ABSTRACT

Recent trends seem to emphasize closer relationships between volunteers and existing organizations and groups. There is concern among community workers that the increasing "bureaucratization" of volunteers comes at the expense of their participation in less affiliated community tasks.

This article presents a more integrated approach to the recruitment and utilization of volunteers, one which views the needs of communities as elastic and evolving. The need to involve volunteers is seen as independent of current needs of existing groups.

A project that is based on this concept has been implemented in Israel. Its main objective was the simultaneous recruitment of a mass of volunteers and the creation of areas of involvement for all of them.

The project has succeeded in the net recruitment of approximately 15% of all able residents in the target area. However, the areas of involvement selected by the volunteers indicate a preference for traditional, affiliated tasks. The selection of tasks related to community functioning lags far behind. The findings lend some support to the claims made by community workers and underscore the need to focus on these critical areas during special and ongoing recruitment efforts.

Fitting Volunteers with Tasks and Creating Tasks for Volunteers: A Look at the Role of Volunteers in a Community Context

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Volunteerism and citizen participation have long been integral parts of the human services, and in the last two decades there has been a systematic effort to conceptualize and develop these roles in literature and practice. The four primary objectives for volunteerism and participation that emerge from a review of the literature are: (a) to make up for the dwindling funds for public and private programs by using volunteers as an unpaid pool of human resources (Conley, 1972; Routh, 1972), (b) to humanize services that have become increasingly bureaucratic and impersonal (Orr, 1984; Manser, 1987), (c) to provide constructive outlets and courses of action for populations with excess of leisure time and other bases of needs for participation (Cull & Hardy, 1971; Morris, 1969; Schindler-Rainman & Lippitt, 1971), and (d) to improve conditions in local communities and society at large by involving lay citizens in local activities (Haeuser & Schwartz, 1984; Litwak et al., 1975; Manser, 1987).

Volunteerism's diversity of purpose and its growing scope have led to the increasing systematization and "bureaucratization" of the field; evidence of these changes can be found in both the practice and the literature. This trend is reflected in the prevalence of the following topics: (a) deducting and creating voluntary roles from the goals and objectives of agencies and groups (Seguin, 1984), (b) fitting volunteers to roles by utilizing rational methods adapted from such technologies as functional job analysis (Fine & Wiley, 1971; Offer, 1981), and (c) en-

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hancing the relationships between professionals and volunteers in agencies and increasing volunteer utilization (Naylor, 1967; Routh, 1972; Sharon & Neeman, 1989; McNulty & Klatt, 1989). Several authors (Haeuser & Schwartz, 1984; Perlmutter, 1984) go on to conceptualize a new specialization in social work, that of volunteer administrator.

The growing systematization of volunteerism is a direct response to the increasing complexity of the needs that volunteers seek to address. Given this trend, the author sees a need to preserve the balance among organizational, community-at-large, and individual needs in the utilization of volunteers. More specifically, the author is concerned that the "bureaucratization" of volunteerism might reduce its ability to respond to the changing and evolving needs of communities.

THE VOLUNTEER OR THE TASK, WHICH COMES FIRST?

The question of how best to approach the involvement of volunteers is a central issue in community work literature. The main philosophical alternatives are perhaps best summarized by Rothman, Ehrlich, and Teresa (1984) who suggest that volunteerism and participation can be viewed: (a) as ends in themselves, *i.e.*, voluntary participation is an ideological imperative in community work and is a strategic and tactical necessity; (b) as means for achieving community ends, *i.e.*, participation by volunteers is an integral aspect of community work but the outcome takes precedence over the process; and (c) as conditional means that should be employed only in pursuing select objectives and only if participation can be effective.

Each of these views fits a key model in community work. The first view is linked to the community development and social action models, whereas the latter two better fit the social planning model and support the need for a more efficient involvement of volunteers (Rothman, 1979).

Dissatisfaction with the dichotomous way in which issues have been presented led the author to seek a more integrated approach to volunteerism and participation, one that addresses effectiveness and efficiency and responds to the broader needs of communities and to traditional values of community work. The basic premise underlying this approach states that the recruitment and involvement of volunteers should not be dictated only by present needs, structures, and missions of groups and organizations. It must also take into account broader, long range goals of communities and must be based on the recognition that community needs are not of a fixed nature. Groups and organizations are the building blocks of communities, but at any given moment the needs of the communities are greater than the sum of the existing organizations' missions. The ultimate goal should therefore be to make each able resident a volunteer and to create challenging, well-conceived tasks to accommodate the supply of volunteers.

