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# Canadian Journal of Volunteer Resources Management

Le journal canadien de gestion  
des bénévoles

2005

Volume 13.3



FUTURE TRENDS

TENDANCES

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### EDITORIAL

Sheila Jenkins

### CREATING A SOCIETAL AGENDA WITH VOLUNTEERISM AS ITS PRIORITY

Volunteer Canada ..... 3

### TWENTY TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY ADVANCEMENT IMPACS

David Driscoll and Shauna Sylvester, *Ontario* ..... 6

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Liz Weaver, *Ontario* ..... 9

### FUTURE TRENDS: INVESTING IN CANADA'S VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES- A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE

Anil Patel, *Ontario* ..... 11

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND MANAGERS OF VOLUNTEERS

Paddy Bowen, *Ontario* ..... 14

### ASSESSING THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEER WORK

Linda Graff, *Ontario* ..... 16

### BOOK REVIEW

Donna Lockhart, *Ontario* ..... 18

### PEER EXPERT

Debbie Kennedy, *British Columbia* ..... 21

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ISSN 1192-1676

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## EDITORIAL

*Que sera, sera*

*Whatever will be will be*

*The future's not ours to see*

*Que sera, sera.*

This old favourite by Doris Day tells us that we cannot see into the future, although many people have spent their lives trying to do so.

In February 2005, a group of voluntary sector leaders in Canada convened at Chateau Montebello in Quebec to use their experience and energies to create a plan to move volunteerism in Canada into the future. This issue of the journal, highlighting 'Future Trends', features the four priority areas for action agreed upon by the 'think tank'. We have been fortunate to tap into the expertise of some of the attending leaders.

We lead off with an excerpt from the final report of VolunteerZone Bénévoles which has been submitted by Volunteer Canada.

From IMPACS (Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society) comes the twenty tips for effective policy advancement while Liz Weaver asks if the cup is half full or half empty in her article on organizational capacity.

Anil Patel from the Framework Foundation gives us a multi-stakeholder perspective on the subject of investing in Canada's volunteer management resources.

Paddy Bowen offers us her thought provoking look at citizen participation and challenges us to consider the impact that it may have on the work we do as managers of volunteers.

Linda Graff tackles the difficult issue of assessing the value of volunteer work with an excerpt from her new book *Best of All: The Quick Reference Guide to Effective Volunteer Involvement*. Donna Lockhart weighs in from Peterborough with an enthusiastic review of Linda's book.

Our peer expert, Debbie Kennedy, from MapleRidge, B.C. provides some practical tips on how managers of volunteers can keep abreast of the trends that will impact our future.

As we look to the future of our profession as managers of volunteer resources, we hope that the challenging range of ideas presented in this issue of our journal will be part of your path forward. Even if we cannot see the future, it is there for us to shape.

Sheila Jenkins

Editorial Member

## CREATING A SOCIETAL AGENDA WITH VOLUNTEERISM AS ITS PRIORITY

Excerpt from the Volunteer Zone Bénévoles: Final Report, prepared by Volunteer Canada

In February 1930, the site of the present Château Montebello in Québec was nothing but a clearing in the forest. Four months later, fuelled by the vision of Swiss-American Harold Saddlemyre and the strength and determination of a multitude of Canadian labourers, a magnificent chateau of more than 10,000 massive logs was erected. The chateau captured the imagination of the times and was recognized for the remarkable feat that it was.

Exactly seventy-five years later, Volunteer Canada brought together a group of leaders in the Canadian voluntary sector for a February 'think-tank' at the Château Montebello. This group also faced a significant challenge - to unite their thoughts, passions, experiences and energies in the creation of an action plan to move volunteerism in Canada into the future.

It was an ambitious task. The three days of the 'think-tank' were ones of intense interchange, debate, consensus building, brainstorming and decision making. But great visions can and do become powerful realities when bolstered by hard work, cooperation and the determination of many. The work that was started at Montebello is just a beginning - but as French novelist Anatole France once wrote "to accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act." We believe that the groundwork for great things was laid at Montebello.

### Volunteerism at a Turning Point

The United Nations General Assembly proclamation of the year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) marked a significant milestone in the history of volunteerism. IYV not only provided a unique opportunity to highlight the work of millions of volunteers worldwide, it also generated broad recognition by governments of the value and contribution of volunteerism and the need to develop strategies to allow voluntary action to flourish.

In Canada, an important IYV legacy was the announcement of ongoing, permanent funding for the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI). Announced in December 2001, the CVI represents a considerable acknowledgment of the importance of volunteerism to Canada. It aims to improve the ability of organizations to benefit from the contribution of volunteers, to encourage Canadians to participate in voluntary organizations and to enhance the experience of volunteerism.

Over the past several years, the importance of volunteerism has become more widely understood in Canada. There is now unprecedented access to information on volunteering and widespread societal recognition of the value of volunteer work. Comprehensive research studies have been undertaken to gather information on volunteerism and the voluntary sector, increasing knowledge and

awareness of their size and impact and shedding light on the challenges and issues that affect voluntary activity. Screening burst into the media becoming a household word almost overnight and igniting debate about safety and responsibility. Several Canadian provinces introduced mandatory volunteering into high school programming.

During this time, however, Canadian society continued to change and evolve adapting to shifting demographics and altered social and economic conditions. Even though volunteers report that they derive huge benefits from volunteer work, the overall number of volunteers dropped significantly between 1997 and 2000. Those that do volunteer appear to have different expectations than they did previously and have less time to give. Organizations report enormous difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified volunteers and attracting volunteer board members. Volunteerism appears to be at another turning point in history.

