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An Interactive Model for Volunteerism

Nancy Hanawi

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by Nancy Hanawi

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Executive Summary

Virtually all nonprofit organizations depend to some extent on the work of volunteers; many deliver their services entirely through volunteers. Yet research has contributed relatively little to fundamental understanding of volunteers and volunteerism, perhaps because what research has been done tends to deal with volunteerism in a narrow context. Typically, research efforts have consisted of querying a set of volunteers for one or more organizations regarding their motivation and satisfactions with respect to that particular volunteering situation. Thus what is usually being examined is the person in a specific volunteer role. In this study, what is suggested is an interactive model for analyzing volunteering. Using this model, the individual in her volunteer role is viewed as the intersection of two larger spheres: the whole organizational setting and the overall life of the volunteer. Placing examination of the particular and current volunteer role in the setting of each of these broader spheres allows some new perspectives and speculations about volunteering motivations, satisfactions and development.

The results of the project are presented in three parts. The first part builds on the results of a prior research project in a nonprofit San Francisco organization (A). This project included as one component a study of A's volunteers. A second organization (B) was the site for the current research project: B is in the same geographic area as A, offers the same kind of services and has a similar initial training. The two organizations have, however, very different cultures. A group of B's prospective and current volunteers were surveyed, as had been A's, by questionnaire and/or interview. Where appropriate for current purposes, identical questions were used. Comparative analysis of the results provides support for concluding that organizational culture has considerable impact on volunteer attraction, motivation, retention, sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and therefore also on the overall makeup of the volunteer pool. Data on volunteer utilization were also yielded by this research. Implications of the findings for managers of nonprofit organizations are explored.

In the second section one of the major interactive aspects of the volunteer experience is explored, that of learning or self-development. Here what is of interest is learning that extends beyond skills used directly in the volunteer role, to learning relevant to and useful in the larger sphere of the volunteer's current and future life. Volunteers reported an array of changes in competencies, attitudes and values that resulted from volunteering; many are clearly relevant to other portions of their lives. Implications both for volunteers and for volunteer organizations are discussed.

The final section of the report views the experience of particular volunteering in the context of the volunteer's life, both past and current. Lengthy interviews provided the vehicle for exploring such questions as: What does an individual's life course reveal about her motivation to volunteer? Do an individual's motivations relative to volunteering remain the same throughout life? Is there a relationship in a given individual between motivation to work and motivation to volunteer? The results lead to several working hypotheses: (1) Lifelong themes of interest, motivation and sources of satisfaction can be identified in individual histories. These themes are established early and persist into later life. (2) The ways in which these themes are manifested
tend to mature from early activities directed to larger, more globally framed causes to ones that are more focused, more local, and with more evident impact (though perhaps still contributing to larger causes). (3) Volunteer activities provide the means to satisfy one's lifelong "themes" when they are not being, or cannot be, satisfied in paid work. Thus there appears to be a strong relationship between paid and unpaid work motivations and satisfactions. Further study of concurrent work and volunteerism histories is suggested, in order to shed more light on both spheres, and also to contribute to the understanding of adult development.
Introduction

The "third sector" of nonprofit organizations is clearly growing in size and influence and as a result is drawing more interest from policy-makers and researchers. A recent flyer for the journal *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* states that nonprofits employ more civilians than the federal and state government combined and have a collective budget larger than all but seven nations in the world.

Virtually all of these nonprofits are dependent in some way on the work of volunteers: as board members, fundraisers, clerical and administrative workers, and public relations agents. Many organizations depend entirely or in part on volunteers for direct service delivery. Thus understanding volunteers and volunteerism is critical to the operation of this huge enterprise. Yet relatively little research has been done, compared to the list of questions that need to be explored. Susan Ellis (1985) remarks in her article on a research agenda in volunteerism, "One way to describe the needs for research in volunteerism is to say that everything is left to do."

Organizations are, of course, primarily interested in how to get -- and keep -- volunteers, and much of the research that has been done tends to respond to this interest. What motivates people to offer their time and talents with no monetary compensation? Even this research question, however, has generally been dealt with in a narrow context. Typically, current volunteers from a single organization or a set of organizations have been asked why they volunteered for that particular situation. In some cases they have also been asked why they continued to volunteer and what, of various aspects of volunteering, gave them "satisfaction." In effect, therefore, research has tended to focus on the intersection of the volunteer and the organization. (See C in figure 1)
What we have tried to do in this project is to examine the volunteer role within the two larger contexts, A and B, and also to look at the impact of the volunteer role on the person (C's effects on B). The three areas of this diagram are obviously interactive: a person's life is or can be altered by the experience, as can the organization. Similarly the organization as a whole affects the volunteers it draws, and the overall life pattern of the volunteer determines what volunteer role, if any, he/she will play.

This paper has three parts which explore, in order, the following sets of questions and issues:

I. What role does the organizational culture play in the motivation, retention, and satisfaction of volunteers and therefore in the overall makeup of the volunteer pool? As will be noted below, we were fortunate to be able to examine two
organizations which deliver the same services through volunteers in the same geographic area and which have similar initial training requirements but very different cultures. In the process of looking at these two volunteer pools, we also are able to come to some conclusions regarding volunteer utilization.

II. How are people changed by the volunteering experience, particularly with respect to learning? The volunteers here are well educated and are primarily in professional occupations; self-development is therefore a major interest and satisfaction. What is it that volunteers learn? How can and should organizations heed these learning interests of volunteers?

III. What does an individual's life history reveal about her motivation to volunteer? Do an individual's motivations relative to volunteering remain the same throughout life? Is there a relationship in a given individual between motivation to work and motivation to volunteer? Some researchers (Gidron, 1983; Dailey, 1986) have used theoretical frameworks that were developed to analyze motivation to work, in order to similarly analyze motivation to volunteer, but none seemed to have looked at the interrelationship of work and volunteering.

Methodology

The research for this project was designed to build on one part of an earlier comprehensive evaluation research project which was funded by Ford, Hewlett, Irvine, and Burden Foundations. That project examined one nonprofit organization in the San Francisco Bay Area which is a leading model for delivery of conflict resolution services by trained volunteers. We will call that organization A. For the current project a second organization, which we will
call B, was utilized. It too delivers conflict resolution services in the Bay Area, through volunteers. For the first section of this paper (and that section only) we use results from both projects, and in that section both organizations will be described in detail. Here we will outline the data collection methods used in both projects.

In the earlier project the following respondents and processes were used:

1. Volunteers for A are required to go through a 26-hour training at the start of their commitment. Prior to the decision to go through training and become a volunteer, people may attend an orientation session to find out about the organization's history, mission, services, etc. At such an orientation in March 1983, 82 people were surveyed by written questionnaire. (Of these, 57 went through training.) The questionnaire probed who the prospective volunteers were and why they were interested in A.

2. Approximately one year later, the above group was re-surveyed, some by written questionnaire and some (randomly chosen) by personal interview, to determine whether and how they had become involved with A and how they perceived their experience.

3. "Older" volunteers and former volunteers were also randomly chosen for a similar interview or questionnaire survey. A total of 18 interviews and 31 questionnaires were completed.

4. In addition, various volunteer records were examined to determine attrition patterns, aggregate amounts of volunteer time utilized, etc.
In the current project, similar data were collected:

1. Volunteers for B are also required to go through about a 26-hour training and are invited to an orientation session earlier for mutual "screening" between prospective volunteers and the organization. In October 1988, B held such an orientation; twenty-five (almost all) of the attendees filled out a written questionnaire at that time. This survey (see Appendix) again explored who the respondents were and why they were interested in B. The relevant questions from the questionnaire of the earlier project were retained, with the same wording, so that results could be compared.