THE HAIFA DEMONSTRATION PROJECT: "OPERATION HEART"

The need to test this approach led to the development of a demonstration project for the integrated recruitment and involvement of volunteers. The objectives of the project went beyond the need for knowledge building and were in response to actual problems that are endemic to communities in both developed and developing societies. These problems include low levels of participation and communal identification.

The project, named Operation Heart, took place in the city of Haifa in Northern Israel, which has a population of approximately 250,000. The site for the project consisted of four adjacent neighborhoods, each with approximately 6,000 households. The four neighborhoods offer a mix of social and economic conditions but none can be described as impoverished. Operation Heart was planned and implemented by a combined com-

munity school and center that serves the four target neighborhoods. Up to this point the process consisted of the following phases:

Needs and Resource Surveys and Assessment

1. Residents survey: the objective of this activity was to identify types of problems and needs, as well as potential resources that exist in the community. Tenant committees, numbering 605 members, were interviewed and asked to identify needs and resources in their buildings.

2. Nominal group sessions: this activity also aimed at assessing community circumstances. Small groups of teachers, social workers, religious leaders, and law enforcement personnel utilized the Nominal Group Process technique (Delbecq, Van de Ven & Gustafson, 1975) to identify and rank community problems and needs.

3. Voluntary groups and organizations survey: the objective was to identify areas of existing involvement as well as unmet and potential needs for volunteers. The information was obtained via questionnaires that were sent to all known groups operating in the four neighborhoods.

Design and Implementation of Recruitment Strategy

Following the analysis of findings from the first stage, current and potential needs were clustered around six areas of community concerns. Each of these areas was further broken down as follows:

1. Establishment of public safety and security: recruiting crossing guards, traffic observers, civil guards (auxiliary police), developing and teaching defensive driving courses.

2. Absorption of immigrants and other newcomers: sponsoring new families (advocacy), assisting children of newcomers, maintaining contact with prospective immigrants in their countries of origin.

3. Improvement of human and interpersonal relations: recruiting members for committees to promote human and civil rights, and for committees to promote better understanding between Arabs and Jews, training for conflict resolution among tenants.

4. Enhancement of quality of life: preserving nature, fostering community development, increasing consumer awareness and protection, producing local newspapers, conducting antismoking campaigns, preserving common housing property (stairways, refuse disposal areas), establishing organ donation programs.

5. Delivery of assistance to residents in need: recruiting big brothers, babysitting for needy parents, offering counseling, providing homemaking and repair assistance, providing legal aid, visiting isolated widows and aged residents.

6. Delivery of assistance to the disabled: providing home visits, providing homemaking and repair assistance, helping in fundraising activities, visiting hospitals and institutions, driving disabled persons, entertaining disabled children on weekends, providing escort services.

The six areas of concern became the focus of the recruitment strategy, which aimed at reaching all able residents over 16 years of age. The objective was to enlist the involvement of each in at least one voluntary activity whether of long term, short term, or one-time duration.

The areas of concern and their specific tasks also became the basis for the creation of new roles for the expected volunteers. This activity involved meeting with existing groups and community workers interested in developing new initiatives in anticipation of the new recruits. These meetings focused on ways to channel prospective volunteers to existing needs and on strategies for integrating organizational programs with new community issues (Havercamp, 1989).

The main instrument used in the project was an indexed, directory-style

brochure. Each area of concern was allocated a page containing all the optional activities that one could select, along with a registration form. Useful household tips, such as first aid, were printed at the end of the brochure to increase the likelihood that residents would keep it.

The recruitment process utilized diverse methods and media. The flow of activities was sequenced and scheduled to culminate on Volunteer Day (or V-Day for short), a day designated for total canvassing of the community. Lead-in activities included delivery of the recruitment brochures to the mailboxes of all households in the four target neighborhoods; display of posters and distribution of informational leaflets in apartment buildings, shopping areas, and public facilities; feature stories in neighborhood, local, and national newspapers; and national radio and television coverage. Items included appearances of the organizers on talk shows, stories in the local sections of the news, and unpaid announcements of public interest. At a time when the media had been saturated with negative news, the project was "sold" as a relevant, positive, and unprecedented event.

The public campaign intensified during the week prior to canvassing day and two major events provided the lead into V-Day. The first was an evening of interviews in a local auditorium with prominent celebrities who were involved in voluntary activities. The second event was a volunteerism fair held in a local shopping area with the participation of 30 organizations.

Canvassing day (V-Day) was the end event and climax of the recruitment stage. To ensure maximal coverage, the four neighborhoods were subdivided into census tracts, and a list containing all housing units and their addresses was prepared for each tract. The canvassing force was made up of high school students and adult volunteers. Students were divided into pairs, with one tract of addresses assigned to each pair. A central command post was set up and communications were established with area (neighborhood) managers whose tasks were to ensure the safety of the canvassers and to resolve localized problems such as erroneous addresses.