### Volunteer Zone Bénévoles

It was against this backdrop that Volunteer Canada recognized the need for strategic planning and action to elevate the importance of volunteering in the social and political consciousness of Canadians and to move volunteerism into the future.

To this end, *Volunteer Zone Bénévoles - Intentional Dialogue 2005* was created. Modeled as a national 'think-tank' on volunteerism in Canada, *Volunteer Zone Bénévoles* brought together 75 leaders, expert practitioners and those who play significant roles in furthering voluntary action in Canada for three days of discussion. The careful selection of a diverse group of participants from a variety of areas ensured that the perspectives of youth, managers of volunteer resources, practitioners, as well as funders and influencers were strongly represented.

The vision of *Volunteer Zone Bénévoles* was a bold one - to create a societal agenda with volunteerism as its priority. Its stated goals were to redefine and embrace volunteerism in its original sense; identify actions to overcome current challenges to volunteering; and recommend actions to support and relieve the stress of volunteer programs.

### Building a Framework

The participants of *Volunteer Zone Bénévoles* spent two of the three days engaged in discussion and feedback sessions designed to help sift through a myriad of themes, issues and challenges raised by participants and hone in on specific areas determined to be critical for action. By the final day, consensus was reached on four priority areas in which the proper investment of time, energies and resources could result in a holistic societal agenda for volunteerism.

The proposed model identifies Public Policy and Advocacy, Organizational Capacity, Volunteer Engagement and Movement Building as four crucial building blocks for action. Understood within the model is the notion that demographic shifts are an important consideration for each of the four areas.

*Public Policy and Advocacy* describes the process of speaking and working with

governments at all levels about volunteering and volunteerism in a society where contributing to one's community is perceived as the fundamental right of every Canadian.

*Organizational Capacity* refers to the building of healthy organizations and includes supporting and enabling healthy management, governance and leadership and funding policies. Communication plays a key role in each of these aspects.

*Volunteer Engagement* is about the experience of volunteering and refers to knowledge and understanding of how and why people become engaged as volunteers, as well as how they want to be engaged. Recruitment, retention and recognition of volunteers are important components of this priority area. Marketing is a consideration that permeates the entire action area.

*Movement Building* refers to the creation of a social movement to broaden external understanding and recognition for a societal agenda with volunteerism as its focus. The building of such a movement is about creating shared awareness, commitment and other values and includes connecting with organizations, reclaiming the language and strategic communications.

### **Moving Forward**

Volunteer Zone Bénévoles brought an eclectic group of subject specialists who would not normally come together to form a working group. The agenda was a difficult one. A serious societal goal was set, examining volunteerism in its broadest sense and creating actions to allow it to flourish. Many ideas were shared and debated - and the seeds for something significant were sown.

Initial decisions for follow up processes have already been made. Volunteer Canada's Board of Directors has spent a full day defining appropriate next steps. A plan for this will be made available. New communication devices are being developed in order to make the transfer of information easy and timely. This includes a regular update section in Volunteer Canada's electronic newsletter, 'eVOLution'.

Volunteer Canada is committed to playing a leadership role in moving this agenda forward. We will work collaboratively with others in order to enable, facilitate and assist individuals and organizations across Canada to contribute, give, participate and make this one of the best countries in the world. There is much to be done to put the efforts of Volunteer Zone Bénévoles to good use. Everyone has an important role to play and success will depend on the continued participation and commitment of all.

For more information on the strategic direction established by the Board of Directors of Volunteer Canada and a complete report on Volunteer Zone Bénévoles, please visit [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca) or [www.volunteercanada.ca](http://www.volunteercanada.ca).

## **TWENTY TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY ADVANCEMENT - Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society**

Advocating effectively for your policy position is mission work. In this article,, Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS') strategists share twenty tips to help you effectively communicate your policy goals.

1. **Be Clear.** Focus your message by identifying the problem and the solution. A good policy campaign should be able to do both in just a few, quick sentences (sound bytes).

2. **Target Your Message.** Who can make a difference? Understand how power works and spend some time researching who the key decision makers are, then talk to them. Find out what their decision making process is and how it can be influenced. Talk to others. Learn about the entry points. Who can support you in advocating for change? Who are your allies? You will need to mobilize others to apply pressure.

3. **Determine Your Strategy.** There are many ways of advancing policy; through direct discussions with ministers, participation in consultations, through public pressure, through friends in high places, through the electoral process. Very rarely does one single strategy work. You will need a variety of strategies that are focused and complement each other. This is often the point at which people become vague on what to do. They believe that launching a media campaign will change a policy. On the surface, a politician might announce a change that looks very much like the one proposed by your media campaign, but often the details reveal something much more watered down. Be prepared to follow the process through each stage. Make sure you have a good person who can work 'inside' the policy room and never go into a session unprepared. To keep your strategy clear, develop a standard briefing document that outlines your case. Revise this document as you gain new information.

4. **Become Media Savvy.** The media will be critical in advancing any policy change. You need to know who might help you deliver your story and how to best deliver it. What makes it a story is important: controversy, conflict, injustice, irony, uniqueness. Always be clear (remember tip number one) and do not get sidetracked from your issue.

5. **Understand Your Opposition.** You will be criticized and you need to anticipate this. First consider the range of opposition. Identify each criticism and rehearse your response to it. Do not wait to be criticized before considering your responses. You will be judged by how well you stand up to your critics. Also, when you are interacting with anyone that you perceive as 'opposition', treat him or her with respect. Imagine yourself in his or her shoes and try and determine what might be a 'win' for them.