2. Approximately one year later (November, 1989), the nineteen people from the above group who had actually attended the training were surveyed by a mailed questionnaire. Response was, however, so poor (7) that this set of data could not be used either to compare with the analogous results for organization A or to compare with the earlier responses of the same group before training. Some of the data were useable in conjunction with the next set of data.

3. All the "older" volunteers of B (58 total) were contacted by mail in early 1989 to explain the project and to ask whether they would be willing to respond to a written questionnaire or be interviewed. Of these, 32 people responded, the majority saying either process was acceptable. A total of fifteen interviews were conducted; nine people returned questionnaires. (Some people moved away or became otherwise unreachable.) Respondents were not geographically clustered in any way, but rather lived and worked all over the Bay Area, making the
logistics of individual interviews complex. Interviews followed the same structure as the written questionnaire (see Appendix), but the interview process allowed considerably more exploration of several items. Respondents in both cases were asked about their motivations for joining and staying in the organization, their satisfactions and dissatisfactions, and the perceptions of the impact of the experience on them. They were also asked to assess themselves in several related skill areas. Then they were asked to sketch their work and volunteering history, and to reflect on some of the patterns of motivations and satisfactions throughout. The life history aspect was explored extensively in the interviews; it is not an area which conforms well to a questionnaire situation. The interviews typically took one hour but some extended to several hours, particularly since many respondents found this a rare opportunity to reflect on their past and even to learn more about themselves.

4. As the data collection was drawing to a close, two additional interviews were conducted with volunteers outside organizations A and B. Some speculations about the existence of life-long themes and motivations and about "maturation" of volunteering needed to be tested on people with a longer history. These two respondents, who were 75 and 78 years old, had lengthy careers in both volunteering and paid work. They provided rich examples of how recognizable threads can weave in and out of one's activities but continue over sixty years or more, resulting in a tapestry of life in which one can clearly trace the prevailing
themes. These interviews took much longer; one extended over two sessions, for a total of five hours.

As noted above, the discussion that follows is organized into three areas:

I. Influence of organizational culture on volunteer attraction, retention and satisfaction. In this section we use data from both projects to analyze the role of culture in volunteerism. This section closes with comments on the implications for organizational planning and policies.

II. Volunteering as a learning experience. This section rests largely, as does the next, on the interviews conducted in the current project. Here we examine volunteering from the individual's perspective, in the particular dimension that, at least for these volunteers, is a, if not the, primary motivator and satisfier. This section also closes with comments about organizational implications.

III. Motivations in volunteering from a lifelong perspective. In this section we speculate about the existence and power of life-long patterns of motivation of individuals, based on this collection of case studies. The interplay of paid and unpaid work in fulfilling these lifelong needs is a key element in the discussion.

Data will be presented as it contributes to the discussion. Those who are interested in seeing the data from the current project in one place may refer to the appendix where copies of instruments used are displayed, along with quantitative data when appropriate.
1. Influence of organizational culture on volunteer attraction, retention and satisfaction.

Organizations A and B are similar in many ways. Both are engaged in providing alternative dispute resolution services for a broad array of conflicts and parties. Both have existed for about a dozen years, though B was until several years ago a program in a larger organization. Both operate in the San Francisco Bay Area; both require volunteers to complete an initial extensive training. They differ, however, in some important and obvious ways, largely based on quite different ideologies. Actually, organization A has a strong ideological basis while B's ideology, if it has one, is rather invisible. The fact that B is providing alternative dispute resolution services in and of itself might imply certain values, but none are explicitly and publicly put forth. Organization A, on the other hand, professes to do "neighborhood-building" through these same services. It has offices in various neighborhoods and presents its service as "neighbor helping neighbor." It is critical of the current justice system and has an anti-professional flavor.

Were one to look at the cases handled by the two organizations, one would find considerable similarity. The training is also quite similar. The actual process of resolving conflicts differs somewhat though each uses mediative techniques. Organization A uses a multi-person mediator panel which strives to represent "the neighborhood" in some way, while B uses two co-mediators.

Finally, A and B use volunteers differently: in both organizations, all volunteers are trained to mediate conflicts and, in both, volunteers do such work. In A, however, volunteers also play other roles, such as planning, case work, etc., and get heavily involved in "governance." Many volunteers of A spend considerable time in meetings and in the many social events. This is not the case with B: volunteers do almost exclusively mediation work. There
are a few rather inactive volunteer committees and a rare social event, but generally the
volunteers do not know one another. Organization A does a broad and very aggressive outreach
for volunteers; B tends to use a more passive network approach. (There seems to be, however,
little difference in how people first hear about both organizations.)

So we have here two organizations, alike in their services and in various other ways, but
very unlike in organizational culture or image. (It may be too simplistic to say A is a "sixties"
type of organization, but the label does express much of the flavor of A.) The initial question
we sought to answer was, do these organizations draw different kinds of volunteers? This might
tell us something about how people select from among possible volunteer opportunities, since
here we are keeping the training requirement, geographic area, and primary volunteer work
constant. We also sought to answer other questions about these two volunteer pools, such as why
volunteers stay in the organization, what their sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are, etc.

The data to be used in the first part of this discussion are from written surveys obtained
from 82 respondents for A and 25 for B, at an orientation or get-acquainted session for
prospective volunteers of each, prior to final commitment to the training and volunteer service.
Therefore, these are people who have been drawn to each organization by what they have learned
from an outsider's viewpoint (though many have gotten their information from an insider).

The demographic data alone clearly separate these two groups, even though they have
some similarities.

Gender: A is predominantly female (67%), B predominantly male (60%). (For
brevity's sake, we will use "A is" as shorthand for "the group of prospective
volunteers of A is.")
**Length of residency:** B consists of longer term residents as compared to A:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year or less in neighborhood</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 5 years</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10 years</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 10</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Owner/renter status:** B is more commonly a homeowner (44%) compared to A (25%). (The average percentage for San Francisco is 33%).

**Age:** A is younger than B. Seventy-five percent of A’s volunteer prospects are between 26 and 35, compared to only 16% for B. B’s ages cover a broader range, with a median age of 44.

**Race:** Both groups are predominantly white, though A is more diverse.

**Income:** Household income for A is substantially lower than for B, even taking into account the five-year difference in dollar value:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household income &lt; $10,000</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - 20,000</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - 30,000</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over $30,000</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marital Status: Only 18% of A's prospects were married, as compared to 36% for B.

Education: In both cases the volunteers were highly educated, though B's educational level was higher. Sixty-eight percent of B's volunteers had some graduate work (and 96% held an undergraduate degree) as compared to forty percent for A. It should be noted here how high A's educational level is, given its relatively low household income.

Some questions on each survey probed indicators of the respondent's "neighborhood-connectedness." One question asked about the frequency of visits to one's neighbors' homes in the last two weeks. A's responses were somewhat higher, with 31% saying they had made three or more visits, compared to 13% for B. The two groups, however, gave similar answers to a query about the number of neighbors they knew well enough to ask a favor. They also gave similar answers as to how often they had gotten together with neighbors to discuss neighborhood problems. Respondents were asked to rate their neighborhood as compared to others, on a scale from 1 to 5 where 5 indicated an opinion that it was much better than others, and 1, much worse. Although both rated their neighborhoods high, A's average rating was 3.68 compared to B's 4.2.

Degree of satisfaction with the police and court system did not separate the two groups. Several questions probed this area, since the organizations are involved in alternatives to the traditional legal system, and therefore disaffection with the establishment could be a motivator.
Respondents were asked to rate their own skills in several aspects related to mediation such as listening skills. Both groups generally rated themselves quite high, and in comparable ways on particular dimensions.

