

Paper Presentation

Topic: Innovations and Good Practices in Volunteering

Why Do People Volunteer?

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Abstract

My full paper will give an overview of the important factors, tools and share Zartok-89's strategies for successfully engaging and promoting volunteerism. I will

1. Identify ways how to recruit volunteers and involve them in developing programs which can be as a guide for volunteer organizations.

2. Explore volunteerism from motivation to action and benefits.

Understanding volunteer motivation (there are three different forces that acts as motivators to human behaviour).

3. Identify volunteer rights and responsibilities

4. Discuss expectation of volunteers and the organizations

5. Describe volunteer roles according to its Retention Cycle.

6. Share ideas and techniques for volunteer coaching, assessment and recognition.

7. To have an idea to encourage the best volunteer in the involved program.

8. Describe those elements “Why Do People Volunteer”.

Body of Paper

Volunteering in Armenia today plays an important role in developing and strengthening national prosperity and progress, humanitarian aid and technical cooperation. In Armenia, there is a high demand for volunteer work, which can help solve societal problems with minimal investment. Thanks to the volunteer movement, volunteers assist in implementing the state's social reforms. International experience shows that volunteer work makes society more prosperous. This is due to the fact that volunteers are needed in different spheres throughout the country. Volunteer work by youths on-line within the organization is very effective. Our organization has 15 on-line volunteers who assist and support our volunteers in Armenia with their knowledge, which strengthens the volunteer sector and helps us to implement our projects, including capacity-building.

Volunteers have an important role in Armenia, because volunteerism is a humanitarian action that assists social development and helps reduce the poverty level. Youth volunteering work helps build strong and united communities. Volunteer work stimulates people to cooperate and trust each other which helps create a stable, integrated society. NGOs depend on developing, empowering and managing their volunteers. By shaping and developing an active volunteer movement, NGOs will reduce social stress and poverty and help implement social reforms. NGOs must shape the volunteering movement so that the government can also take part. At this time, the government does not have adequate means to help the volunteer sector.

Within our organization, which has a definite focus, specific aims, objectives and strategies, volunteer work is easy to manage and well-focused. During training, volunteers learn about the structure of the organization and the functions of each member. Consequently, volunteers are well-informed, which helps make volunteering more effective.

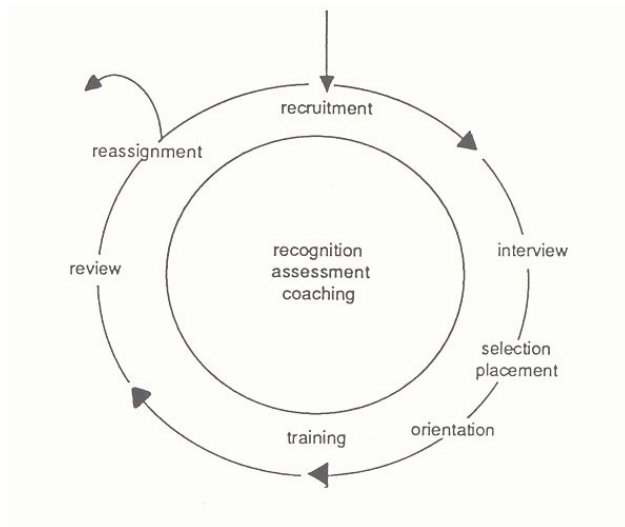
Before volunteering begins, the rights and responsibilities of being a volunteer are clearly explained.

Rights include:

- To have information about the organization
- To be trained to implement projects and activities
- To have the opportunity to evaluate the volunteering activity
- To have opportunities for managing and leading
- To promote the activities of the organization by sharing personal experiences between volunteers
- To receive a small amount of money

Responsibilities include:

- To be honest and believe in the effectiveness of the work
- To act as a team member with other volunteers and staff
- To protect the dignity of the organization
- To maintain and strengthen the organization's relationship with society
- To perform the duties they have agreed to carry out
- To accept the decisions of the director and coordinators
- To participate in meetings and in the decision-making process
- To understand the responsibilities and attitude of a volunteer.



In order to have sustainable volunteer sector that can successfully implement projects according to its mission NGOs should be skilled at the following Retention Cycle.

The volunteer Retention Cycle: How to recruit and involve the volunteers in developing programs:

Look first at the overall design of the model. Just outside the bigger circle are the pre-recruitment activities, steps that help you get ready to go to the community for volunteer support. The circle revolves through the phases of recruitment, asking people to take on a project, making sure they understand the task and feel comfortable with it. Every volunteer will need a basic orientation to your organization, what it does, how it operates and how their tasks fit into the overall mission or plan.

Building Program Support

Before bringing new volunteers into your agency or before starting a new program that involves volunteers, consider the adjustments that may be needed when new people join.

Assessing Readiness

Sometimes current volunteers feel torn between keeping life within the organization as it always has been – comfortable and familiar and welcoming others with different perspectives, ideas and purposes. New people may suggest changes, a sense of discomfort. This reluctance, whether by staff or volunteers, may be very confusing for new recruits. The argument goes something like this:

<i>Yes, we ant new volunteers</i>	<i>BUT...</i>	<i>We don't want to change.</i>
<i>We need more help here</i>	<i>BUT...</i>	<i>We only want volunteers who are available 9 to 5.</i>

We welcome new ideas

BUT...

