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# Corporate volunteering

## From charity to profit – non-profit partnerships

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### ABSTRACT

More and more, profit and non-profit organisations are working together to solve problems in their local communities. Companies can provide much needed resources: money, means, manpower, mass and media. Corporate volunteering (manpower) especially is a relatively new way for companies to show their business/community involvement. Two important discussion themes can be found in corporate volunteering:

- Will the volunteering take place in company time or in employee time?
- Will the employee volunteer for an organisation of her/his own choice or will the company have a list of approved organisations and/or causes?

Based upon these questions three topics are described in this article: forms of corporate volunteering, perceptions of corporate volunteering and development of corporate volunteering. Volunteer administrators need to understand these concepts to be able to make an offer that is both appealing for employees and companies, but is also favourable for the non-profit's mission.

### INTRODUCTION

An ever-increasing number of companies put their corporate citizenship into practice by leveraging co-operative relationships with non-profit organisations and/or governments. *New social partnerships*, *inter-sectoral partnerships* and *public-private partnerships* are only some of the terms that are used to refer to these co-operative relationships between companies, non-profit organisations and governments (Coogins & Rochlin 2000; Nelson & Zadek 2000). In Australia this is becoming important too (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs and the Business Council of Australia 2000).

This article focuses on corporate volunteering as an instrument of Business Community Involvement (BCI). In corporate volunteering a company encourages its employees to offer their time and expertise as volunteers to non-profit organisations. These volunteer activities can be undertaken within or outside the employees' official workload and time. This article offers a model to analyse corporate volunteering from different perspectives and is based

upon the experience of the recent rise of corporate volunteering in the Netherlands. This (re) introduction of corporate volunteering as part of BCI in the Netherlands is promoted by the national business network, *Samenleving en Bedrijf* (Business and Society), the peak organisation on volunteering, *Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk* (Dutch Organisations Voluntary Work), some private consultants and the national government.

The current state of affairs regarding BCI and corporate volunteering in the Netherlands is as follows:

- 1 By early 2003, about fifteen largely multinational companies were involved in *Samenleving en Bedrijf*. The majority of these organisations are in banking or consultancy<sup>2</sup>.
- 2 Willem Lageweg, executive vice president of Rabobank Netherlands, describes the current state of these fifteen best practices in BCI as moving from 'inspiration', the idea phase, to getting

'transpiration' from the difficulties in further developing BCI.

- 3 Cause related marketing and visible corporate philanthropy is not common in the Netherlands. The effect is that, especially for companies with a Dutch history, marketing and BCI are not related, which makes corporate volunteering a focus point instead of sponsoring or (classical) philanthropy (see also Meijs 2003).
- 4 Numerous business practices have organised or continue to organise corporate volunteering projects of which a vast majority consist of one-day or one-off projects.
- 5 About twenty-five local government supported intermediaries offer their brokerage services. They help companies to become inspired and support non-profit organisations in organising one-day corporate employee volunteering projects.
- 6 In 2002 sixteen municipalities and two provinces received national government money to promote and organise BCI.
- 7 Some nationally organised non-profit organisations, of which the Dutch Red Cross is the leader, are developing policies regarding their business relationships, monetary donations and in-kind support such as volunteer time and knowledge.

The research for this paper must be placed in the tradition of action research (Reason & Bradbury 2001; Coghlan & Brannick 2001). The basis of this paper stems from the authors' continuous involvement in the process of introducing and developing BCI in the Netherlands. During this process interviews were held with key players in companies (national and local), government, peak bodies and non-profit organisations. Previous concepts of the models used in this article have been tested in workshops at conferences such as Internationaal Jaar van Vrijwilligers (IJV) Amsterdam 2001, European Business Marathon 2002 (Meijs & Van der Voort 2002) and the NOV Conference 2003 (Meijs & Van der Voort 2003). In 2003 and 2004 these findings were followed up by qualitative research focussing on partnerships between companies and non-profit organisations in the shape of twenty-five interviews with companies, municipalities, non-profit organisations and 'intermediating organisations'. Furthermore,

Van der Voort executed a case study research on two best practices in The Netherlands (see Van der Voort 2003).