At this point it may be useful to draw summary profiles of each organization's prospective volunteer group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly female</td>
<td>Predominantly male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter term resident and renter</td>
<td>Longer term resident and homeowner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower income</td>
<td>Higher income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher proportion single</td>
<td>Higher proportion married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well educated</td>
<td>Higher educational level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat more connections</td>
<td>More satisfied with neighborhood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fairly sharp differences in profiles are significant given the similarities of the two organizations. One might ask whether people therefore have different reasons for interest in volunteering for the organizations. The most prevalent interest expressed in both cases was a commonly offered reason for volunteering: self-development. People wanted to learn new skills or have a chance to practice skills they already had. Beyond this, however, the primary reasons diverged. In A the next two reasons, about equally prevalent, were a social quest (basically to meet and interact with people) and a desire to help neighbors and/or improve the neighborhood. Very few people in B mentioned social activity as a motivating interest; their second most
prevailing motivation (and almost as highly rated as self-development) was a belief in alternative dispute resolution. Prospective volunteers talked about wanting to get involved in something they "cared about" or "believed in."

In a later section we will return to the topic of motivation of volunteers, in an enlarged discussion which moves beyond particular organizations. Here, however, it is instructive to consider Malcom S. Knowles' article on "Motivation in Volunteerism" (1972). He refers to Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, and claims that most appeals to volunteerism are based on the lower level needs of safety, belonging, and esteem. He posits that the consequences are that volunteerism often fosters parochialism, self-righteousness and competitiveness, and inhibits its effectiveness as an instrument of individual and social change. What we see in organization A is one that appeals to people based on the potential of social ties on a micro level and on the satisfying of safety and belonging needs. Furthermore, A has the feel of a movement in that it is strongly anti-establishment (justice system) and anti-professional, but it separates itself from the hundreds of other organizations doing similar work. Organization A puts itself forth as the leading organization in the field and the one with the best model for what it does. It therefore does seem to do what Knowles claims, in that it promotes parochialism, self-righteousness, and competitiveness. Organization B, on the other hand, does not promise social aspects of volunteering and also does not have the aforementioned "movement" characteristics; it promotes its work as a viable and appropriate alternative to the traditional system without openly discrediting that system.

Clearly, prospective volunteers get the messages that these organizations deliver in a variety of ways. Organization A draws younger, less family- and community-grounded
individuals who appear to see it, at least in substantial part, as a way to enhance their social context and their place in it. Organization B draws older, more established people who see volunteering as a way to contribute to a larger vehicle of social change that they believe in. The process of mediation is intellectually complex, and the required training is extensive. It is not surprising, therefore, that both organizations should draw as prospective volunteers well-educated people, mostly professionals of various kinds, who are very interested in self-development.

The patterns discussed above become even more marked as we look at people who are actually volunteers and not simply interested prospects. (Of our two samples of prospective volunteers, 68% and 76% respectively chose to go through the initial training.) The next portion of this discussion is based on 31 volunteer respondents of A, secured in the earlier study, and 29 volunteers of B surveyed in the current study. Both samples include a cross-section of volunteers in terms of longevity and level of activity. In both cases a core questionnaire was used; some respondents in B used the written version while most were interviewed. The latter situation obviously allowed more complete data. (Although 18 additional interviews were conducted in A, these data were not available.) For the purposes of the present discussion the following queries are salient: Why did you volunteer? Why do you remain a volunteer? What are the most and least satisfying things for you about volunteering in this situation?

Open-ended questions were used to ascertain the most important reasons for joining and staying in A, while B’s volunteers were given a closed set of reasons for which they could check all that were important and then indicate the most important. The closed set of responses was in part developed from the set of responses in the earlier project. The rather lengthy list was collapsed in the analysis of responses to four major groups of motivation:
1. Learning: self-development; use and refinement of skills; career usefulness; challenging and interesting work.

2. Altruism: giving help to other individuals or giving to the community.

3. Content-oriented: commitment to a cause or purpose of the organization.

4. Social: meeting and working with other people.

The most important initial reasons for volunteering that the respondents recalled that they had had were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>(53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content-oriented</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second column under B gives the frequency with which this category was rated as one of the reasons for volunteering. As can be noted, the social reason looms larger for A than B, as does "helping," while learning is a much higher priority for B. The content-oriented proportions are closer, but the way in which the commitments were expressed are quite different. Volunteers in A spoke of community improvement and of the belief in the specific model of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) put forth by A, while volunteers in B talked in interviews about commitment to ADR generally. Thus we again see both echoes of a social movement in A and at the same time the parochial aspects noted by Knowles. These may seem contradictory but they
are not: A sees itself as a social movement, not as one of many organizations working toward the same social change goal.

With regard to most important reasons why they stay, volunteers answered as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>(   )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>(41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content-oriented</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both organizations have a drop in the importance of learning compared to initial motivations which is not surprising since most learning in these organizations happens in the early stages (a fact which will be a topic of discussion below). Altruism dropped in A but rose in B. In fact, in B altruism rose almost exactly in the amount that learning dropped as a motivator. Social motivation was steady in both. The most dramatic change was a sharp rise in content-orientation, for A. This is not surprising given the character of A: volunteers get very involved in all aspects of the organization and there are many meetings, trainings, and social events, all designed to build internal community. The members of "the movement" thereby become more committed to its ideals. So we have in A a group of volunteers who, though they come in with motives of high learning and altruism, become much more focused on A's mission. In B we have volunteers who primarily came for self-development and for whom that motive remains strong, but for whom altruism rises in importance as self-development falls off somewhat.
Data on satisfaction of being a volunteer continue to support the patterns we have been noting. Most (76%) of B's volunteers found their greatest satisfaction in doing the actual work, getting concrete results with and for other people who have been in troubled situations. About 21% find their greatest satisfaction in the intellectual aspects of the work, putting a shade more emphasis on the satisfaction of using and honing their skills than on the results achieved. (The lines here are somewhat hard to draw, it should be noted.) Almost half (47%) of A similarly found satisfaction in the concrete aspects of the work, but for only 8% was the intellectual challenge their greatest satisfaction. In A what takes greater prominence as a source of most satisfaction (29%) is the sense of being involved in doing something that benefits the community, not just the people involved in the dispute. This sense of larger good was mentioned only occasionally by B's volunteers, and then incidentally rather than as a primary source; 13% of A's volunteers listed social aspects as their top source of satisfaction, an area missing entirely from B's responses.

Aspects seen as least satisfying can be displayed side by side because the components, if not the proportions, are similar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational problems</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough work for volunteers</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems in the actual work</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too little time to devote to volunteering</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is probably the norm for volunteers to be less than happy with various aspects of the organization which impact them in important ways. What is interesting here is that in organization A the volunteers are, in large part, the organization, since they are heavily involved in its governance. Their remarks in this component came from an internal perspective and include, therefore, such things as unproductive meetings or poor governance structures, while B's comments are from the outside and at a distance, and tend to critique the organization as it affects their work, rather than as an organizational entity. Organization B's dissatisfaction with how much they are called on is not surprising since, as will be discussed below, there is a large gap between how much time they expected and are willing to give, and how much they actually do give. Although, as we will see, A's volunteers also feel underutilized, they are more involved with the organization and find other problems of more concern.