6. **Portray Your Role as Champion, Not Victim.** While it is important for you to clearly outline the problem, you need to have a solution. In advancing your solution, you need to assume a position of power. Translate your individual problem into a social issue;

from 'powerless victim' to 'powerful advocate' (Larry Wallack, Berkley Media Studies Group).

**7. Identify Credible Spokespeople.** Make sure that the person, who is advancing your policy, be it in the media, in the minister's office or mobilizing allies, is the appropriate person. Organizations often get caught up in their own internal politics (for example, certain egos need to be front and centre). For each situation ask yourself, is this the best spokesperson? Will he/she be taken seriously, listened to, consulted? Ensure that spokespeople receive adequate briefing and training. If media relations are part of your strategy, ensure that your spokesperson is prepared with question and answer sheets and has role-played the media interview before it takes place.

**8. Tell the Truth and Know Your Issue.** You will be up against governments and corporations who have the funds to undertake research. Ensure that your information is credible. If possible use factual information that has been prepared by the government or industry to support your case. Statistics that can be related to a personal story are also well received. Whatever you do, do not fabricate the truth. It will be detected and can cost you dearly.

**9. Be Strategic.** Always ask the question, will this action advance the policy? Sometimes the answer may not be evident and you may need to take a leap of faith. Generally, however, you should be calculated in your strategy. Understand when it makes sense to work with others and when it does not. For example, policy by coalition is often difficult and very slow, yet it is critical in demonstrating constituency and community support. Be honest about your strategy with your colleagues but also be conscious of the limitations that collective action can have in acting quickly.

**10. Win Over the 'Muddled Middle'.** To borrow a phrase from Herb Chao Gunther (Public Media Centre), target your message to the group who does not know what they think ('the muddled middle'). Do not waste resources on those who will never agree with you or those that will always agree with you. Talk directly to those who can be swayed. In our communications work, we call this group the 'persuadables'.

**11. Establish Positive Relationships.** Keep your relationships in good order. You may find that a person you have previously alienated becomes a key point of contact for your policy issue. Also, understand that it is very difficult but very important to bargain hard, particularly when you have developed strong relationships with key decision-makers.

**12. Pay Attention to Timing.** Timing is everyone's ally or enemy. Preparations of budgets, election calls, leadership reviews, throne speeches have an impact on the timing of your policy inputs. You need to understand the cycles within government so that you can maximize the impact of your intervention.

**13. Know the 'Currency' of Public Life.** Recognize that popularity, good press, votes, perceptions of leadership, recognition, praise and influence are the currency for people elected to public office. A campaign that is always confrontational is unlikely to achieve its desired ends.

**14. Liking and Agreement are Independent Variables.** Do not assume that everyone on the 'other side of the table' agrees or likes each other. Equally, do not assume that everyone on 'your side of the table' agrees or likes each other. Successful advocacy campaigns are often the result of individuals overcoming the inherent tensions that occur in coalitions that are temporary by nature.

**15. Their Side Bad, Our Side Good... Not!** It is an unfortunate case that in some advocacy campaigns individuals try to demonize the other side or present themselves as angels. Rarely are issues so clear-cut: a good journalist or an informed citizen is going to see through the polarization or negative spin. Instead of gearing up for one side of the issue, present yourself as reasonable and capable of seeing the other side's perspective. Again, time spent on maintaining 'internal' relationships is critical.

**16. Every System Has Leaks.** Know where they are. Understand why individuals within the system are providing you with information and learn how to protect these individuals. You may need them to help you advance an issue when it appears to have stalled or you may need their support to understand the internal communication channels. Treat leaks as normal and expect them to be a part of the process.

**17. Principles and Interests.** All parties will see themselves as principled people pursuing a principled agenda. All parties will also have interests that are less profiled and therefore less evident than the principles. Know them both. Understanding where principles and interests interface may work to your advantage.

**18. Being Flexible Isn't Necessarily a Bad Thing.** Many of us working in the voluntary sector can be earnest in our pursuit of our ideals. 'Politics is the art of the compromise'. It is important to know where your boundaries are and how far you or your coalition partners are willing to go in pursuit of a policy change. If you have established parameters, then being flexible within those parameters should not cause undue stress.

**19. Don't Get Caught Up Fixing the Bureaucracy.** One of the most effective tools that public officials have in stalling a process is pointing to problems within the bureaucracy. Often groups find themselves embroiled in trying to fix problems internal to government or mediating relationships between departments. Groups can easily be enticed to working at this level because it makes them feel like they are 'players' within government. It is important to keep focused on the issue and constantly evaluate processes to determine if they will effectively advance your policy issue.

**20. Celebrate Your Successes!** Take every opportunity to celebrate your successes, however small. Public policy development is a long and laborious process. Most campaigns fail because they run out of steam or money or both. It is important to keep people motivated and positive, so celebrate the victories, however small.

Now you are on your way. Advocating effectively for your policy position is central to what you do, and developing the right communications framework is key. Look for other resources on communications and advocacy at [www.impacs.org](http://www.impacs.org).

*This article has been collaboratively produced at IMPACS Communications Centre by Shauna Sylvester, Executive Director and David Driscoll, Associate Counsel. IMPACS is Canada's first and only non-profit communications agency, providing services, support and training to Canada's voluntary sector organizations. Our mission: helping those organizations get the attention they deserve for the important progressive policy positions they are advancing.*

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: Is the Cup Half Empty or Half Full?**

by Liz Weaver

In a sector where voluntary organizations are competing for every funding dollar available and are being challenged by increasing demands for services from increasingly complex clients, organizational capacity is an issue at the forefront. Therefore, it is not surprising that organizational capacity was raised as one of the four key directions identified by the participants attending *Volunteer Zone Bénévoles* in 2005.