Since corporate volunteering is mostly part of a broader partnership between a company and a non-profit organisation, the first part of the paper briefly describes the definition and sustainability of partnerships. The second part focuses on corporate volunteering and offers an analytic tool for examining corporate volunteering. This tool is used to describe corporate volunteering from three different perspectives: forms of corporate volunteering, perceptions of corporate volunteering and development of corporate volunteering. In the third part conclusions will be drawn and some recommendations for practitioners in the field will be made.

#### **1 HOW CAN A SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BUSINESSES AND NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS BE DEFINED?**

Nelson and Zadek (2000, p.14) present the following definition of a 'new social partnership':

people and organisations from some combination of public, business and civil constituencies who engage in voluntary, mutually beneficial, innovative relationships to address common societal aims through combining their resources and competencies

Austin (2000) mentions three succeeding stages of partnering within cross-sectoral relationships:

- i. **philanthropic.** A company gives money and materials, and a non-profit organisation receives this charity humbly. Interaction is mostly limited to donating and receiving a cheque
- ii. **transactional.** Company and voluntary organisation are 'business' partners. Both partners invest in and derive benefits from their collective activity or project. Both partners pursue their own interests and goals
- iii. **integrative.** Partners' missions, people and activities begin to experience more collective action. It begins to look like a highly integrated joint venture that is central to both organisations' strategies. The partners have agreed to a joint policy and common vision for the future.

Individual value creation escalates to joint value creation.

According to Austin, partnerships undergo an evolutionary path from philanthropic activities to transactional and integrative relationships, that is, from BCI as charity to BCI as a strategic activity, central to the primary activities of the business partner. Kjaer and Tennyson (2003, p.85) referred to evolution as 'the growing up from a more personalised to a more formalised working relationship, through the greater engagement of organisations and the creation of management systems'. As more people from executive and operational layers of both partner organisations are involved, a variety of collective projects and activities are undertaken, a common agenda is set, the partnership becomes of strategic importance to both partners, the organisations become concerned with their partner's internal affairs and social value is sought, the partnership reaches the integrative or sustainable stage. The experiences of the first two stages are necessary prerequisites to building relationships of trust. Lewicki and Bunker (1996, p. 124) call this the *stagewise evolution of trust* from 'I am prepared to enter into a partnership' to the bonding statement of 'I can identify myself with my partner'.

Recent research in the Netherlands finds evidence for two different models of the development of partnerships (Van der Voort 2003). The first model is the USA based direct model that is prominent in most literature. In the direct model a non-profit organisation and a company work together and develop a partnership. In the second model, the indirect model, an intermediating body matches businesses and non-profit organisations. In the Netherlands this is usually not a commercial broker but a governmental sponsored organisation.

Redmond (2003) links the notion of indirect partnering and the use of a broker to employee volunteering. This broker matches profit and non-profit organisations, facilitates the organisation of employee volunteering projects and supports both organisations in generating the best value from these projects.

## 2 HOW TO MAKE ALL THESE PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONS SUSTAINABLE?

In sustainable relationships between companies and voluntary organisations there are four common

characteristics of partnerships (Van der Voort 2003). Partners should agree to a *common goal/ agenda*, they should both invest in and yield benefits from their co-operative relationship (*reciprocity*) and they recognise the *synergetic effect* of bringing their unique resources and skills together. Finally, *evolution* refers to the long-term character of a partnership, as a prerequisite to achieving synergy.