The canvassing volunteers were given four hours of orientation during the week preceding V-Day. Role plays and simulations were used to prepare the students for their task and for "real life" resident responses. Several ideas mentioned in the literature, including Rothman, Ehrlich, and Teresa's (1984) instrumental and expressive reward basis, and Rothman's (1974) action hypothesis, were incorporated into the training. A special emphasis was put on the referrral of the new volunteers to existing groups or to interested community workers who expressed interest in creating roles for those who enlisted. The students were instructed to focus on the enlistment of volunteers and to turn down offers of material donations, which were seen as a diversion from the project's primary goal.

Canvassing took place on the evening of V-Day. The timing was selected to maximize the probability for finding residents at home. The canvassers were instructed to return to those addresses where residents had not been found during the first round of visits.

RESULTS

- 6,010 addresses were visited on the evening of V-Day.
- 5,928 households were actually identified.
- 4,409 households (74%) had at least one adult or teen age member at home during one of the visits.
- 895 households provided 974 new volunteers for a total of 1228 different tasks in the six areas of concern.

The following tables provide a breakdown of the new volunteers and the tasks for which they signed up, along several dimensions:

Table I
Tasks Selected by New Volunteers
by Area of Concern
n=1,228

Area of Concern	Percent of All Tasks Selected
Assistance to newcomers	30.5
Assisting needy families and persons	20.6
Public safety	17.0
Quality of life	15.7
Human, interpersonal relations	14.3
Assisting the handicapped	11.9
Total	100.00

Table II
Tasks Selected by New Volunteers
by Orientation of Tasks
n=1,228

Orientation of Task	Percent of Tasks
Individuals and families (direct services)	40.6
Social and environmental	37.1
Community development	22.3
Total	100.00

Table III
Tasks Selected by New Volunteers
by Preferred Frequency of Involvement
n=1,228

Preferred Frequency	Percent of Tasks
Once a week	43.2
Twice a week	25.4
Once a month	24.9
One time only	6.5
Total	100.00

The most frequently selected individual tasks were sending letters and parcels to prospective immigrants abroad (148 responses), taking first aid classes (73 responses), hosting youth from prospective immigrant families (72), consent to donate organs following death (54), and tutoring and homework assistance for needy children (47).

DISCUSSION

Assessing Success (effectiveness)

The primary goal was to recruit as many able residents as possible. As the figures suggest, the project achieved partial success. The author estimates that between 12% and 15% of all able residents responded to the appeal. These percentages represent a net increase in the number of volunteers (persons not involved in ongoing voluntary activities prior to the project). The figures do not include the high school students and adults who were involved in the various activities related to the implementation of the project itself.

Because the reported project is a pilot, comparisons to similar efforts in Israel or other countries are difficult. Those figures that are available come from surveys that measured the scope and nature of volunteerism or participation at given points in time. Estimates range from 24% of all adults (Morris, 1969; Reisch and Wenocur, 1984) to 34% (Manser, 1987). In view of these estimates, the enlistment of an additional 12% to 15% within a short time frame is encouraging, although the stated goal of reaching all residents had proven to be an ideal rather than a realistic target.

The measurement of success itself needs some clarification. One definition can include all those who responded positively to the recruitment campaign. A more conservative approach would count only those who have made at least the initial contact with the various committees and groups. Although the issue of retention goes beyond the scope of the

reported phases, in new groups that have had their initial meetings and in initial contacts of new volunteers with existing groups and services, the average follow-up rate was 70% of original respondents.

The Distribution of Responses

First impressions from observing Tables I and II are that the majority of respondents opted for more traditional, "safer" forms of involvement. Thus, public safety and assistance to the needy are long established areas for volunteers in Israel, while human and interpersonal relations are not. Almost 41% of the selected tasks are in the area of direct assistance to individuals and families, and 37% relate to broad social and environmental involvement. Only 22% of selected tasks are directly related to evolving community needs. This finding lends some support to the contention of community workers that residents tend to shy away from participation in community decision making. The findings also support the argument that in modern-day Israel service to the society at large has become more sanctioned than service to one's own community (Gidron & Bargal, 1986). Given the choice, the majority of respondents prefer traditional volunteerism and service to society rather than the less familiar participation in evolving community affairs.

The findings are consistent with those of the U.S. Census Bureau and the United Way of America (Reisch & Wenocur, 1984). These two sources reported that the majority of volunteers in the United States are engaged in providing direct services rather than in social planning, fund raising, committee work, and other community related activities.