Organizational capacity, as determined at *Volunteer Zone Bénévoles* includes some of the following elements: the culture and values of the organization, the ability of the organization to engage its human resources (paid and unpaid), effective decision making processes, leadership and the ability of the organization to bridge the 'knowing/doing gap'. In essence, organizational capacity is the ability of the organization to define its purpose or mission and determine what it must have in place in order to accomplish its mission and goals.

More recently, the Ontario Trillium Foundation released a research report entitled **Building Capacity, Granting for Impact**. In this report, four pillars were identified in a capacity building framework. The four pillars include relevance, responsiveness, effectiveness and resilience.

Relevance is defined as understanding and aligning with the community realities and mix. Responsiveness includes the activities such as consultation and collaboration in responding to community needs. Effectiveness is internally focused

and includes practicing good governance, implementing well planned programs and services and managing resources. Resilience includes leadership, creativity, continuous learning and change management.

These two approaches to understanding organizational capacity share many commonalities and yet seem a bit abstract in the current context found in Canada. According to the recent National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) there are over 161,000 nonprofit and charitable organizations in Canada delivering a broad spectrum of services and programs.

This large array of organizations means that Canada has one of the richest and most vibrant voluntary sectors and yet, under the surface, there are many challenges facing these organizations. There is an increasingly competitive environment for funding, staff, board members and volunteers as more and more organizations compete for fewer and fewer resources.

Many voluntary organizations spend most of their time focused on raising resources meaning that there is less time and energy available to address fundamental organizational capacity issues such as leadership, planning, adapting to change, risk management and community engagement. The expectations on voluntary organizations are growing and the capacity of organizations to respond to these expectations is declining.

If the push is on to increase financial resources, then issues of organizational capacity which deal with human resources fall off the radar screen. Human resource capacity is viewed as an essential element of organizational capacity but too often organizations are ineffective at managing their human resources.

Small to medium sized organizations are especially challenged as the senior staff often carry the lead responsibility for the entire burden of management: strategic, financial, program, human resource and stakeholder/community.

So how can organizations build their capacity? The first step is to take an inventory of what capacity the organization already has in place. In his recent book *Managing at the Leading Edge*, Mike Hudson provides a number of different strategies for uncovering or determining the organization's current capacity. He argues that organizations need to recognize the need for investment in capacity building. Four key components include identifying a desired outcome, developing a change strategy, determining champions and providing adequate resources.

Most organizations look to external sources for solutions when some solutions might exist within. The capacity just has to be released. The first component of organizational capacity should be an inventory assessment to uncover what really exists in the organization, the strength of relationships, staff and opportunity for programs and services. It might also uncover organizational weaknesses and

provide the board and staff with serious questions to consider about the need and purpose of the work. An interesting and comprehensive capacity assessment tool can be found at [www.vppartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.htm](http://www.vppartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.htm).

Is your organization's capacity cup half full or half empty? Understanding where your organization has capacity and where the gaps are is the first step to filling the cup. The next step will be building the capacity of the voluntary sector in Canada. This will take vision, action, risk and a great deal of faith on the part of funders, donors, partners and staff.

*Liz Weaver is the Chief Executive Officer of YWCA Hamilton. Prior to this appointment, Liz provided leadership to Volunteer Hamilton, Bay Area Leadership and Volunteer Canada and was instrumental in writing and designing a number of resources including the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement and the Volunteer Management Audit.*

*Liz teaches volunteer management at Mohawk College and is a trainer with the Canadian Voluntary Sector Training Network. Liz was awarded a Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2002 for her involvement and leadership with Volunteer Canada and in 2004 was awarded the Women in the Workplace award for the City of Hamilton.*

## **FUTURE TRENDS: INVESTING IN CANADA'S VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES - A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective**

by Anil Patel

Technology guru and visionary Alan Kay once said, 'the best way to predict the future is to invent it.'

Framework Foundation has embraced Alan's idealism and wants to harness the most valuable of Canadians' possessions: their time. We are envisioning how communities would grow if more Canadians aged 22 to 35 years old picked up a cause; any cause. Given that only one in three Canadians in this demographic have some form of post-secondary education and/or skills are actively volunteering, the possibilities are tremendous.

Framework Foundation is asking what would happen if the participation rate among our demographic increased by one percent? How many people would that be? Where would they volunteer? What impact could these new volunteers have to help solve community issues? What other stakeholders would be needed to make this happen? How could Framework Foundation play a part?

## **Overview: National Strategy on Increased Volunteer Involvement**

To help tell the story and understand the implications for communities if more 22-35 year olds volunteer, Framework Foundation is writing the *National Strategy on Increased Volunteer Involvement (NSIVI)*. Preliminary estimates indicate that a one percent increase in volunteer participation rate within 20 Canadian cities would translate to one million volunteer hours!

Despite this vast potential, it is unclear how Canadian communities are directing support and using strategic policy to reach this very fickle and illusive demographic. The good news is the NSIVI is helping to connect the dots.

The NSIVI is building a case to boost the spirit of community building and engage more volunteers. To do so community members must dedicate long-term, sustainable resources toward improving volunteer management in Canada's nonprofit and voluntary agencies.

This environmental scan will also help contextualize how our first major program, the Framework Timeraiser is one of many emerging engagement options around which community members can rally. In essence, the NSIVI will aid the national expansion plans for future Framework Timeraisers across Canada.

Framework Foundation acknowledges that to host other successful Timeraisers an in-depth knowledge of all stakeholders and influences within various communities must be fully explored.