Next to sustainable partnerships, two other sustainable strategies to focus BCI activities can be identified: sustainable projects and a sustainable impact area (Meijs & Van der Voort 2002). Sustainable projects can be found in situations in which companies frequently organise the same or similar projects. An example of a company committing itself to a sustainable project in the Netherlands is KLM. Each half year it organises two KLM project weeks during which KLM employees are able to devote themselves to local community projects. Voluntary organisations can take advantage of this by supplying their volunteering activities in project form. A sustainable impact area implies that the business organisation brings focus in its BCI activities by limiting the scope of their activities to a particular group or cause, for example to 'handicapped people and sports' or to 'young entrepreneurs'. Voluntary organisations have to make clear to their business counterparts how their activities can be linked to the business' chosen impact area.

## 3 CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING IN PERSPECTIVE

Corporate volunteering is one demonstration of Business Community Involvement. Tuffrey (1998, p.3) refers to corporate volunteering as employee community involvement and defines it as 'the voluntary activity of employees, encouraged and supported by their employers, in their local communities'. Tuffrey (1998) states that corporate volunteering helps non-profit organisations to tackle social issues more effectively, as resources are stretched and new skills and new ways of approaching problems are introduced. Furthermore, corporate volunteering offers practical links to overcome barriers between both sectors.

The investment from companies to non-profits in a partnership or co-operative relationship can consist of the so-called five m's: money, means, manpower, mass and media<sup>3</sup>. *Money* is obvious. *Manpower*

refers to corporate employee volunteering (or corporate volunteering). Donating stationary, computers and facilities are among those resources that are referred to as *means*. *Mass* relates to the opportunities of both partners to use their reputation and networks to carry weight in lobbying and open doors that would otherwise stay closed. An example of *mass* was presented during the final presentation in the Netherlands regarding the co-operative partnership between Shell Cares (the BCI department of Shell Netherlands) and Forum (a minority organisation that organises, amongst other programs, home tutoring). Based upon the internal Shell evaluation it was said that, owing to Shell's support in manpower, money and means, local aldermen were more prepared to pay attention to Forum and subsidise its activities. *Media*, finally, refers to the possibilities for both partners to promote their partner's and the partnership's missions through the use of internal and external media.

Corporate volunteering is still a very under researched area. Benjamin (2001) stated that most publications focus on guidance for corporate employee administrators. Benjamin (2001) herself concludes that:

- 1 Administrators of corporate volunteering programs face many challenges and have limited resources.
- 2 In selecting programs the needs of employees generally are more important than the needs of the community.
- 3 Promoting volunteering broadly is the primary focus for most companies although there are many volunteering events at pre-selected sites.

Non-profit organisations based in the US are better able to work with corporates on one-off volunteering activities than their Dutch counterparts. This is an assertion by Westerman (2000) who found that in 2000, national volunteer organisations did not expect anything at all from corporate volunteering and BCI. Furthermore, volunteer organisations saw only very limited possibilities for the use of this new energy. According to Meijs and Hoogstad (2001) this difference between the two countries can be explained by their different approaches to volunteer management. In the Netherlands a membership approach is used in which an existing group of vol-

unteers defines the tasks to be undertaken. In the US context a program management approach is used in which volunteers are recruited and selected to perform pre-defined tasks.

Meijs and Kerkhof (2001) developed a link between human resource management goals of developing employees and the functional motivations of volunteers. They link the notion of corporate employee volunteering to such HRM items as recruitment, pre-retirement, teambuilding, management development and leadership training. Olde Hanter (2002) found that in the Netherlands the seven leading companies in corporate volunteering do not have a common language or understanding of corporate volunteering.

Redmond (2003) identified some of the success factors to be considered when organising employee volunteering projects: clear planning, projects that suit both partners' objectives and the brokerage services of a mediator. Lee (2001), whose research on employee volunteering benefits for companies, community organisations and corporate volunteers, concluded that 'employee volunteering works on mutual benefit' (p.38). Further, Lee argued that the benefits of employee volunteering could be enhanced by stimulating employees to invest their professional, managerial and technical expertise in non-profit organisations as well as their non-work related skills.