Volunteers in both organizations were asked to compare their level of involvement in various ways: to what they had expected, to what they would like it to be, to their involvement in other organizations, and to what they would like it to be in the future. Table 1 gives the results.
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT AS COMPARED TO</th>
<th>MORE</th>
<th>LESS</th>
<th>ABOUT SAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHAT EXPECTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT WOULD LIKE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT EXPECT IN FUTURE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As background for discussing this table we should note that respondents were also asked to cite the average number of volunteer hours they had spent per month in the last year; the average number for A was 7 hours per month; for B, 3.7 hours. The group of B's prospective volunteers, when asked how many hours they expected to spend per month, gave an average of 7.5 hours in response. (We do not have analogous information for A.) Volunteers in A and B gave remarkably similar answers in comparing the reality of time commitment to their expectations: the majority expected to spend more time (even though A's spend almost twice as much time). Their expectations for the future are also similar. Given the very small commitment for B, it is not surprising that half of the volunteers spend more time elsewhere, as compared to one-third for A.
The major difference here is that B's volunteers clearly desire to spend more time: 63% say that their commitment is less than they want it to be. This represents a major lost resource for this organization, which invests considerable time in the initial training of volunteers. Even in A, where volunteers seem more satisfied with their level of commitment, 29% would like to spend more time and, it should be noted, much of the time commitment of A's volunteers is spent not in the direct service work of the organization but in commitment-building social and governance activities.

There is a minimal level of activity which is necessary for volunteers to feel connected to an organization; there are individual variations in this critical level but certainly when a person's involvement falls below one or two hours a month, or when there is no continuity in the level of contact, volunteers will drift away. In the case of B, volunteers are called upon to handle specific cases; they cannot initiate activity. They can -- and do -- express their level of interest, but that is the limit of their initiative. This forced passivity has had other negative impacts on some individuals; because this is skilled work, some felt they might not be "doing it right" and that perhaps they were being given indirect negative feedback through lack of contact. Since these volunteers are very interested in self-development they are particularly affected by such an aura of possible rejection of their work.

As mentioned earlier, of the twenty-five prospective B volunteers who were surveyed, nineteen went through the training. A year later only seven returned a follow-up survey. Of these only five had become at all active. All five stated that they desired more involvement, and all cited infrequency of contact as their greatest source of dissatisfaction. The low level
of response also suggests a lack of connectedness to the organization even in the first year of volunteering.

There are clear lessons here, particularly for organizations which depend on well-trained volunteers to do service work of a complex nature.

1. Organizations need to be sensitive to the profound impact of their cultures on the type of volunteers they will draw and what their satisfactions (and dissatisfactions) will be. An organization such as B, which draws mostly professionals interested in doing good work but also very interested in personal growth and development, must provide appropriate opportunities. Particularly if such an organization has misjudged and recruited too many volunteers for its current needs, it must offer workshops, seminars or other structured learning situations to retain volunteers. Volunteers in B were asked whether they would like more social activity and what further training they would want, if any. They frequently responded by combining the two; they wanted informal semi-social opportunities to discuss the work and to debrief and reflect on what they had done with others who were doing similar work. They were intrigued by the cases they had handled but felt isolated and needed the social dimension of learning in order to fully integrate the experience. Providing such opportunities would be a simple thing for an organization to do.

Organizations such as A, which involve volunteers heavily in internal community building, also must insure that such time not be regarded as wasted, since it is not spent pursuing the service work of the organization. Such an organization runs the risk of retaining only a core of "groupies' who are more
interested in social and internal organizational activities than in the work itself. This can result in an enormous amount of staff time being spent on volunteer management with very little external output. In a sense we have in A and B two extremes of focus on volunteers: Organization A probably expends too much energy on managing volunteers and B too little, for the professed purposes of each organization. If A wants to maintain its current culture, however, it will inevitably have to expend more time on its volunteers than B, even if B were to increase its time to a more appropriate level. Thus the culture of an organization has an impact on budget support needed for volunteer management. Lack of recognition of the character of the volunteer pool also obviously has budget impact, since volunteer retention will be affected. When volunteers need substantial up-front training, lack of retention represents a major loss of resources to the organization.

2. Organizations which use volunteers as the primary resource for service delivery need to carefully assess what size volunteer pool they need. This sounds obvious, yet few organizations follow this rule, leading to major mismatches of resources and work. Assessment of optimal volunteer pool size requires at least the following information: (a) a projection of how much volunteer time will be needed, at least for the next year and preferably for several years in those situations where volunteers need time to attain proficiency; (b) an assessment of how much time volunteers -- current and prospective -- are willing to give; and
(c) a projection of volunteer attrition, based on past history, at least for the next year.

Again, these sound simple and obvious, but few organizations devote the requisite attention to attaining such information. Yet the penalties for misjudging optimal pool size are great. If the pool is too small, work is delayed or not done, volunteers are overworked, and there may be insufficient staff time to find and train other volunteers. It is no wonder that organizations usually secure pools which are too large. The effects of an overly large pool may not be so obvious to the organization, but they are equally serious: volunteers are underutilized; skills decline; retention is poor; and a disproportionate amount of staff time may be used to manage the volunteer pool.

The best estimates may still result in a pool that is too large or too small. Clearly organizations should make their estimates to err, if at all, on the side of largeness. When a pool is too large, an organization must first acknowledge that fact and then use this plethora of riches in a way that benefits the organization and/or the volunteers. There is always work to be done; there are always activities of intrinsic interest to volunteers. The organization must not break its implicit contract with volunteers by ignoring them, simply because it doesn’t need all of them at the moment.

II. **Volunteering as a learning experience.**

For many years the concept of "service learning" has been utilized by educational
programs. The term itself, which is about a decade old, captures the idea that volunteer programs have a potential not only to provide services but also to foster development in those who provide the services. This admirable concept has unfortunately been largely confined to situations involving educational program sponsorship and student volunteers. It is usually only in such cases, when learning is the primary objective, that there is a consciousness about how and why learning happens during volunteer experiences, and how such experiences should be designed to maximize learning. Yet, in many other situations, as we have seen in the last section, learning (or development) is a primary motivating force for volunteers, at least those of the type we are concerned with here. Little formal research has been done on the potential of volunteering as a source of adult learning (Whitmore et al. 1988).

If volunteers are indeed seeking some sort of development, what is it that they experience? Is it simply a new or enhanced set of skills or is it something more profound, more in the nature of affirmation or transformation than "value-added?" Volunteers in B were asked to say how their experience had been to them personally and what had happened to them as a result of their experience. It should be recalled that these volunteers were not heavily invested in terms of time, yet they found the experience quite valuable: half judged the experience very valuable, 35% valuable, and 15% said it was not valuable or had declined in value since the initial experience (several cited here their low level of activity).

When respondents were asked to elaborate on the nature of the value of the experience, many, not surprisingly, cited new or enhanced skills. (About a third of the respondents mentioned this category, but many joined this with other remarks.) The other comments fall into a number of categories, not sharply divided. A listing follows, with representative quotations.
which capture the flavor. (It should be recalled here that the work being done by these
volunteers is mediation between parties with disputes, which may be of many kinds.)

1. Transfer of specific skills and understandings to other areas of one's own life.
   • "It helped me in all facets of my life in negotiating and in understanding the
     point of views of others."
   • "It has helped me to understand some issues I was dealing with elsewhere"
     (from a lawyer).
   • "I've transferred these skills to the world around me: work, home, and
     recreation. Now some people know there's a workable alternative to anger,
     frustration, and perhaps courts."

2. Personal changes (other than skill development)
   • "I am more confident with older males. I have more power and status here
     than I do at work, and this gave me a chance to learn about power."
   • "It helped soften my personality, feel more the 'common good'...."
   • "It has made me more considerate of others by seeing the variety of life
     situations gone astray."
   • "It helped me seize positive moments in my personal and business
     opportunities; previously many such moments must have passed without my
     notice or understanding."

3. Opportunity to manifest values
   • "I've found a 'hands-on' application for my values -- to be conciliatory, to
     promote understanding, to help, to teach. It's been very satisfying."
• "It gives me the opportunity to teach what I believe -- that everyone can handle his own affairs if given a chance."