The NSIVI examines four research themes: demographic trends, community issues, employer-supported volunteerism and volunteer management. The NSIVI will support the rapid and prudent expansion of Framework Foundation by examining these themes so that Timeraising activities reach the heart of quality volunteer engagement.

### **1. The Demographics**

In urban centres across Canada, on average 20% of the total population is Framework Foundation's target demographic. Most are employed in the private sector, with some form of post-secondary education. Fortunately many will help when asked. However, we also know that this same cohort lacks the time to volunteer, do not know where to turn to get started and feel the current offering of volunteer opportunities are not relevant to them. Addressing these barriers and promoting the motivations to their participation is a challenge. People **do** have time; but it depends on how this time can be used. People **do** have places to turn; but the sector has not been able to provide a unified voice to make it clear where to go. People **can** be provided relevant and meaningful opportunities; but many voluntary organizations are not equipped with the tools and training to

effectively and efficiently do so.

## 2. Community needs

The NSIVI examines four unique types of community organizations in order to develop a comparison of the issues, engagement resources and challenges facing each community:

1. Programs and services offered by local Volunteer Centres provide one of the clearest snapshots linking people to causes and causes to people.
2. Granting priorities of Community Foundations also provide a lens on the people, issues and ideas where resources are being deployed.
3. As one of the largest community engagement organizations in any city, funding priorities, corporate outreach and capacity-building efforts of the United Way is being explored.
4. From a private-sector perspective, the policies and focus areas of local boards of trade help illustrate the leadership priorities of businesses promoting economic stability in the community.

## 3. Employer-Supported Volunteerism

Policies and programs of employer-supported volunteerism are still emerging across the country. As a starting point, the NSIVI examines the top rated workplace employers and Imagine's Caring Companies as a natural rallying point to align corporate priorities, community needs and employee interests. By providing business leaders with a more holistic synopsis of community needs, Framework Foundation hopes to improve the connectivity of the business community with Canada's nonprofit and voluntary community in the hopes of strategically engaging their young employees in relevant and meaningful opportunities.

## 4. Volunteer Management

In our estimation, the country's infrastructure to engage more Canadians is massively underdeveloped. Through an extensive literature review, analysis of community based funding priorities and three years of direct experience working with connecting volunteers and volunteer agencies, the Framework Foundation has noticed that insufficient emphasis is being placed on practical capacity building efforts to improve engaging, training and retaining volunteers. Building on the capacity issues identified in the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations, the management of volunteers should be the number one strategic priority for a majority of Canada's nonprofit and voluntary organizations.

## Bend the Trend - Final Remarks

These four research themes are embedded in our call to action. Let us put adequate resources into building reasonable infrastructure so all Canadians who express an interest in getting involved with community building have the opportunity to do so.

Getting involved with a community building cause should be made simple. But for most 22 to 35 year old Canadians settling in urban centres, the action plan is more

complex than stating a lofty engagement goal. Quality always wins over quantity.

Framework Foundation is placing emphasis on a volunteer engagement strategy through the NSIVI that can take into account the multi-faceted issues and the many stakeholders that make for good engagement models. The future is **ours**. What do **we** want to make of it?

*Anil Patel is co-founder and Executive Director of Framework Foundation. For more information visit [www.frameworkfoundation.ca](http://www.frameworkfoundation.ca) or email [apatel@frameworkfoundation.ca](mailto:apatel@frameworkfoundation.ca).*

# CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND MANAGERS OF VOLUNTEERS

by Paddy Bowen

The impulse to volunteer, to reach out and help another, to contribute time, passion and energy to making something happen lies at the very heart of humanity. It also provides the fundamental lifeblood of the formal voluntary sector in Canada.

Although there are 161,000 organizations that range in size from thousands with no paid staff and budgets under \$30,000 to the few hundred monoliths that often dominate our collective understanding of charities and non profits, the fact is that there would be no sector without the vision and determination of individuals. According to the recently released National Survey of Non Profit and Voluntary Organizations, 1.3 million paid staff work alongside more than 6.5 million volunteers every year to produce billions of hours of care, service and effort and in so doing, contribute an annual economic equivalent of eight percent of the Gross Domestic Product of Canada.

Although the statistics do not tell us exactly how many of these people bear responsibility for recruiting, overseeing, supporting and managing volunteers, the number certainly lies in the tens of thousands. Inside that number is the cohort of individuals who have adopted a formal and often professionally designated status as 'Managers of Volunteer Resources'. Supported by peer networks, professional associations, community college programs, local, provincial and national volunteer centres, managers of volunteer resources have developed a significant expertise on the topic of volunteerism. Some of that wisdom also seeps into the less formal areas of the voluntary sector enabling convenors of sport teams, Sunday school leaders or small agency heads to discover and adopt strategies developed by the profession around issues like screening, youth volunteerism or conflict resolution.

The purpose of this article, penned by one whose own professional career has led to the development of considerable knowledge about formal volunteering in Canada, is to push a little against the walls of that nicely constructed phenomenon to suggest that it may be time for the community of managers of volunteer resources,

and the voluntary sector in general, to look beyond itself. They need to consider the fact that notwithstanding the remarkable breadth and scope of volunteering, it actually represents only a part of the total picture of citizen engagement and social capital in this country.

While there are those who choose to exercise their desire to make a contribution, be connected, address problems or engage in collective action from inside organizations, the ways that Canadians participate in community more often extend beyond the parameters of the voluntary sector per se.