On a more abstract level, corporate volunteering can be placed in the discussion on business's corporate citizenship. According to Zadek, Hojensgard and Raynard (2001, p.13) corporate citizenship 'embraces the growing number of voluntary initiatives by the business community that address social and environmental as well as business aims, increasingly in partnership with civil society organizations and public bodies'. All voluntary investments by companies, into the quality of life of their surroundings and includes corporate volunteering, falls under the definition of corporate citizenship. Matten, Crane and Chapple (2003) link the notion of corporate citizenship to government failure. They view corporate volunteering such as feeding homeless people and improving deprived neighbourhoods as 'protecting social rights which originally would have been the task of government' (2003, p.114).

Lee (2001) found in her case study on corporate volunteering that the need to express a business's desire to be a good corporate citizen is perceived as

Table 1: Basic analytic tool to analyse corporate volunteering

	Employee's own time	Employer time
Employee chooses the organisation/cause		
Employer chooses the organisation/cause		

more important than HRM benefits. Corporate volunteering is, according to Lee, a very popular BCI instrument, since it enables companies to include their employees in the corporate citizenship process. Maybe one of the most interesting points in this respect is the possible and sometimes real tension between achieving societal goals, private goals of employees and business goals of companies. Olde Hanter (2002) suggests that companies can choose to develop corporate volunteering from two perspectives. The first perspective is *bottom up* in which the current volunteer activities of employees form the basis from which corporate volunteering is supported and stimulated. In a *top down* perspective, employers choose their own causes and volunteer programs to organise (new) corporate volunteering energy.

The choice between employee-led and employer-led corporate volunteering is a very fundamental one, since it affects the achievement of societal goals, private goals of employees and companies' goals regarding corporate volunteering. It affects, for example, the opportunities of companies to focus corporate employee energy to a specific cause or impact area (societal goals), to stimulate the investment of work related skills and knowledge, to stimulate teambuilding among employees and to make sure that company valued competencies are learnt. Lee found (2001) that employees' perceptions of personal gain were based around personal satisfaction, instead of newly learned skills that would be the object of the companies' goals. Redmond (2003) describes another point of tension regarding corporate volunteering. She refers to the difficulties of non-profit organisations in matching their needs to the 'requirements of a company who seem more interested in having a teambuilding exercise' (2003, p. 65). In her research Benjamin (2001) concluded

that both employees and especially non-profit organisations are not or are only sporadically consulted as an input into the design of corporate volunteering programs. The authority to decide resides at senior management level.

Clearly more research is needed into the issue of corporate volunteering. To analyse items surrounding corporate volunteering a simple analytic tool needs to be developed. Any corporate volunteering program seen from the perspective of a company faces two choices:

- Will the volunteering take place in company time or in employee time?
- Will the employee volunteer for an organisation of her/his own choice or will the company have a list of approved organisations/causes (which could apply to just one organisation)?<sup>4</sup>

By combining these two questions a very simple, but effective analytic tool has been developed, see Table 1

### 3.1 DIFFERENT TYPES OF CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

Meijs and Kerkhof (2001) identify different ways companies express their commitment to their employees' volunteering (Table 2). *Recognition* refers to those activities that companies can undertake to prove they value volunteer work, for example, by including volunteering into recruitment decisions or by paying attention to volunteering during personnel meetings. Through *support*, companies are able to make it easier for their employees to volunteer, for example, by allowing flexible hours or by letting employees use company resources. A third option is *organisation*, which means that companies are actively involved in organising volunteer opportunities for their employees. Finally *sponsoring* refers to the situ-

Table 2: Different forms of corporate volunteering

	Employee's own time	Employer time
Employee chooses the organisation/cause	Recognition Supporting Organising Sponsoring	
Employer chooses the organisation/ cause		Team projects Mentoring Secondments

ation in which employees are allowed to volunteer during working hours. Their volunteer work can also be supported in terms of (financial) resources. *Sponsoring* can be organised into different forms such as *team projects*, *mentoring schemes* or even *secondments* to non-profit organisations.

