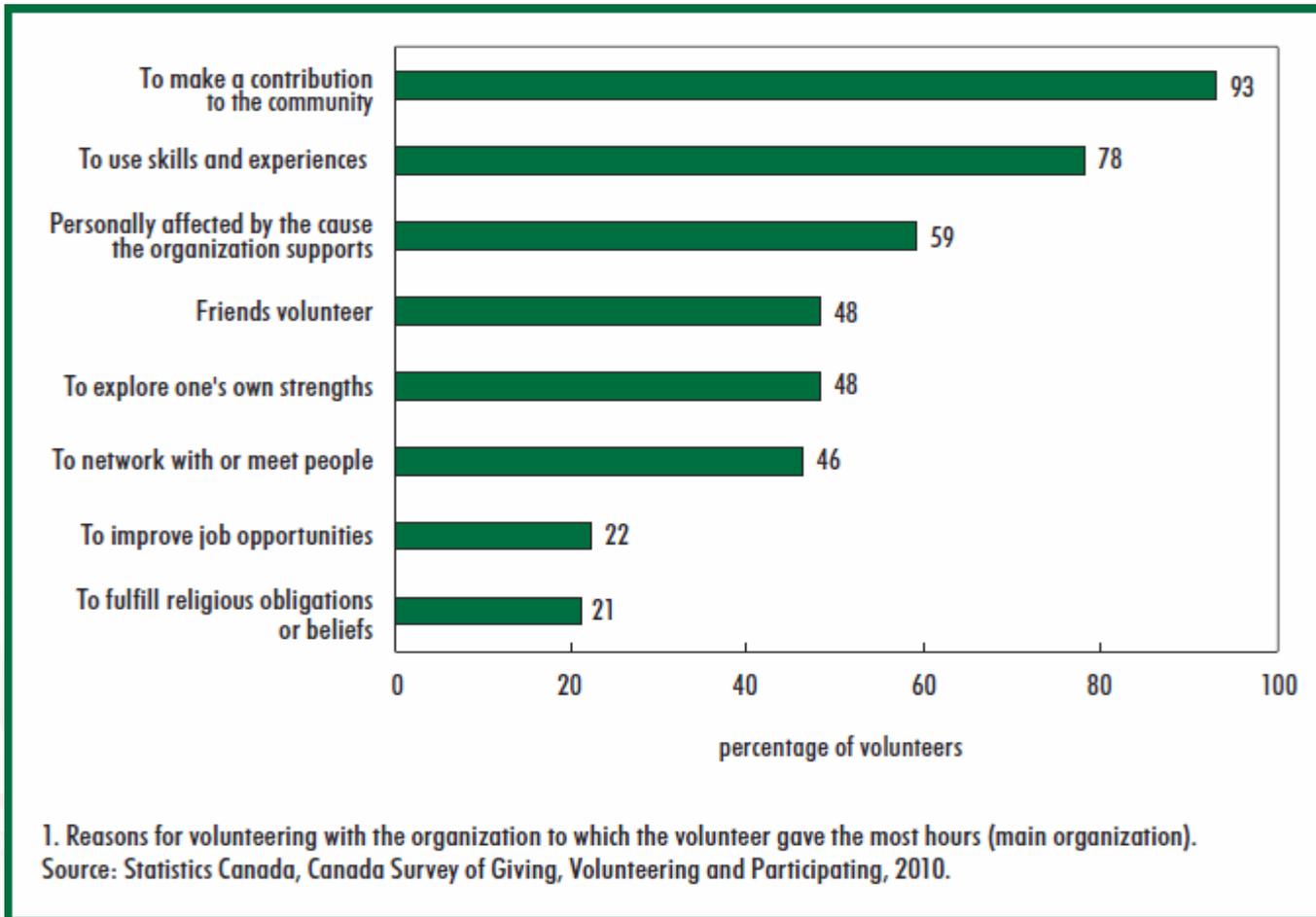


Measuring the Value and Impact of Volunteering and Citizen Engagement

Rose Anne Devlin



Reasons for volunteering, volunteers aged 15 years and over, 2010



Benefits from Volunteering



To Individuals	To Community
<p>Human Capital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skill acquisition• Improved labour market outcomes• Integrate or re-integrate into job market• Help immigrants gain Canadian experience <p>Other private benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling good• Companionship• Improved health• Helping to integrate into community• Provide sense of purpose• Become better citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing social cohesiveness• Developing engaged citizens• Assisting in immigrant settlement• Assisting senior adults• Provide a range of public services:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Culture and arts- Social services- Religion- Education and research- Health- Other organizations



- Notice how important making a contribution to the community is : 93% responded that this is one of the reasons why they volunteered.
- One can think of this reason as helping to develop “social capital”.
- Social Capital arises from investments at the **Community level** (through, for instance, the services of voluntary organizations and the public sector), and investments at the **Individual level** (networking).

