowfire Press, Boulder, Colorado.

... it is all too easy for the uneducated (on volunteers) executive to downplay a person labelled as "only" responsible for volunteers. But this same executive might think twice, or even thrice, before trivializing the work of a person who, as part of a seamless package, was bringing in, not only volunteers, but also materials, equipment, money, information, community support!

The article presented evidence that many people who call themselves volunteer administrators/directors/coordinators in fact do some of these other things. To see ourselves, accordingly, as part of a more pervasive and synergic function of community resource development or some such title, is also to see ourselves as more powerful, so went the argument. And some former volunteer administrators have enlarged their titles in just this way.

Here's an analogy. One person is good at finding gold; another person is good at finding gold *and* silver *and* several other precious metals. You *should* value both. But which one will you *actually* value most?

PASSIVE-ACTIVE: CAUSE-EFFECT

Typically, we in the volunteer world see ourselves as acted upon, rather than acting on; as a resultant of other forces rather than a basic cause. This is true of every study I've participated in or know of, on the future of volunteerism. Studies like the National Forum on Volunteerism (1982), for example, did their best to predict how environmental factors such as inflation or increasing numbers of women in the workplace will impact volunteerism. To my knowledge, such studies rarely or never attempt to predict how volunteerism might impact inflation or the number of women in the workplace, etc.

A similar assumption of passivity occurs when we discuss demographics. There the question is far more likely to be of the type: "What impact will an aging population have on volunteerism?" Yet, recent studies show that volunteerism also impacts right back on the aging process (DOVIA Exchange, 1987), an opposite direction of expected causal flow at least equally worthy of study.

Mainly, I think, a deeply ingrained assumption of dependence keeps us from asking the kind of questions which cast volunteerism as active cause rather than passive result. Thus, the Center for Creative Community has a project to determine the impact of volunteerism (as cause) on the economic well-being of communities, rather than the usual *vice versa*. So far, we've come up with eighteen ways (Center for Creative Community, 1985) and at least one economist reviewer says they make sense. We needed only to break through our habitual self-perception of passivity.

May I recommend that whenever we catch ourselves considering a statement of this type—how does X effect volunteerism—we turn it around to how does volunteerism affect X, and see what happens. And when we have turned it around, let us pursue the implications relentlessly. Thus, to our credit, the relation between corporations and volunteerism has indeed been studied in both directions—how volunteerism impacts corporations as well as how corporate involvement impacts volunteerism. But have we gone the whole way? Thus, has anyone asked if an employee's fulfilling experiences and recognitions as a volunteer might make her more likely to demand more of the same in the corporate workplace?

Sometimes it seems as though we position entire programs under the assumption that we volunteers deal with symptoms, not causes. Recently, I heard an excellent presentation of a fine program in which volunteers work with latchkey children. In an accompanying video, the father of one such child expressed his regret—the pain was visible—that circumstances forced his wife and him to leave their child alone for certain times. They had no choice, he said; both had to work full-time to maintain their standard of living. Wait a minute, I thought. Where are the volunteer programs to challenge the materialistic assumptions that make parents place their children at latchkey risk in the first place? Such programs would probably be educational, would likely be issue-oriented, and almost certainly would be unpopular and controversial in a society which increasingly requires incessant consuming.

Is this a fair assessment of organized volunteerism, or merely another unsupported version of the old band-aid accusation? I do not know. I only ask that we pay more attention to whether our programs deal sufficiently with the causes of social problems, not just their results. And I hope, too, that we do not avoid as too controversial the kind of issue-oriented volunteering which does tend to deal with causes (in *both* senses in which that word is used).

THE RULES WE PLAY BY

Psychologists tend to do very well on intelligence tests; I suspect this is at least partly because intelligence tests were developed by psychologists in the first place. Assuming garbage collectors ever saw the point of constructing intelligence tests, psychologists would not do nearly as well.* To paraphrase an old adage: "The hand that sets the standards, rules the world."

The clearest possible admission of second-rate status is to allow yourself to be judged by principles and standards fundamentally different from your own ideals. If the price of upward mobility for a woman is just to play the man's game, including some of its worst parts, who has really won? Not women, I should think, nor men either, for that matter, in the long run.

How does modern volunteerism stand in that regard? Not very well, I believe. Thus, one of our basic assertions—basic miracle, if you will—is that millions and millions of people *will* do valuable work, *without being paid for it*. This means, among other things, that *money is not the sole measure of the value of work*, maybe not even the most important one.

Some of us then proceed immediately to justify our volunteer programs in terms of their *dollar value*! In so doing, the presumed price of program survival is accommodating to the principle: money *is* the main measure of the value of work. Thus, we allow ourselves to be judged by standards that are not just *different* from ours; they are *opposite* to ours. No clearer acknowledgment of inferiority could be imagined.**

Nonetheless, I predict we will continue to reduce to materialistic terms the work people do for reasons that are precious, precisely because people are more than materialistic. At any rate, I am not holding my breath until volunteer administrators eliminate the practice. Nor do I even necessarily recommend it—we do have to be practical, after all.