In particular *organisation* and *sponsoring* could stimulate new volunteering opportunities for a profit/non-profit partnership while *recognition* and *support* promote existing employee volunteering activities. Non-profit partners who receive voluntary support from the for-profit's employees could, in return, support other companies attempting to organise corporate employee volunteerism.

*Sponsoring* further enhances the transaction between the profit and non-profit partners by increasing financial support and additional resources. Allen (2003) makes a distinction between employees who volunteer in their own time or during working hours (*recognition*, *support*, *sponsoring*) and employees who are 'volunteered' by the company as part of a conscious effort to invest its human resources in addressing community problems.

*Recognition* is of course always part of any corporate volunteering program. But seen as a stand-alone thing it occurs purely in employee time for non-profit organisations chosen by the employee.

*Supporting* clearly takes place in employee time, since it is about enabling corporate volunteering within working time by fitting it into the working schedules without actually giving the time. But in many cases the company (implicitly) chooses the causes or organisations as the employee has to apply for a program or ask a manager for permission to volunteer.

*Organisation* means that some kind of matching between the company and the non-profit organisation takes place. The company is very much involved in choosing causes, non-profit organisations and assignments that fit with their ideals. Looking at the time perspective, *organising* opens the door to all kind of matching schemes in which both the company and the employee invest time in corporate volunteering initiatives.

*Sponsoring* always relates to investing company time, either in non-profit organisations the employee chooses, in company approved organisations or even in company selected organisations. Team projects are carried out in non-profit organisations that the company has selected. It may be based on an original idea from a specific employee, but the company ultimately makes the final decision. Secondments, corporate volunteering assignments carried out over a lengthy period of time, can either be the sole choice of the company or mutually agreed upon with the employee. The assignments may be selected by the company depending on their strategic importance or may be used as a human resource management instrument for development purposes. If they are mutually agreed upon they may be set up as part of reintegration or pre-retirement schemes.

### 3.2 THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

Meijs and Hek (1999) did preliminary research on the public perception of BCI, based upon a net cost approach. They hypothesised that the public perception of BCI is based primarily on net costs incurred by the company (broadly defined as costs minus

**Table 3: The perception of corporate employee volunteering**

	Employee's own time	Employer time
Employee chooses volunteer work	This is volunteer work, but the company has nothing to do with it.	Corporate employee volunteering, but what are the companies' motivations for this?
Employer chooses volunteer work	A real nightmare?	Is this volunteering or paid work?

benefits). Meijs and Van der Voort (2003) extended the questionnaire to thirty-five situations based upon examples found at the website of 'samenleving en bedrijf' (Society and Business). Respondents were asked to score these situations on a five-point scale which ranged from *definitely not BCI* to *definitely BCI*. A simple rank order analysis shows that situations involving corporate volunteering are generally perceived as more BCI than situations involving 'simple' things as giving money or creating policies.

The next question to address relates to how people perceive corporate volunteering compared to other instruments of BCI. There is the further question about how people perceive the activities in the four quarters of the basic analytic model (Table 3). In 2001 discussions and interviews with volunteers, experts and companies at workshops on corporate volunteering produced four different perceptions of corporate volunteering (Meijs 2001)<sup>5</sup>.

In general the perception of corporate volunteering is somewhat negative. This is especially the case for traditional volunteers and people who are not well-informed. Regarding employee time the negative perception is that companies are 'showing off'. After some discussion people generally do see the possible value of recognition and support but question the use of corporate volunteering. The quadrant in which the employee has to spend her/his own time on causes chosen by the company is in many cases perceived as a kind of nightmare leading to total institutionalisation in which the company, as in prisons, controls the whole life of its employees. This is especially apparent when a company moves from recognising and accepting all activities into recognising only some activities. This change arouses

severe negative reactions from employees. This is further exacerbated if the recognition is linked to career development. The column involving company time triggers the following negative question: Is this still volunteering? For those cases in which the employee receives time from the company to do something he or she really chooses, the public seems to doubt the companies' good intentions.