Desired Levels of Involvement

Residents who responded favorably were given a choice in selecting the frequency of participation, from twice a week to one-time involvement ("doing one good deed," as it was presented). This last choice offered an outlet for those who wished to avoid initial heavy commitment. The actual choices presented in Table III suggest a high level of preliminary commitment, with the majority selecting at least weekly involvement.

The Project from Participants' Perspective

Following the completion of the recruitment stage, structured interviews were conducted with the project volunteers in order to gain more insight into the project's process. In all, 142 project participants were interviewed. The interviews were conducted retrospectively and aimed at reconstructing the attitudes and actual experiences of the project volunteers before and during V-Day.

Findings were that most (60%) of the interviewees had felt some anxiety before their calls on residents. This finding supports the decision to send pairs of volunteers to make the calls (for mutual support). However, the majority (82%) reported that the response from residents was as good or better than they had expected, while 13% encountered more negative resident attitudes than they had anticipated.

Regarding the project outcome, 46% of those interviewed said that they had enlisted fewer volunteers than they hoped, whereas 24% enlisted more. In spite of such disappointments, more than 70% of those involved felt that the project was worthwhile and ought to be continued, and only 10% felt that the project had failed. When asked whether they would be willing to participate in future projects, more than 70% of the respondents replied affirmatively, and only 6% declined. The findings underscore the need to provide preparation and support to project volunteers throughout the duration of the effort.

Barriers to Volunteerism

Among the registration materials provided to project volunteers were instruments for recording the reasons offered

by those who declined to volunteer. Of the reasons recorded, lack of time was most frequently mentioned (96% of all our project volunteers recorded it at least once), followed by poor health (64%), and personal needs and problems (61%). Other reasons given were old age (48%), pre-existing involvement in voluntary and other activities (47%), family obligations (45%), and lack of interest (30%).

Of the reasons given, the least expected was the need for help. Many of those who gave old age, poor health, and family-related difficulties as reasons for not signing communicated explicitly that they themselves had unmet needs. With these residents' consent, their names were forwarded to local human services agencies.

A thorough analysis of the issues related to residents' negative response was beyond the scope of this project and there are serious questions concerning the validity of self-reporting in such instances. The issue nevertheless deserves attention from both community workers and volunteer adminstrators.

CONCLUSIONS

In addition to fitting volunteers into tasks defined by existing groups, this project aimed at the mass recruitment of volunteers and at the simultaneous creation of areas of involvement for all of them. These goals were partially accomplished through a massive community project that has generated a high level of public interest and public coverage. This impact must be sustained by incorporating follow-up activities into the ongoing workloads of community workers and volunteer adminstrators.

Although the current project phase of linking the new volunteers with tasks has not yet been completed and evaluated, this is the time for organizers and evaluators to address a number of core issues:

1. What are the optimal levels for volunteer involvement?

Although the assumption underlying the project was that linear relationships exist between levels of volunteerism and community functioning, the association could be curvilinear (decreased functioning with too much volunteer involvement). However, effectiveness might not be the sole justification for the expansion of volunteerism, because significant payoffs can still result from such projects for individuals as well as for the community (Roupe, 1984).

2. Assuming that a significant positive association does exist between volunteerism and community functioning, how can the quantity and quality of volunteerism be enhanced?

One possible modification of the original design would call for targeting different arguments and appeals to specific groups of potential volunteers such as retirees, students, etc. The reported project used a uniform approach to all prospective volunteers.

3. Based on the finding that volunteers turn more to traditional roles and less to tasks related to community development, how can more volunteers be channeled to the latter?

Many writers in this field call for greater involvement of volunteers in working toward achieving general community goals (Haeuser & Schwartz, 1984; Schindler-Rainman, 1984). They contend that a vast pool of potential volunteers exists but the methods of recruitment and channeling have not changed over the years. One possible direction would be to conduct smaller projects that aim to create and fill roles related solely to community functioning and development.

4. How can an integrated approach to volunteerism, focusing on the simultaneous creation of tasks and a pool of volunteers best succeed?

The potential for linkages should be further explored with the goal of establishing clearing houses for both tasks and volunteers in the community. Another possibility would be to make ongoing re-

cruitment part of the work-plans of volunteer administrators and community workers. Community-wide recruitment drives can become annual events, analogous to integrated fund raising campaigns.

5. How can this recruitment and involvement model be adapted to other environments?

The model described in this article assumes a high level of receptiveness and readiness on the part of the professional "establishment." Such cooperative attitudes can not be taken for granted. Although the basic approach is relatively simple and can be easily adapted to diverse environments, its implementation requires painstaking preparations. At the heart of these preparations must be increasing cooperation between community workers, volunteer administrators, and agency professionals. Such cooperation is a condition for the involvement of volunteers in a wide range of community activities on a scale to which the human services are not yet accustomed.

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