What I do recommend is that while we allow ourselves to be justified in their terms (*e.g.*, dollars), we begin reciprocally to suggest, as gently as may be, ways those using dollar-value standards can judge themselves by *our* standards (I wouldn't put it quite that bluntly, of course, but that is the intent).

For example, why don't we develop an index of work satisfaction or work fulfillment to reflect all the *non-dollar* sources of satisfaction a person has? Then, as we regularly dance to the tune with dollar value of volunteer time, let others begin to hear our music, too: the satisfaction value of work, for staff as well as volunteers. That's our specialty and we're in a stronger, more respected position as it becomes visible, accepted. Pseudo-dollars are *not* our specialty.

There may also be other ways we can begin to encourage a better balanced reciprocity in standards between "us" and "them." We might, for example, publicly examine questions such as: "Can you really pay people to be nice? *Genuinely* nice?" or "How good or bad is the correlation between compensation and caring about one's work?" I suggest the ensuing dialogue would raise general awareness of the value of what volunteer administrators know, and what they do.

A DECLARATION OF INTELLECTUAL INDEPENDENCE

In the field of volunteerism, the great teachers have been the great translators. They have brought us the best from other fields to adapt to our needs, *e.g.*, personnel, psychology, communication, business or other public administration, edu-

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*I say this, not as a matter of strict proof, but as a former psychologist with some experience constructing intelligence tests *and* collecting garbage.

**Or a greater threat to a budget-anxious staff.

cation, office and financial management, economics, public relations, evaluation, ethics, sociology, and so on. The list is long, and it can be confirmed by scanning any textbook in volunteer administration, any conference program, any list of certification competencies.

So be it. I respect us for our willingness to learn from others. Still, there comes a time when you have to ask: is there *anything* we can call our own? Do we have anything original and authentic to say, or are we totally derivative intellectually? I suspect most disciplines, such as psychology and sociology, do have some special basic insight or viewpoint, and this uniqueness is one basis of power because you have to come to them to get it.

And where is our specialty? Who has ever marked out the primary intellectual ground we hold? What do we offer that is original rather than derived? I don't hear that kind of primary declaration from us. All I hear, as noted, is the need to copy and adapt from other fields. But I believe volunteerism will never fully achieve its own power base until it achieves its own intellectual base; that is, until it defines itself as something more than a mish-mash of other fields. I believe it is now time to reach down deeply inside ourselves and identify the authentically original we have to offer the world. Surely there is something very special in our archetypical situation: people working without pay in a society whose mainline assumption is that people work for money; and people choosing work of their own free will in a world where work is so often chosen for us by others or mandated by chronic indebtedness.

Therefore, I would like to see more concentration on identifying, articulating, and proclaiming what is special and original in the volunteer situation, what cannot be derived from anywhere else. This specialness, in turn, defines what we know better than anyone else, hence, the areas in which we can be teachers as well as students, and in all these ways, more powerful.

Just as a rough "for instance" beginning, such statements might look something like this:

- People *do* work for more than the money; work and money are not always inseparable.
- Intangible rewards and recognitions are at least as important as tangible.
- In the long run, it may be more effective to build work around people than to force people to fit pre-cast molds of what they should do and how they should do it.
- Money and/or politics are not the only way people can affect the way things are. You can "vote" with your volunteer service every day.
- Many people need more than one career, not just serially, but also concurrently.

What these statements have in common is a marking out of a special intellectual territory in which we have special, even unique knowledge by virtue of our profession, and from which special bodies of knowledge might be developed. The people approach system, so-called (Scheier, 1981) is one of the few attempts thus far to develop a special body of knowledge based on a "unique" volunteer principle (the opportunity to build work around people).

Another example would be leading works on the value of recognition-other-than-money (Vineyard, 1981). Here, however, I would like to see us emphasize more that our special expertise in intangible recognition is desperately needed by most paid employees, too. Indeed, a tremendous opportunity for empowerment and employment awaits us in the "volunteerizing" of *all* work, both paid and unpaid. I have in fact facilitated trainings on work satisfaction for paid employees, which lead off with this prescription: "Pay your employees a decent salary, then forget you are paying them and treat them as if they were volunteers. And here's how we treat volunteers . . ."

Perhaps such a development is a bit premature, until we have a better grip on exactly what the primary intellectual territory of volunteerism is. Think tanks are an excellent way of identifying and refining such statements—like the five preliminary examples presented earlier. The Center for Creative Community therefore has been facilitating a CHALLENGE series of think tanks at various locations in North America. Concurrently, we have been developing a strategy and methodology for

the conduct of think tanks—a kind of how to go beyond the how-tos (Cole, in preparation).

ONE DOWN TO THE HUMAN SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Somehow, some 30-40 years ago, organized volunteerism cast its fate primarily with the human service delivery system. It was never altogether a marriage made in heaven, witness that staff and agency resistance to volunteers has characteristically been the number one problem for volunteer programs ever since. But the main point here is that, accepted or not, a volunteer program in an agency is almost inevitably cast in a subsidiary role. Usually—not always—where there are any paid staff at all, they are the supervisors and resource people, and much of the methodology of volunteer administration can be seen as a way of being sure volunteers are properly controlled by the agency, even though the usual control mechanisms for employees are lacking; that is, you can't withhold their pay, and you can't usually say, "do it, or else." Volunteer screening; job descriptions; volunteer orientation and training; supervision and evaluation of volunteers; even special recognition of "good" volunteers, are ways of making sure service volunteers stay reasonably tame to the purposes and procedures established for them by the agency.