Team projects, at least in 2001, were not considered to be volunteering but, introducing two separate lines of argument made many people doubt their initial perception. The first argument is that maybe in the eyes of the recipient of a volunteer service the issue as to whether a company pays for this volunteer is not important at all. The second argument, very effective but also a bit harsh, with traditional female volunteers, is to present them with the case that their spouses 'pay' them to volunteer.

### 3.3 DEVELOPING CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

Another factor regarding corporate volunteering that deserves attention is its development within a company or non-profit organisation over time. This development will be described from three different methods: the first by using the analysing tool; the second by establishing a link between (a) corporate volunteering (manpower), (b) the other four m's and (c) the three-stage model of Austin (2000); and the third by giving some concrete action points.

Table 4 visualises four different policies for corporate volunteering from the companies' perspective. In the quadrant, 'employee's own time-employee chosen' the company has a policy for promoting volunteering to its employees. In the quadrant

Table 4: The development of corporate employee volunteering

	Employee's own time	Employer time
Employee chooses volunteer work	Corporate volunteerism policy	Corporate volunteering policy
Employer chooses volunteer work	Company volunteer 'coercion'	Donation of company time

'employer time-employee chosen' the company has a specific volunteer policy. The difference between the two can be explained by looking at local government policies in the Netherlands. Local municipalities have a volunteering policy in which they support non-profit organisations by either attracting volunteers through general appeals to volunteer or by organising training for treasurers of local community organisations. Besides that, they have a volunteer policy for those people who directly volunteer for government departments. This volunteer policy deals with issues such as reimbursement in the same way as a non-profit agency has to deal with these issues. The quadrant 'employee time-company chosen' may be considered coercion on the part of the company to make employees volunteer. The last quadrant 'employer time-employer chosen' should be perceived as a donation of time instead of money to a pre-selected cause.

The most promising way of developing a corporate volunteer policy probably starts from a corporate employee volunteering policy and shifts to corporate volunteering or a donation of company time. In both situations a volunteer who at this moment already volunteers either gets time from the company for his or her own volunteer work or gets more people involved in team-projects in company time. There is also a possible route in which a 'forced' contract concerning volunteering for a certain non-profit organisation, for example, in the shape of a team project, results in an employee who continues to volunteer for that specific organisation (arrows 2 and 4). Furthermore, a thank you note could be the basis of a transition from employees volunteering during their free time to employees volunteering during working time, from corporate

volunteer policies to corporate employee volunteerism. The combination of 'employer time-employer choice' should be perceived as being a donation of company time, rather than corporate employee volunteering. Again, this situation could be the basis for arriving at the right quadrant of the upper half of Table 4.

Another way to perceive the development of corporate volunteering is through linking this trend to the notion of partnership evolution. The BCI development model visualises this link (see Figure 1).

This BCI development model contains three axes. The y-axis (vertical) shows all resources that can be exchanged between partners in the scope of their cooperative relationship (the 5 m's). The upper horizontal axis represents Austin's Collaboration Continuum (2000). Emphasis should be paid to the fact that these phases are part of a flowing continuum. The bottom x-axis pays attention to those conditions that companies/non-profit organisations make towards their potential partners. It is expected that these conditions will change when the partnership enters into a new phase. Part of the process of drawing up conditions that should be met by potential partners, is the drafting of a black list of those organisations that, on no account, would be accepted as partners. This BCI development model can be used to analyse the portfolio of partnerships and to prepare for new co-operative relationships.

Within this model there are two main development trends. The first trend is horizontally from left to right, from the philanthropic to the integrative stage of partnering. A co-operative relationship could start with a simple unsolicited and perhaps anonymous donation. When this donation develops into some kind of sponsoring agreement it becomes



		Philanthropic	Transactional	Integrative
Money				
Means				
Manpower				
Mass				
Media				
Which organisations are (not) potential partners?	<i>Black list</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Conditions</i>

Figure 1: The BCI development model

transactional. Dutch experience has found that many companies are not satisfied anymore with only having financial (money) relations in the form of commercial sponsoring with non-profit organisations. They state that, especially from an internal human resource management perspective, corporate volunteering has much more to offer. This indicates there is a vertical development, mostly within the transactional stage.