4. Sense of accomplishment, usefulness
• "It satisfied my need to feel good about myself...."

5. Provision of a "reality base," exposure to social contexts and people outside of usual experience
• "It helps me to maintain a reality base, as contact with the array of people I saw in my earlier work but not now."
• "It allowed me to contact and interact with a totally different, diverse group of people."
• "It keeps me conscious of what I want to be, so I do not drift away more than I already have. It provides grounding for me. In my work now I'm far away from community activity or individual problems."

Two people emphasized their hunger for learning in another part of the interview. Each had a particular expertise gained from her work; as a result the program had been calling on them to do cases in those particular areas. One, for example, dealt daily at work with landlord/tenant situations and was continually called on to handle similar cases as a volunteer. Both expressed their frustration with this practice and their desire to stretch themselves by dealing with situations completely outside their usual areas of expertise.

Just as people seek volunteer experiences for different reasons, so do adults seek educational experiences for different reasons. Cyril Houle (1961) posited three categories of adult learners. The goal-oriented learner seeks to satisfy well-defined objectives, such as learning
to use a computer. The activity-oriented person partakes of educational experiences largely for social reasons. The learning-oriented person is intrinsically motivated, seeking the pleasure and satisfaction of learning for its own sake. Clearly individuals may vary in their motivations or have a mix of all three at one time; yet this typology is useful. It is also closely related to types of motivations for volunteers. Volunteers may simply want to do the work, for whatever reason, may desire the social connectedness, or may be seeking to satisfy a higher level (in Maslow's sense) of need, a need for growth and self-renewal. As Knowles (1972) notes, volunteer activities can be defined as both opportunities for service to society and learning experiences.

It is easy for organizations to gratify lower-level needs of volunteers -- needs for social connectedness and for esteem. Social events and certificates of recognition take relatively little thought or time. Such needs are common, and it is important to respond to them. In certain organizations the majority of volunteers may be satisfied with such responses. For an organization which has a relatively intellectually sophisticated volunteer pool, however, desire for learning is bound to be a major motivation. If volunteers are to be retained, this need will have to be met. It is therefore in the organization's own interest to do so; it is not simply an altruistic service to volunteers on the part of the organization.

How can an organization go about the job of facilitating learning? Clearly some of what was learned, and could be learned, by B's volunteers had to do with B's particular work. As a first step, then, an organization might ask itself what learning might be transferred by volunteers to other parts of their lives, affirm or illuminate their values, add to their understanding of the human condition, or help them understand themselves better. "Old" volunteers could assist in this process by sharing what they had learned; this initial opportunity to share reflections on
experience could in and of itself provide considerable stimulation. A regular discussion group to continue this learning process would raise consciousness about the learning potential in the work and assist in the reflection-on-experience component which is so important to adult learning. If volunteers would lead the regular discussion, further learning might occur and the need for staff time would be eliminated.

One might argue that the impact of such activity on volunteer retention would not be sufficient to make it worthwhile to the organization. Then it is necessary to judge whether contribution to the self-development of the volunteer lies within the obligation of an organization. Laurence Frank (1958) made these eloquent remarks about the consciousness of organizations regarding services to members:

Are we in our organizations sufficiently alert to the stirrings of members, their aspirations, especially their ideal of the self which they hope to attain? Could we be more responsive to these aspirations, more helpful to individuals in becoming what they would like to be, if we thought more of the members than of the organizational goals? I sometimes wonder if some organizations, without realizing it, have accepted the totalitarian principle of using their members as instruments for various purposes or programs which may be praiseworthy and highly desirable.

Frank goes on to develop the thesis that individual capacities must be cultivated at every opportunity in a society that upholds democratic ideals. Volunteer work situations may often represent what teachers refer to as a "learning window" or learning moment," in which a
significant experience can be used as a basis to provide rich learning. Such opportunities should not be wasted.

III. Motivations in volunteering from a lifelong perspective.

Much of the research regarding motivation to volunteer has been conducted from an organizational viewpoint; i.e., volunteers from one or a number of organizations have been asked about their reasons for volunteering for the specific organizations. The results have often been analyzed with respect to relationships with age, gender, education, and employment status. In this project, as we discussed with respondents their life histories of work and volunteering, it appeared to us that this type of approach yields an incomplete understanding of the motivation to volunteer. Our respondents' lives seemed to have very strong identifiable themes of interest, motivation and sources of satisfaction. These themes extended over long periods, often over an entire lifetime. The relative prominence of the themes varied, and the ways in which they were played out often changed and matured. What was striking, however, was the interplay of paid work and volunteering. If a theme was not being played out in one of these two arenas it frequently emerged in the other. Thus, for these people, volunteering seemed to provide the balance for their lives, allowing each person to continue developing his or her themes.

There are many commonalities among the sets of personal themes, and some of these patterns may give insight into why certain people volunteer while other people never do. Some of these volunteers had periods in their lives in which they did not to unpaid work, and we probed why, particularly since many had volunteered since childhood. The responses support the notion of volunteering as a balancing factor in one's life.
This small collection of interviews (17) is insufficient to provide anything more than limited speculation on the precise role of lifelong themes in the determination of volunteering patterns. The results can, however, support the claim that if one wants to understand the motivation to volunteer one needs to look at the interplay of paid and unpaid work in the context of individual lives, rather than looking at a moment in time for a set of volunteers. Some researchers (e.g., Gidron, 1983) have attempted to use established conceptual frameworks for analyzing paid work satisfactions and motivations in order to similarly analyze unpaid work. Although these efforts shed some light, it seems to us that they miss an essential point -- the importance of the relationship between paid and unpaid work satisfactions and motivations. If one were to look at some of the volunteers in this study, one would find they were seeking, and were satisfied with, quite different aspects of volunteering at different points in their lives. These differences had nothing to do with changes in their values, but rather with changes in the character of their employment or some other aspect of their lives. They had not changed, their lives had, and volunteering took up whatever slack there was, to complement the rest of their life components. People have an extent of control over their volunteering that they do not have over their employment. Volunteering also requires a different level of initiative than work does, since it is not required for survival. The character of volunteering is therefore much more revealing about people's needs than is the character of their work. Volunteering supplies whatever it is they feel is missing and is important enough to pursue actively.

Karla Henderson (1984) has speculated that volunteering is closer to leisure than to work, because it is freely chosen, and suggests that this is "another way to think about volunteering."
We support this argument but would extend it to say that one needs to look at all three activity components concurrently -- work, volunteering, and leisure -- to gain more complete insight.

In this section we will not be using written questionnaire results since those do not provide sufficient detail for our purposes. Rather we will be using 15 interviews from volunteers of B, along with the two additional interviews of older adults which were conducted to view some longer life histories.

As a major part of the interview we asked people to sketch their lifelong history of work and of volunteering. We probed why choices and changes were made and what motivations and satisfactions there were at each stage. We also asked them to speculate about the future. We then asked them if they saw any themes in their lives (and, almost invariably, they cited ones that were already evident to the interviewer.) Sometimes we discussed family background because of the presence of a family ethic of volunteering that strongly influenced their lives.

What we will present here is a selection of a few longer (but still quite abbreviated) descriptions followed by some very brief sketches. Some comments are interspersed in the case studies. At the close we will note some common themes and make some other observations. All names are, of course, fictional.