Capturing the benefits associated with Social Capital and an engaged citizenry



- large academic literature that has been grappling with issues around “Social Capital”
- what is meant by social capital?
- some consensus around Putnam’s notion of Social Capital embodying “**networks, norms and trust**”.
 - “Networks” are pretty straightforward – family and friends, associations – again lots of literature on how to measure networks and their impact.
 - “Norms” typically refer to the extent to which individuals agree on a common vision or common view of the world.
 - measures of social fragmentation : the percentage of the population in any given area made up of, for instance, different ethnic groups.

Capturing the benefits associated with Social Capital and an engaged citizenry



- “Trust” usually refers to confidence in the government and is captured by, among other things, measures of voting rates (areas with low rates of voter turnout are thought to have low levels of trust).
- Why am I talking about this – because we are talking about how to “value” social capital.
- Many researchers are trying to value social capital by looking at specific indicators of social capital and how they are linked to a series of outcomes.
- let me give you the flavour of some of the benefits that are associated with “social capital”.

Benefits of Social Capital



- memberships in professional associations and other groups are linked with an increase in individuals' private philanthropy (both money and time) (Apinunmahakul and Devlin, 2008).
- Individuals who vote (trust in government) are more likely to comply with tax requirements (i.e., less likely to cheat!) (Slemrod, 1998);
- Social norms, reflected by how fragmented (ethnically, for instance) a neighbourhood is, is linked with lower crime (Hirschfield and Bowers, 1997);
- Sense of belonging to a community is associated with the likelihood of having a regular family doctor in Canada (Devlin & Rudolph-Zbarsky, 2013).

What to do with these social capital benefits?



- We can take the **outcomes** linked to better social capital and “value” these outcomes (not an easy task by the way).
 - a dollar value on tax compliance
 - we can measure private philanthropy
 - Benefit of lower crime rates
 - we can estimate the health costs of not having a regular family physician.

Human Capital Benefits



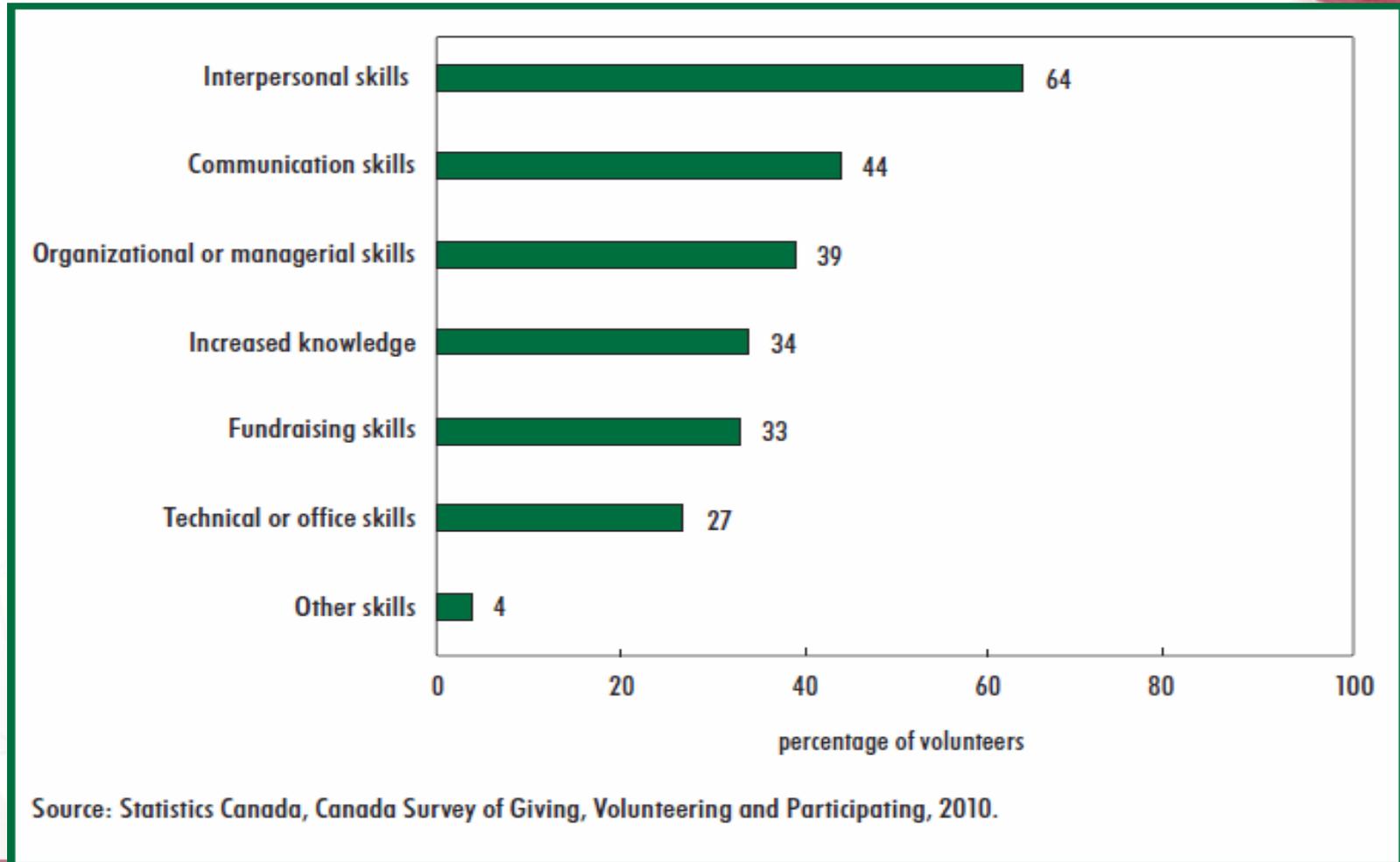
- referring to the chart at the beginning, we see that most of these benefits accrue to the individual volunteer: to use skills and experiences; to explore strengths; networks
- How can we quantify these benefits? One possibility is to look on the paid labour market to see if volunteering provides individuals with an “edge”.
- Many people volunteer to improve opportunities on the paid-labour market:
 - – students are often urged to gain volunteer experience to enhance employment opportunities
 - women volunteer to augment or hone skills to re-enter the job market