For non-profit organisations to benefit from this opportunity, to enhance business relationships through their volunteers and to involve new volunteers, they should:

- *make volunteer work more flexible*, for example, by linking new people to tasks and purposes, instead of the other way around. One-off team projects, specialist services, lunchtime volunteers and virtual volunteering are all examples of short-term volunteer jobs
- *know where current volunteers work*. This makes it possible to negotiate with companies, for example, matching their current involvement with company time, money or means in exchange for a more explicit position being taken by the company
- *describe the benefits of corporate employee volunteering to companies*. Probably mostly in terms of human resources management (motivation, development) but also as a part of marketing and reputation management and to improve the ties with the (local) community which could be important for issue management and lobbying

- *search for contacts with the business sector*. For example, arranging presentations in company locations
- *accept businesses' demand for short-term volunteer work*, making sure that their non-profit organisation is prepared to address this
- *thank the business* as the basis for enhancing their business relationship.

Allen (2003) argues that non-profit organisations should develop their own social case, before accepting the so-called business case for employee volunteering. Non-profit organisations may receive new human resources and expertise and employee volunteering might open doors to other company resources or provide opportunities for educating and influencing employee and corporate behaviour. These benefits should be weighed against the costs involved in employee volunteering, namely the risks of high company expectations, the danger of being diverted from addressing current priorities and finally, company exploitation.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Corporate volunteering is still a relatively unknown topic. As Olde Hanter (2001) has shown in the Netherlands, there is also much ambiguity around the terminology used to define this phenomenon. In this article an analytic tool for examining corporate volunteering has been presented. We think this tool can be used in discussions on corporate employee volunteering. These discussions have to be organised

within the respective sectors of business and non-profit, but also between these two sectors. At this stage, at least in the Netherlands, the field is moving from 'inspiration to transpiration' which means that there are only a few real practices to research. The consequence for research is that there is great need to document and structure the debate between practitioners. Action research is needed!

Maybe the most difficult, but important discussions in general, are about the involvement of the for-profit company. To what extent must a company be involved before they can rightfully claim that a specific case within their company can be called corporate volunteering? Does this mean that there is always company time involved? To what extent may a company be involved in either the lives of its employees or the functioning of independent non-profit organisations? Can a company also have a say in what people do in their own time? Companies, employees and non-profits need to find out which are the lower and upper boundaries of corporate volunteering.

Corporate volunteering must also be seen as part of a whole set of instruments for Business Community Involvement. The key factor is to develop relationships or partnerships with companies that include corporate volunteering. The presented BCI development model shows that the relationship can become more intense (from philanthropic, to transactional to integrative) or can be broadened with more exchanges (money, means, manpower, mass and media). The relatively inexpensive instruments of corporate volunteering, such as *recognition* and *support*, can be very effective in initiating the relationship. This could start by asking existing volunteers to contact their employers to find out possibilities. The other way to start is by organising challenges and team projects. In both situations the volunteer administrator has to act as a development professional to help the relationship progress.

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<sup>2</sup> Members are, amongst others, Mazars, Shell, Fortis, Rabobank, KPMG and ABN AMRO. They organise and execute national programs on sports, coaching and corporate volunteering. Furthermore, they are very active in enabling and supporting local mediating structures.

<sup>3</sup> Benefits for companies can be found in the areas of marketing, human resource management and strategic management, including long term benefits such as (local) development of the society and economy.

<sup>4</sup> This choice may be linked to the historical development of corporate volunteering within a company, either top down or bottom up.

<sup>5</sup> 2001 was at an early stage of the introduction of corporate volunteering in the Netherlands. Now, the concept is much more accepted already. So perception, especially of opinion leaders, may have changed.

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