Michael Solomon is a 68-year-old man with a long career of college teaching and administration followed by a second career of consulting for a wide array of nonprofit organizations. His immigrant parents had no formal education but valued education for their children; and he was able, with the help of the GI Bill, to complete a Ph.D. He entered an academic career, finding the people and culture "exotic" relative to the social milieu he had been used to. He had an early interest in social justice, fueled by a family emphasis on fairness. In
his twenties and early thirties he was occupied with graduate work, teaching, and a young family, but later he became quite active in an array of civil rights interests in both school and community. The two major motivations were the satisfactions of being involved in social justice issues beyond what he could affect individually and that of having direct contact with a diverse group of people rather than just the academic elite. As his career progressed, he gradually moved into non-traditional educational programs concerned with access to education on the part of broader categories of people. His need to contact "real people" outside work diminished since work now fulfilled that need. During this period his volunteer work was minimal; the fight for social justice was fully embodied in his work world. In the last decade he has consulted (sometimes pro bono) for a variety of social and community service organizations, attempting to "help them to do their work better." His volunteering now has moved to the micro rather than the macro social level; he attempts to help a wide range of individuals in conflict to resolve their difficulties. In doing so he has a heavy bias toward mediation as an educational process, and is intrigued by the continuing intellectual challenge posed by using this process to better the human condition on an individual level.

Michael's life history is one of the clearer examples of ongoing themes (interests in social justice, intellectual growth, and a culturally diverse social milieu) which are played out in volunteering when work fails to satisfy them. There is also a common maturation aspect which one will be able to note in other histories. People commonly move from volunteering which is concerned with promoting larger causes to a more micro, hands-on type of work, still concerned with similar issues: from a work-globally focus to one which might be characterized as work-locally but still think-globally.
Judith Green is a 38-year-old lawyer who works for a large law firm, representing banks in commercial litigation. She grew up in New York City in a family that fostered socio-political activism; her mother was very politically active and her father was "so proud of her whenever she did good work." She first volunteered as a teenager, teaching reading in Harlem and doing hospital work. In college she taught English to Spanish-speaking children in Washington, D.C. Her first two paid positions were in the Mission district of San Francisco: first teaching ESL in the community college, then in a legal defense organization, advocating for people denied benefits. During this period she did no volunteer work, "except as it slopped over from my job." Convinced that there were too many bad lawyers, she went to law school but afterwards found it difficult to find "socially responsible" legal work and gradually progressed from a general practice to a narrow commercial specialization. During her legal career, she has given seminars on finances and budgeting to low-income women through a women's group she was active in. She also promoted socially responsible investing in the same setting. She is currently involved in the mediation activities of organization B because it provides "grounding," keeping her conscious of what she wants to be and do, since she has otherwise drifted far from community and social activism. (At work she is seen as the "office radical.") She is contemplating a move in her work closer to community, perhaps involving the mediation skills she has gained through volunteering. Her lifelong interest in helping people to learn gives her approach to mediation an educational bias.

In Judith's life we see a period of work which amounts to quasi-volunteering. Since all her themes (community involvement, doing "good work," teaching, multi-culturalism) were
satisfied at the time, she did no volunteering but rather pushed out the boundaries of her work to encompass more time and activities which were integral to the work but not compensated. This pattern was present in many lives.

Elizabeth Gordon is a 38-year-old woman who describes her work as "bureaucrat"; she supervises 40 attorneys (though she herself is not an attorney) in a government agency. She has been an active volunteer all her life in anti-war work, the women's movement, ex-offender concerns, urban planning and neighborhood issues, and nursing home reform advocacy: all directed at social change which remains the overall theme of her efforts. Her work career after college progressed from legal secretary to paralegal, welfare advocate, paralegal trainer, hearing officer, and thence to her current position. Very conscious of changes and patterns, she noted several important aspects of her history. She felt the nature of her work at each point had a tremendous impact on her volunteering. When she was involved in training, for example, it was so consuming in time and attention that she felt she was doing volunteer work all the time and thus did (formal) volunteer work only "for fun" then. She quite deliberately, for her current work, decided to do the "dreaded 9 to 5" in order to free up time to do the things she really cares about. Thus she used work as instrumental to doing volunteering. The only requirement for the work was that it be "at least neutral" relative to her values. The patterns of maturity in volunteering are clear: she has moved from non-skilled to skilled volunteering; from larger issue areas (e.g., war and peace) to local, hands-on issues (neighborhood projects); and from non-discriminating, almost accidental, involvement to a conscious selection of that which best uses her skills and is most likely to have impact. She says she has found out what is rewarding and effective, versus what might be done out of guilt. She requires more intellectual stimulation now,
and is not willing to do work where she is underutilized. She has less patience with bad organizations which profess to do good things. These patterns of maturation seem to be common in highly skilled long-term volunteers.

Linda Roth is a 75-year-old woman with a 63-year span of volunteering history and a 46-year span of working. She was not a volunteer in B; her major volunteer work is now as ombudsman in several nursing homes. (She and the following person were the two extra interviews done in order to include some longer histories.) Linda had a hard childhood; her father died when she was 10 and at 14 she lied about her age in order to work. She began teaching at 18, after two years of college. Except for four years when she withdrew to have children, she continued teaching, moving from elementary school teacher to resource teacher, until she retired at age 60. She also completed her college degree early in this career. Her first volunteer position at age 12 involved reading to and playing with a neighborhood child confined by polio. She did this, she said, because she herself had had a hard childhood and she had always "sympathized with people." Her stepfather was active in church affairs and during her childhood was the major force behind the ouster of a minister who supported the Ku Klux Klan (in West Texas), so that she had a vivid example of acting on principles. She volunteered at age 16 to work with the small children in the church. During her working career, volunteering, when she had time for it, concerned either work-related activities, such as doing home-teaching for some children, or her children (e.g., being a scout leader). When she retired she "missed people" and needed to feel useful, so she taught ESL as a volunteer for several years. The next period of her life was devoted to caring for her husband who was ill. After he died, she became, because of her love of art, a docent in an art gallery, an activity which she continued for years.
until she was physically unable. Six months after her husband died she reached a very low point, largely because she no longer felt useful. She called a crisis line, which some months later wisely recruited her to volunteer, which she did for eight years. She also starting taking art classes, and finally became interested in the ombudsman program. The latter happened because she became outraged over her own experience as a patient in a nursing home, where she was sent after breaking a hip. She signed herself out in a day and became an ombudsman. Her history shows not so much the concurrent interplay of work and volunteering as it does the role of volunteering to replace some satisfactions of work after retirement (and in this case also to respond to some aspects of widowhood). Linda says her greatest needs are to be useful, to be using her skills, and to be involved in work compatible with social justice values. She needs challenge and meaningfulness and has "no time to spin her wheels." She knows she will not be able to drive some day, a necessity for her current volunteering, and so has saved up useful projects that she can do at home.

Harriet Robbins' life is impossible to capture in a page or two. (Her interview extended over five hours.) She is 78 years old and the rich variations of her life reflect one of its basic themes: a willingness, indeed a desire, to be in new situations. From a very impoverished childhood she progressed through a life which included two troubled marriages ending in divorces, an off-and-on education which continues to this day, and jobs ranging from typing manuscripts at home to teaching full-time. Her volunteer experiences fit in the cracks of her life, largely as political action, until she retired from teaching at 60. She then became the driving force behind organizing "seniors," initially as a paid worker but then as a more than full-time volunteer. When asked why she continues to devote such energy to volunteering she replied that
it is a "learning process" and "creative." Her approach is that of a good researcher: she finds out as much as she can from all sources before initiating action, and initiating and leading are what she does. She is not an envelope-stuffer, seeking relief from boredom or needing social contact. She belies many researchers' conclusions that "older volunteers are less likely than younger ones to be interested in rewards dealing with learning and self-development" (Gidron, 1977). Our contrary thesis is that a person who is highly motivated by learning at the age of 10 will still be driven by that same motivation at 70. Harriet's life exhibits other themes that similarly extend over many decades: she is a risk-taker, with a low boredom threshold, a tolerance for being out-of-step with the mainstream, and a great impatience with incompetence. A finely tuned sense of outrage regarding social wrongs has driven her work, her volunteering and indeed her entire life. She started work at the age of ten, and even when drastic financial need squeezed out most other motivators, she found ways other than work or volunteering in which to express her values. At one time for example, she used symbolic dress -- the wearing of cotton stockings -- to display her support for a cause she felt just. Illness has forced Harriet to curtail the current level of her activities but she now has a "senior scholar" grant. Characteristically, through the grant she is pursuing both learning and activism, as she does background research for the formation of a coalition which will work to improve nursing homes.