*We tried that idea seven years ago
and it didn't work.*

Volunteers receive mixed messages. Some people decide not to stay because they prefer clear cut situations where they feel they can make a contribution. Other may feel that the double messages are directed at them “We want volunteers, but we don’t want you”. They leave very unhappy about their experience. Few new people agree to stay on and work with a group that is experiencing confusion. New people haven’t built the relationships or the history that compel them to stay. Current volunteers, who have both history and relationship, feel that the failure of the new volunteer to stay proves that the new recruit lacked commitment.

Recruitment

There is a formula that volunteers will be effective, will enjoy their work and will stay with you. It’s “selecting the right volunteer for the right job at the right time so everybody wins”. For example our organization for the recruitment seeks out those individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to do the jobs needed by the organization.

Interview

Though some people don’t give great importance to interviewing volunteers, saying that it’s time consuming and too formal, any how most people disagree, because they are sure that if people take time to get to know the volunteer, it helps avoid misunderstanding in the future. Therefore volunteers who are listened to, not just talked at, feel valued and understood.

Selection and placement

After an interview most volunteers are comfortably placed in a program, committee or position of their choice. Occasionally a clear fit does not exist. For example:

- A volunteer wants to take on a task that is unrealistic at present (a young man wants to be a president of the organization Board).
 - ✓ In order to assess his/her skills, you may suggest a minor role to expand his/her understanding and develop his/her competence at your organization. May be he/she can have any position in the future.
- The volunteer may have goals that can not be met at the present time (a volunteer can do anything what he wants).
 - ✓ In this situation you may re-direct this volunteer to another project. Be up front that you can’t achieve this dream with your current budget.

Thus selecting volunteer to act in the best interests of the clients is a big responsibility.

Orientation

The purpose of the orientation is to help the new volunteer feel comfortable, competent and safe as quickly as possible. The focus should be on the information that volunteer needs to know to do his/her job today. Each involved volunteer in the program should be got acquainted with the organization history, future plans and detailed documents.

Training

The purpose of the training is enhanced job performance and increased personal satisfaction. Training can be done in different ways not in a formal workshop setting.

Coaching, Assessment and Recognition

These three elements are fundamental to all the interactions between volunteers and those who work with them, both staff and volunteers leaders.

Coaching

Coaching is the most appropriate for working with volunteers. It helps you set standards, assists in the development of strategies and identifies the need to adjust and adapt plans. The coach focuses on performance and results, allowing the volunteer the freedom to act.

Assessment

Volunteer are still uncomfortable with the term “evaluation”. Assessment suggests an ongoing process of checking. It allows the volunteer to determine what changes need to be put in place to achieve the desired results.

Recognition

As a main concept, recognition tries to find volunteers doing something right. Rather than focusing on the events organized once a year it focuses on the informal aspects of recognition, for example- the warm thank you, the handwritten note, the phone call that says “you were missed”.

In my opinion big attention to the cycle reduces and eliminates problems before they start. Putting system in place that support volunteers strengthens all aspects of your volunteer program.

As an innovation I would suggest to organize awarding events after the project implementation that is to encourage the best volunteers with correspondent awards and prizes (certificate of achievements, diplomas, money and so on).

Each youth volunteer that wants to be involved in volunteering activities has different

motivation. Some factors that influence them give them reason to participate in volunteering works. These motivations are

- **Force** - A strong desire to have influence within the organization and society, to impact others, to give advice and develop a sense of responsibility, to give suggestions to the volunteer sector about projects;
- **Affiliation** – A person that values relationships, enjoys working with others and seeks out opportunities to be helpful and supportive.
- **Achievement** - Motivation to implement a successful project and assist in the activities of the organization, to work with a target group and involve them in volunteerism.

Voluntary motivations include:

- ☞ To obtain work experience: It is important to implement the projects correctly, since the NGO can write employment recommendations in the future.
- ☞ An opportunity for personal growth: Volunteer work is training for him/her, and helps volunteers to explore new activities and new fields.
- ☞ To improve mental and physical health.
- ☞ To meet people from different groups within society.
- ☞ To contribute to society in a meaningful way.
- ☞ Good working conditions.
- ☞ A sense of being needed and valued.
- ☞ Meaningful work that interests or challenges people.
- ☞ A sense of obligation.
- ☞ A chance to use special skills.
- ☞ Fellowship, socialization, friendship.
- ☞ Recognition for work well done.
- ☞ A caring and compassionate supervisor.
- ☞ A chance to be involved in decision-making.
- ☞ A feeling of being involved in an issue of importance, a cause in which people believe.
- ☞ Giving something back in gratitude.
- ☞ Belief about the importance of helping others.
- ☞ Meeting expectations of people whom you hold in esteem.

☛ Relief from personal negative feelings.

Conclusion

The importance of volunteer effort in the life and health of communities is being accorded the attention it has long deserved. The need for a systematic approach to the management and mobilization of volunteers becomes urgent, not only because more people are becoming involved but because the problems they strive to address are increasingly complex, the needs continue to mount and the time available to volunteer is compressed. Effectively harnessing volunteers' talents and skills, while being responsive to their individual needs, clearly requires coordination. Without volunteers, many worthwhile programs, initiatives and projects would not take place. Because volunteers are so vital to organizational success, we must ensure effective recruitment and retention practices.

Volunteering is a humanitarian action that assists social development and helps reduce poverty level. Volunteer's work helps build strong and united communities. Volunteer work stimulates people to cooperate and trust each other which help create a stable, integrated society.

Therefore if each volunteer organization can use its volunteer resources right and effectively according to necessary factors that I mentioned in my full paper (see retention cycle) can shape and develop an active volunteer movement.