In a 2004 paper published by the **Public Policy Forum**, a model for citizen and community participation was suggested that encompasses seven areas of participatory activity including:

- public involvement (the engagement of people in various forms of democratic participation);
- participation in sports;
- the arts;
- environmental stewardship;
- belonging - to places of worship, associations or unions;
- informal caregiving and
- formal volunteering and giving.

For a fuller exploration of this broader concept of citizen participation and a discussion of the challenges and opportunities that exist around developing it, readers may review the paper Investing in Canada: Fostering an Agenda for Citizen and Community Participation found at [www.pforum.ca](http://www.pforum.ca) in the 2004 publications section.

The question that emerges from the perspective of the managers of volunteer resources community is simple though undoubtedly compelling. If we accept that the broader objective is to encourage and enable the involvement of individuals in a wide array of participatory behaviours (including but by no means exclusively focused on volunteering), what are the implications for this profession? Should managers of volunteer resources continue to specialize in the sphere of formal volunteering or will it behoove the profession to start broadening their net?

Consider this example: a manager of volunteer resources in a hospital provides a clearly delineated and vitally important role - to recruit and manage individuals who want to volunteer. However individuals from the community are also engaged with the hospital in a myriad of other ways. They are patients, the family members of patients, donors or Board members. In some instances, they may provide pro bono consultative services and some just pay \$500 to attend a fundraising event every year.

The varieties of ways that individuals participate in just one organization, like a hospital, are mind boggling as are the impacts - not only those accrued directly by the hospital but on social well being, social capital and quality of life at a community level.

So, what would happen to policy and practice in our example institution if a holistic and integrated approach were taken to managing and enabling the relationship between the organization and all these individuals? What would happen if a conscious strategy was employed to assess and make seamless the connection of governors to donors to volunteers to patients and their families? Above all what would this mean for the manager of volunteer resources? Does she become an anachronism or an out of date employee whose area of specialty has waned in importance? Or does she, could she, step forward to help conceive and guide the evolution of a more inter-connected approach to community, citizen and organization relations?

Clearly there is much to think about when, if and as the broader concept of citizen participation begins to ignite the interest of community leaders, politicians and administrators. There is evidence that this is beginning to happen as seen in the wake of Hurricane Katrina or the London bombings. Discussions are starting to turn to the key importance of participation and engagement, inclusive of but not contained to volunteering, and the desire of the institutions of the state to find better ways to connect to individual citizens.

If indeed 'the times they are a changin' and traditional ideas about volunteering, volunteer development and the capturing of that wonderful human instinct to engage are indeed taking hold, what better time could there be for the community of managers of volunteer resources to pursue these ideas, initiate a discourse and fully explore this new terrain? After all, attunement to people and ideas has always lain at the heart of this profession.

*Paddy Bowen was President and CEO of Volunteer Canada from 1995 to 2003. Since that time she has established a new charitable organization "Communitarum: the Citizen and Community Participation Project" which she is leading. She is also currently working with Imagine Canada and eight other national organizations to lead the Voluntary Sector Awareness Project. She would welcome your thoughts and reactions to the ideas introduced here - and to hearing about the debate and discussion that may follow. Paddy can be contacted at [paddy.bowen@magma.ca](mailto:paddy.bowen@magma.ca)*

# ASSESSING THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEER WORK

by Linda L. Graff

As part of a growing pressure for accountability and transparency in the voluntary sector and reflecting the increasing preciousness of limited resources, more and more volunteer program coordinators are being asked to measure their program outcomes and justify their program budget requests. That there is an acceptable return on volunteer involvement has historically been taken for granted, particularly when the costs of engaging volunteers were very low. Now, with increasing management standards requiring greater resource allocations (e.g., more program coordination and supervision time, increasing hard costs of screening and training and recognition materials, etc.) and with volunteers tending to stay for shorter periods of time, organizations need to think carefully about the returns they get back from the investments they make in volunteer involvement. This is a relatively new concept in volunteer position and program planning.

There has been a spate of efforts to assess 'the value of volunteer time' or the 'value of volunteer work' using the wage replacement approach. Briefly, this methodology involves multiplying the number of volunteered hours by an average hourly pay rate based on what an employee might be paid to do the same work. The resulting total is reported as the 'value' of the work done by volunteers. It is not. The resulting figure is quite simply what the organization did not pay to have the work done. That is very different from what the work is actually worth.

Consider these parallel questions:

- What is a park worth?
- What is a police department worth?

To answer either of these questions, one would not take the number of hours worked by the park workers/police officers, multiply their hours by their average wage and claim that to be the worth of the park or the police department. Clearly, that calculation represents what it costs to generate the value of the park/police department, not its actual value.

While a full exploration of how to fairly and respectfully calculate the worth of volunteer involvement is beyond what can be done here, a caution is raised about using the wage replacement approach.

Setting aside the not insignificant question of how one could accurately assign an 'average wage' to the often quite different work done by volunteers in a range of different positions (in some countries, including Canada and the United States, a single wage is held up to represent the average wage of all volunteer workers in the entire country!), the wage replacement method actually serves to mask the real value of volunteer involvement. Think on how you might answer the following

What is the value of:

- a volunteer who spends time at the bedside of a dying child?
- 400 citizens who turn out to find a little girl lost in the swamp (and they are successful!)?
- the work of a group of anglers and environmentalists collaborating to clean up a stream bed, preserve the watershed, rehabilitate the sport fishery, and thereby revive the previously failing tourist industry in the surrounding area?
- the adult literacy movement?
- a volunteer fire department?
- the money collected by volunteers of the arthritis society, which is largely responsible for funding research on successful joint replacement (substitute in this example, volunteer fundraisers for the cancer society, the heart and stroke foundation, the multiple sclerosis society, the Huntington's society, the diabetes association, the local hospital auxiliary, or one of any of the other thousands of charities through which volunteers raise funds to change the world, build their community, or find a cure)?