The following characterizations of volunteer's lives will further illustrate the points which emerged above.

• A 42-year-old lawyer worked for a number of years in Legal Aid. As he was doing so he became "involved in a lot of community work" but saw it as simply extra time spent on the job, because it was work-related. When he later moved into private practice, he
became more involved in volunteer mediation services, in order to give to the community and to "maintain a reality base" through contact with people of a broader spectrum than he sees in his current work.

- A 34-year-old labor-management lawyer, whose first career was as a professional musician, volunteers in a number of areas. She says it is because her work is not particularly socially worthy, and that volunteering therefore "justifies" her existence.

- A 48-year-old man exhibits in his life a set of common patterns: a low tolerance for lack of action, risk-taking, and a desire to learn and teach. His many-faceted career frequently exhibits work that is quasi-volunteer. During times when his work was more conventional, his volunteer activities multiplied. At several points he did not volunteer at all, and when queried about this he responded, "I was doing [at work] what I wanted to do."

- A 37-year-old production manager has had a multitude of volunteer activities. In contemplating her future, she says she will do this (paid) work until she gets out of debt, then take a cut in salary to do what she really want to do: teach. Given the way she envisions teaching, there is no doubt that it will become quasi-volunteering.

- A 42-year-old man exhibits the common pattern of an absence of volunteering during a ten-year period when his work with the disabled did not conform to nine-to-five boundaries but spilled over into various community-based activities related to but not required by the job. When he moved into other work with more definite boundaries, he developed several volunteer roles which satisfied his life themes of cultural diversity, experimenting with social service systems, and contribution to community health.

In summary, these life histories lead to the following hypotheses:
1. Lifelong themes of interest, motivation, and sources of satisfaction can be identified in individuals' histories. These themes are established early and persist through late life years.

2. The ways in which these themes are manifested tend to mature from early activities directed to larger, more globally framed causes to ones that are more focused, more local, with more evident impact (though perhaps still contributing to larger causes).

3. Volunteer activities provide the mechanism to satisfy one's themes when they are not being, or cannot be, satisfied in paid work. Work that is satisfying tends to push out boundaries and become quasi-volunteer in nature.

The themes exhibited by this group of volunteers seem to have many commonalities, but this is an unusual group in its level of education and general sophistication. They may not, therefore, be typical of volunteers in this regard. There is no reason to believe, however, that the above hypotheses should be true only for this unusual group.

Adult development has gained attention as a field of study in recent years. Most of the major conceptual frameworks have been posited in the form of ages, cycles, stages, or periods. Although these frameworks are helpful in understanding how and why adults change and develop, what may be missing is a concurrent scrutiny of how and why adults remain the same. That is, what is it in people's lives that persists, though it may be expressed in different ways, throughout all of life's stages of development? Erikson (1950, 1958, 1969) used the term "life course" to encompass the engagement of self with the world. Within this overarching concept, Levinson (1986) designates "life structure" as the pattern or design of a person's life at a given time, and
concludes that marriage-family and occupation are the central components of the life structure. For each of the people we interviewed, a small number of life themes seemed the most powerful determinants of the life course, at least as it is revealed in paid and unpaid work. Although developmental aspects were apparent in how these themes were manifested, they were of minor importance with regard to the overall theme.

Further examination of concurrent work and volunteering histories may be fruitful, therefore, in two respects. Such research may shed more light on motivation and satisfaction in both spheres, and it may also contribute to the understanding of adult development.
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1982  

Levinson, Daniel J.  
1986  

Miller, Harlan B.  
1982  

Phillips, Michael  
1982  

Smith, David Horton  
1982  

Whitmore, Elizabeth; Sappington III, Harry W.; Compton, J. Lin; Green, Jennifer C.  
1988  
Prospective Volunteer Survey

This survey is part of a research project which is trying to find out why people volunteer, why they choose a particular volunteer situation and what happens to them as a result.

We're asking you to fill out this questionnaire, and about a year from now we'd like to survey you to find out how your ideas and attitudes might have changed.

All of this information will be confidential. No names will be released on any research results. We ask you to give us your name so that we can keep track of who has filled out the questionnaire and also so that we can match what you think now with what you might think later.

Thank you for your help.

1. Name ___________________________ Male 15 Female 10

2. Number of years you have lived
   in the San Francisco Bay Area MEDIAN 20 YRS
   in your neighborhood MEDIAN 8 YRS.

3. Are you a homeowner or renter? Check which:
   Homeowner 11 Renter 14

4. Occupation PROFESSIONAL/MET: 22 STUDENT/HOUSEWIFE: 3

5. Age MEDIAN 44 (RANGE 23-58)

6. Race. Check which:
   Black 1
   White 22
   Asian
   Other 2

7. Approximate family income. Check one:
   under 10,000 0
   10,000 - 20,000 2
   20,000 - 30,000 6
   30,000 - 40,000 2
   40,000 - 50,000 8
   over 50,000 7

8. Family status. Check which: single 46% married 39% divorced 20% separated 4%

9. Do you have any children? Yes 14 No 11

10. Check the highest education you've had:
    elementary school___
    some high school___
    high school diploma___
    some college___
    associate degree 1
    bachelor's degree 16
    some graduate work 2
    graduate degree 15
11. About how many children in your neighborhood do you know by name?
   ________ 0 4 7-10 3
   1-3 8
   4-6 3
   >10 1

12. In the past two weeks, about how many times have you gone to a neighbor's house to visit?
   ________ 0 10 4-6 2
   1-3 11 7-10 6
   NA 8

13. In the last year, about how many times have you gotten together with friends or neighbors to talk about neighborhood problems?
   ________ 0 8
   1-3 7 4-6 4 7-10 3
   >10 3

14. About how many of your neighbors do you know well enough to ask them a favor?
   ________ 0 3
   4-6 8
   >10 2
   1-3 10 7-10 2

15. How much do you feel a part of your neighborhood? Check one:
   very much a part 3
   pretty much 10
   only somewhat 11
   not at all 1

16. How well do you feel you know your neighborhood? Check one:
   very well 7
   pretty well 6
   only somewhat 11
   not at all 1

17. Compared to other neighborhoods in the Bay Area, how would you rate your neighborhood as a place to live? Check on the scale below where you think it fits. (1 = worse than most other neighborhoods; 3 = about the same; 5 = much better)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. In the past year how many times have you contacted the police because of a problem?
   ________ 0: 12
   2: 5
   1: 7
   3: 1

19. How satisfied were you with the results? Check one:
   very satisfied 7
   pretty satisfied 5
   only somewhat 1
   not at all 1

20. Have you ever been in court? Yes 20
    No 5

21. How satisfied were you with the experience? Check one:
   very satisfied 5
   pretty satisfied 4
   only somewhat 9
   not at all 2
22. Following is a list of statements. For each one please rate whether you agree with it or not.