Human Capital Benefits (3)



- Several years ago, Kathleen Day and I looked at the question as to whether the paid labour market “rewarded” individuals who volunteered.
- we found that volunteers on the paid labour market earned about 7% higher incomes than others, controlling for a host of factors that affect earnings (age, gender, education, experience, occupation).
- This is an example of the value of volunteering to individuals.

Skills acquired through volunteering, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010



An Example: VIE

- A while back, I was part of a team of individuals involved in trying to evaluate the impact of the **Volunteers in Education** VIE) program, run by the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI).
- matched up volunteers interested in going into elementary schools to assist children with their reading and other skills.
- A number of VIE volunteers participated in focus groups and indicated how volunteering in a school helped them to either be accepted by a teacher's college or gain paid employment in education
- some immigrants used their VIE experience as a stepping stone towards entering the teaching profession in Canada.

An Example: VIE (2)



- Immigrants who volunteered seemed better able to integrate themselves into their new communities – one immigrant volunteer is recently quoted as saying that “volunteering is a quick way into society”.
- Older individuals volunteering with the VIE program expressed tremendous satisfaction with their interactions with younger generations.

An Example: VIE (3)



- From the schools perspective, drawing on volunteers from the broader community (as opposed to from parents) meant that children could be assisted in specific areas.
- “they have become wonderful spokespeople for what they saw happening in the school”.
- Can construct a table indicating the benefits associated with volunteering (like before, replicated next slide)
- Use this table to identify the elements to be valued:
 - some can be “more easily” evaluated (volunteer labour), than others

Benefits from Volunteering



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Conclusions



- Let me return to the issue of this panel: namely, **Measuring the Value and Impact of Volunteering and Citizen Engagement (Tools, gaps and models for measurement)**
- as Laurie has pointed out, there are a nice range of tools for measuring the value of the time input made by volunteers:
- Of course work can be done here, more accurate assessments of the time by type of volunteer for instance, but this is manageable.
- Measuring impact of volunteering, however, is a much more complicated task.

Conclusions



- best place to start is by identifying all of the possible benefits to the volunteer, to the recipient and to the community.
- much research already done: need to bring the research to the community and to applications (e.g., VIE experience)
- some community outcomes/benefits **can be valued** and others are more elusive (BUT STILL NEED TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED)
- Thank you Volunteer BC, Volunteer Canada, and sponsors for hosting this Summit on Volunteering and Citizen Engagement: I'm delighted to be part of it!