Organized volunteerism will remain essentially subsidiary as long as it is auxilliary in this way—far more influenced by, than influencing its agency hosts.

I am nevertheless convinced that far more good than harm happens because volunteers are in the human service delivery system—particularly in the enhancement of services to clients. Therefore, I hope and expect we will keep our foothold even at the cost of reinforcing the perception of us as subsidiary.

What we *can* do, however, is give more attention to settings in which volunteers and their leaders are *not* so subsidiary.

One such setting is the group composed mainly or entirely of volunteers. Some types of all- or mainly-volunteer groups include neighborhood organizations; networks; service clubs; many church or synagogue groups; educational organizations; self-help groups; recreational or cultural groups; club groups of all kinds; advocacy or issue-oriented groups; many professional associations (especially local chapters); co-ops; boards, committees and task forces (as lacking in staff support); most fraternal organizations; many newly created service programs or facilities, before funding; etc. There must be millions of such all-volunteer groups; probably this is where most people do most of their volunteering, and where much of the cutting edge of social progress occurs. Yet, most of the training and publication *re* organized volunteerism assumes there will be paid staff working with volunteers, supervising and supporting their work, providing continuity, etc. Only recently has a visible literature begun to develop focusing especially on all-volunteer groups (Yellowfire, 1985 a and b); much of this body of knowledge is still in the future, as a major project of the Center for Creative Community.

For now, however, the point is that, by definition, volunteers are subsidiary to no one else in an all-volunteer group; hence there could be more opportunity for autonomy for professional leadership involved with them. But how could a volunteer administrator make a living working with an all-volunteer group? That is a legitimate practical question (though, on the other hand, it is an exquisite irony to have defined the field of *volunteer* administration largely in terms of what people can be *paid* to do).

A future I find quite plausible here, once the body of all-volunteer group knowledge is solidified, is one in which a volunteer administrator acts as an independent consultant to a set of all-volunteer groups. No one of these groups could afford such full-time services by itself. But a pooling of all their retainer fees should make a decent total revenue for the volunteer administrator, whose title as well as role would probably evolve to something more like "volunteer group resource consultant." And, I believe, the role and the profession would show a net gain in autonomy here.

For those who remain as volunteer administrators in agencies, all-volunteer groups may still serve as leverage for em-

powerment. First, the all-volunteer group consultant role will compete importantly for the services of volunteer administrators which could lead to greater value placed on getting and keeping good people in agencies. Secondly, as agency volunteer administrators begin to recruit as resources volunteer *groups* along with volunteer individuals, agencies should begin to understand better the autonomy of volunteerism, since that will usually be more clearly evidenced in dealing with a group of volunteers, rather than an individual volunteer.

But not always. Another neglected setting for volunteerism is the freelance volunteer who works largely independent of organizations. Related descriptions are "mover and shaker," "social entrepreneur," "gadfly" and occasionally less printable names. These people are enormously important; while they do not work *for* organizations, they often end up *creating* them. As Eileen Brown says on the basis of her preliminary research (Brown, 1987): "Free-lance volunteers represent a precious heritage in the history of helping. They are intensely individual, active, not-for-profit workers, by choice not affiliated with an organization. The free-lance volunteers can be *issue-oriented*, mobile and flexible in target areas or more *service-oriented* helpers of individuals not as mobile, usually working within a fixed area/neighborhood." Brown goes on to note that "all of our communities have and need these individuals."

Here then is the very model of autonomous volunteering. From it, we can draw inspiration and self-confidence, and even, under certain conditions, valuable help for our organization. Brown, for one, feels that we are not utilizing freelancers fully enough. While they will never belong to us as among "our" volunteers, they can certainly help our causes when they happen to be going our way. Their genius for cutting (or ignoring) red tape and their attitude of "damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead" can move things when otherwise the bureaucracy of helping might leave us dead in the water. And more relevant to the theme of this article, freelancers model volunteers as kings and queens, rather than pawns for our agency managers. Finally, Brown's results thus far indicate that while freelancers are not interested in belonging to a formal program, they *are* willing to accept help and support for their work, *on their own terms*. Perhaps somewhere here, there is a future role variation for volunteer administrators, more as supporter than as supervisor, more as network facilitator than director.

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HERE'S YOUR CALENDAR FOR NEXT OCTOBER 1989!

1989 SEPTEMBER 1989						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER
1989

1989 NOVEMBER 1989						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 FIRST QUARTER	9 COLUMBUS DAY YOM KIPPUR	10	11	12	13	14 FULL MOON
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 LAST QUARTER
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 NEW MOON	30	31 HALLOWEEN				

"LEADERSHIP - A CAPITAL INVESTMENT"
1989 Conference on Volunteer Administration
Washington, D.C. / October 12-15, 1989

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