1 = agree strongly
2 = agree somewhat
3 = disagree somewhat
4 = disagree strongly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having people with different cultures in a neighborhood makes it a more attractive place to live.</td>
<td>20 4 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police can't really do much to stop crime.</td>
<td>1 8 11 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My neighborhood has changed for the better in the past five years.</td>
<td>2 14 5 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my neighborhood it's pretty easy to tell a stranger from somebody who lives there.</td>
<td>7 9 5 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The justice system works pretty well in most cases.</td>
<td>4 10 7 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody ought to do something to improve his/her community.</td>
<td>19 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. How did you find out about [ ]? Check as many as apply:

I was a disputant 1
From a friend 4
Contact by [ ] 1
From a flyer or announcement 1
TV, newspaper or radio 3
Other (Please specify) 15

24. What was your most important reason for being interested in [ ]?

25. Any other reasons? Please list them.
26. Why might be valuable for you?

27. For your community?

28. Do you belong to any neighborhood or community organizations? (Such as churches, block clubs, etc.) Yes/ No/ NA

29. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is low and 5 high, how active would you say you are in your community? (state number)

1: 6 2: 5 3: 4 4: 3 5: 1

30. If you decide to volunteer for , how much time do you expect to spend per month? 2 hours or less 3 to 6 hours 7 to 10 hours more than 10 hours (How many?)

31. Following is a list of skills. People can learn these skills in different ways. Please rate yourself on how well you do each of these. 1 = not skilled; 5 = highly skilled or expert; 2, 3, and 4 are in between. If you've had any formal training, also check the last column opposite the item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>not skilled</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>formal trn'g.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading a group discussion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening carefully to people (a good listener)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing a situation or problem.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volunteer Survey

This survey is part of a research project that is trying to find out more about volunteers and volunteerism. The project is being funded by The Institute for Nonprofit Organization Management at the University of San Francisco.

All of this information will be confidential. No names will be released on any research results. We ask you to give us your name so that we can keep track of who has returned the questionnaire.

If you have any questions, please call:

Nancy Hanawi at 655-8812.

Thank you for your help.

PLEASE ENTER THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Name:______________________________________________

Address:____________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Telephone:__________________________________________
1. When did you begin to volunteer for [ ]? Year: 1983-86 11

2. Check the choice below which best describes your current status in [ ].

   18 I am an active volunteer
   5 I was active but am now temporarily inactive. (Please skip to question 4.)
   1 I am no longer a volunteer at [ ] (a former volunteer). (Please skip to question 4.)

3. For active members only:

   a) Over the last year, approximately how many hours per month, on average, have you spent in activities related to [ ]?

      MEAN 4 hours (average) per month
      (RANGE 0-14)

   b) Over the last year, approximately how many cases (total) have you handled? _______ cases for the year. MEDIAN 5
      MEAN 6 (RANGE 0-21,

   c) On this scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is very low, and 5 is very high) CIRCLE the number that best indicates your current level of involvement with [ ]

      1 2 3 4 5
      very low 3 very high

   d) We would like you to compare your current level of involvement in [ ] in several ways:

      CHECK ONE FOR EACH QUESTION:

      MORE | LESS | ABOUT SAME

      Is it more or less than you expected it would be when you joined? 6 12 4
      Is it more or less than your current involvement with other organizations? 8 12 4
      Is it more or less than you would like it to be? 2 15 7
      Is your involvement now more or less than you think it will be in the future? 4 9 11
4. a) I would like to know why you decided to volunteer for

If you can recall how you felt at that time, please put a check (✓) in column A on all the reasons why you volunteered, and put a * on the most important one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th># #</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th># #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. For learning and self-development</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To use and refine the skills I already have</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Because of commitment to ADR generally</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Because it helps promote peace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Because of dissatisfaction with the legal system</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To give something to the community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To help individuals with problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To meet people with similar interests</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Because it might be useful in my current or future career</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Because the work is challenging and interesting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Other? Specify:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Now in column B, if you are still a volunteer, please put a check on all the reasons why you stay a volunteer, and a * on the most important one.

5. If you are not still a volunteer, please tell me when you left (year: ______) and why.

6. a) What is (or was) the most satisfying thing for you about volunteering?
b) What is (or was) the least satisfying - or most frustrating - about volunteering?

7. How valuable has volunteering been for you personally? CHECK ONE:

   1. very valuable  
   2. valuable  
   3. not valuable  

   13  2  NA or other 2

8. What has happened to your personally as a result of your experience in volunteering? Please be as specific as you can. (I realize this is a difficult question, but it is an important one.)
9. Following is a list of skills. People can learn these skills in different ways. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 = not skilled and 5 = highly skilled or expert), please rate yourself on each of the skills listed below. If your skill has improved through volunteering at _, please check the last column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>not skilled</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>improved since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading a group discussion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with people</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing a situation or problem</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling conflict in my own life</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. a) Do you now have a job where mediation is an important part of the work?
   1. Yes. What kind of job? _________________________________
   2. No

   b) If no, do you anticipate that you will in the future have a job or career in which mediation is a major part of the work?
   1. Yes. What kind of job? _________________________________
   2. No
11. I would like to know something about your volunteering history, and how it relates to your work history (if it does). Could you outline for me below what your major volunteer efforts have been at various times of your life, and what your work was at that time. (For those of you who will be interviewed, we can pursue this more at that time.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Volunteer work</th>
<th>Paid work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my 20's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my 30's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my 40's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my 50's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my 60's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. As you look back at the history of volunteering you just outlined, please think about the following questions and make any comment relative to them that occurs to you:

a) Were your motivations and satisfactions pretty much the same throughout, no matter what you were doing? Or did they change?

b) Were there any relationships between your paid work and its satisfactions, and your volunteer work and its satisfactions?

c) Do you see any changes in the future in what you'll be doing and why?

Note: It is often difficult to obtain or give full answers in a written questionnaire which probes such broad areas. If you are not being interviewed, and I want to pursue in a little more depth these last few questions, may I call you for a few minutes of your time on the phone?

If yes - phone #____________________
best time:____________________
This section will provide me with some background about you which will be useful in analyzing the data.

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Number of years you have lived
   in the San Francisco Bay Area  ☑ median 20
   in your neighborhood  ☑ median 5

3. Are you a homeowner or renter? Check which:
   Homeowner ☐ Renter ☐

4. Occupation  ☐ PROF'L/ MGT: 20
   25-29 3  30-39 5  40-49 5  50-59 1

5. Age  ☐ 30-34 1  40-44 5  50-54 2  60-64 0

6. Race. Check which: Black ☐ White 86% ☐
   Asian ☐ Other ☐

7. Approximate family income. Check one:
   under 10,000 ☐ 30,000 - 40,000 ☐
   10,000 - 20,000 ☐ 40,000 - 50,000 ☐
   20,000 - 30,000 ☐ over 50,000 ☐

   57%

8. Family status. Check which: single 26% married 61% divorced 13%
   separated ☐

9. Do you have any children? Yes 61% ☐ No ☐

10. Check the highest education you've had.
    elementary school ☐ associate degree 8%
    some high school ☐ bachelor's degree 28%
    high school diploma ☐ some graduate work 12%
    some college ☐ graduate degree 52%
This last section of the questionnaire is for information rather than for my research, and this page will be given to the organization to help them plan. (Please omit this page if you are a former volunteer.)

1. Please check whether you are interested in working with in any of the following areas:
   - Fund-raising
   - Newsletter
   - Lobbying/advocacy
   - Public relations
   - Organizing social events
   - Other (Specify: __________________________)

   If you check any of these, please note your name here so you can be contacted in the future: __________________________

2. In what areas would you like to see offer more training?

   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

3. a) Would you like to have more opportunities to get together with other volunteers?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe

   b) If you answered yes to Part a, what kinds of events would you like to see, and how often?

Thank You!