When one spends even just a few moments considering the multiple values created by volunteer work – value to the organization, its 'clients,' the volunteer him or herself, the community, civil society – the shortcomings of the wage replacement approach come into sharper focus.

It is tempting, and it can be impressive, to multiply hours by a wage equivalent and claim that the resulting total of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars represents the "value" of volunteer work. This is certainly the easiest method. But it misrepresents, and in most cases, underestimates the real value of volunteer work.

An alternate approach would involve the identification of actual outcomes of the work, calculating the full costs of achieving those outcomes, and then asking the question: is this a good investment of our resources?

Consider these illustrations:

- If it cost \$75 to put a volunteer at the bedside of the dying child, would that be a good investment of hospital resources?
- If the police department had to spend \$2,000 to pay its officers to coordinate the efforts of the 400 citizens who volunteered to search the swamp to find the child, would that be a good investment of taxpayers' money?
- If it costs an organization \$300 to place a volunteer tutor with an illiterate adult student for a year and it takes an average of three years to teach an adult student to read at a functional level, is that a good investment? If the student is then successful in getting a better job, does not go on welfare, does not end up homeless ... is the volunteer literacy program worth what it costs?

The numbers used in these illustrations are completely fictional. They may not remotely represent the real cost of engaging volunteers such as these, but they illustrate how a different way of thinking about the value of volunteer work more

appropriately honours the true contributions that volunteers make.

If you decide to use the wage replacement approach in your program statistics, be certain to be very clear about what the resulting figure represents, which is not at all the 'value' of volunteering, but rather, what the organization has not paid in wages to get the work done. Describing the outcomes of volunteer efforts and contrasting those against the real costs of outcome generation is a more promising approach and may very well become the new best practice in volunteer program management in the near future. At minimum, it is more accurate and more respectful.

*Linda Graff is President and Senior Associate of Linda Graff and Associates Inc. She has worked in the nonprofit sector since 1980. She is a voluntary sector and risk management specialist, an impassioned advocate for the field of volunteer program management and a sought after international speaker.*

## **BOOK REVIEW**

by Donna Lockhart

### *Best of All: A Quick Reference Guide to Effective Volunteer Involvement by Linda L. Graff*

As a college instructor, I have never put a 'textbook' on the curriculum outline for The Certificate for Volunteer Management program. I could not find a resource that was both generic and inclusive. I have changed my mind. After reviewing Linda Graff's new resource *Best of All*, I have decided to recommend it as THE resource for my students for a number of reasons.

Linda writes to several target audiences. The students in my class come from a wide variety of situations. Some are starting new careers, some are getting the 'certificate' in a field where they have extensive experience, some are changing careers and others are volunteers wanting to understand more about effective management. As community volunteers, many of them coordinate large numbers of volunteers and events and want the theory and framework to do it successfully. *Best of All* provides practical, energizing ideas that are stated in plain language suitable for a wide audience.

Linda's format is based on an updated framework. The field has used the *Volunteer Retention Cycle* (MacKenzie and Moore, 1993) for many years and I have made my own adaptations to it. Linda has now updated this model and expanded on each of the segments of the Volunteer Involvement Cycle - the foundation upon which the profession is based. We can give our newcomers this foundation and those with experience will see new items for personal development. It certainly illustrates that no field stays static. Linda has now created the text that aligns with this cycle and I can see how easily students can integrate this resource into classroom work.

This resource is practical but also stimulating. Linda's world experience is shared and highlighted with Key Ideas or Leadership Tips and the How to Tables make it easy to focus on a specific area that needs improvement. Having a resource listing at the end of each chapter is particularly helpful if you just want to focus on that topic and make improvements to your volunteer program.

For the last year or so the term 'Best Practices' has surfaced in most professions. Years of quantitative data usually provide the base from which to build a best practice. Increased hard data in the voluntary sector is accumulating. However, Linda has proven that we do have 'best practices' and has taken the effort to pull them together. These areas have become 'an industry accepted way of doing something that works'. Linda has given us the platform to be 'right up there' and current.

Lastly, this would not be a Linda Graff work if the Caution areas had not been included. Linda gives us stimulating ideas, sharing her knowledge and experience from around the globe and adding that wonderful dose of reality. She gives us time to step back, take a breath and consider another side to the question or area being considered.

We have all wondered what more could be written on involving and managing volunteers. Linda Graff continues to astound us. *Best of All* will help my students build a clear and concise foundation for successfully involving volunteers in the important work of their organizations. This new resource is inclusive but also stimulating enough to make us want to search further. As an instructor, I am always looking for the 'very best' for my students. I think *Best of All* has hit the mark!

Linda L. Graff. (2005). *Best Of All: The Quick Reference Guide To Effective Volunteer Involvement*. Dundas: Linda Graff And Associates Inc. Available from: [www.lindagraff.ca](http://www.lindagraff.ca)

*Donna Lockhart is a workshop leader, consultant and partner in The RETHINK Group. Her mission is to 'build best practices in volunteer management'. Since 1984, she has partnered with hundreds of non profit organizations in the social, recreation, education and health sectors to increase the effectiveness of volunteer resources. She designed and currently delivers the Certificate in Volunteer Management for a community college.. For more information about The RETHINK Group contact Donna at: [www.rethinkgroup.ca](http://www.rethinkgroup.ca)*

## PEER EXPERT

by Debbie Kennedy

### Scenario:

*“How do you, as a manager of volunteer resources, manage to keep up with the future trends in our profession while dealing with the demands of a very busy job?” If you answer ‘flying by the seat of my pants’, you are probably not alone.*

### Response:

Every one of us has a certain management style to manage our growing list of priorities each day. I include ongoing research as one of my annual goals, recognizing that changing trends affect every aspect of the volunteer management cycle. I consider myself fortunate because I love researching; I also accept that change, in many instances, proves to be necessary. I enjoy using the Internet to access information regarding trends in the field, to dialogue with colleagues and to gather resource material. I also share such information with colleagues who are not as comfortable with the wonder of the World Wide Web, and as such may otherwise not benefit from the wealth of information that particular resource can provide. I keep a folder near my computer and when I receive website information that looks interesting, it is filed for my research time. I also use an Outlook folder for filing interesting web links for easy access, particularly when it is apparent that I will be a frequent visitor to such sites. I prefer to take a few minutes to research at the beginning or end of a busy workday, at least once each week.

A few excellent websites are those of Volunteer Canada, Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR), Service Leader and Energize. If you pick up one good piece of information, it is worth the effort. Also, do not forget the value of networking. Join your local association where other administrators of volunteer resources hold regular meetings to discuss issues, trends and other topics relevant to the field. Or, make a point of contacting another administrator from a totally different field; you will be amazed at the mutual interests that arise and the amount of information that you can share. With new information and a heightened awareness of changing trends, you will be better prepared to try something new and exciting, which in turn keeps programs fresh and interesting. These are just a few ways that I manage to keep up with the future trends in the very busy field of volunteer management. Happy Surfing!

*Debbie Kennedy is the Manager, Volunteers & Pastoral Care at the Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows Health Services in BC and has working in volunteer administration for over 5 years. Debbie recently obtained certification through CAVR. She is the chair for the Administrators of Volunteer Resources BC.*

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

[www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)

[www.volunteercanada.ca](http://www.volunteercanada.ca)

[www.serviceleader.org](http://www.serviceleader.org)

[www.energize.inc](http://www.energize.inc) (Check out Hot Topics)

[www.ppforum.ca](http://www.ppforum.ca)

Publication: *Investing in Canada: Fostering an Agenda for Citizen and Community Participation*

[www.cprn.org](http://www.cprn.org)

Website of the Canadian Policy Research Networks.  
Of interest: *Human Resources Capacity in the Voluntary Sector*

[www.frameworkfoundation.ca](http://www.frameworkfoundation.ca)

[www.vpppartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.htm](http://www.vpppartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.htm)

## INTERESTED IN WRITING?

If you see a future topic that interests you and you would like to share your story or experience, send all submissions to the Canadian Journal of Volunteer

Resources Management  
[joanniecox@sympatico.ca](mailto:joanniecox@sympatico.ca)

# JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Editorial Process and Guidelines for Authors

## Objective

The Journal of Volunteer Resources Management is intended:

1. to serve as a credible source of information on the management of volunteers in Canada;
2. to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to encourage networking among managers of volunteers;
3. to provide a professional development tool for managers of volunteers;
4. to recognize and encourage Canadian talent in the field of management of volunteers;
5. to include in each issue at least two articles that will consider different views on a specific and predetermined theme.

## Target Audience

The Journal's intended audience includes managers of volunteers, educators, media and funders of not-for-profit organizations across the country.

## Submissions

All manuscripts will be accepted on diskette or via e-mail in either Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Submissions should be written according to "Canadian Style - A Guide to Writing and Editing" - Secretary of State, Dundurn Press. External reviewers may be engaged to review content if deemed advisable by the committee.

The revised draft is edited for clarity and consistency by the Editorial Team.

The edited version is returned to the author for acceptance along with an approval form for signature.

The signed form is to be returned to the Editorial Team within a week along with any suggestions for final revisions.

## Format and Style

Authors are asked to respect the following word counts:

	Words	Pages
<b>Lead Article</b>	2000	5-6
<b>Secondary Article</b>	700-800	2-3
<b>Book Review</b>	150	1

The lead article will look at the topic in some depth and will normally require the author to conduct research into current trends and perspectives on the subject.

The secondary article will adopt a more practical approach, including personal experiences and opinions.

## Advertising

Limited advertising space will be allowed in the Journal, for materials of direct relevance to managers of volunteer service, and as long as it conforms to the guidelines set out by the Editorial Team.

## Guidelines:

1. Only ¼ page and ½ page ads will be accepted.
2. Ad must be camera-ready.
3. A maximum of one page of ads will be permitted per issue.
4. Job ads are not recommended.
5. Cost is to be determined by the Editorial Team.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**November 2-5, 2005**

**Jacksonville, Florida**

Association for Volunteer Administrators conference

**May 9 - 11, 2006**

**Toronto, ON**

Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources-Ontario

**June 22 - 25, 2006**

**St. John's, Newfoundland**

Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR) Conference

**September 22 - 26, 2006**

**New Delhi, India**

International Association for Volunteer Effort,  
World Volunteer Conference

Click on the following websites if you want either more information or to become a member of: PAVR-O [www.pavro.on.ca](http://www.pavro.on.ca) or CAVR [www.cavr.org](http://www.cavr.org)

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS & THEMES

□	Issue □ □	Deadline □ □	□	Theme
	Winter '06	articles due on the 24th of January		Orientation and Training
	Spring '06	articles due on the 24th of March		Corporate Connections
	Summer '06	articles due on the 24th of June		Motivating Volunteers
	Fall '06	articles due on the 24th of August		Positioning our Profession