



Volunteerism and Community Engagement in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Short History

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VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR: A SHORT HISTORY

National studies and research carried out by the Community Services Council NL indicates that many organizations need more volunteers for all sorts of work (to serve on boards and committees, for short-term activities, for work on a regular basis, with the right skills) and have trouble recruiting and retaining volunteers. At the same time, many organizations are not sufficiently focused on the skills needed internally to accommodate volunteers and to make their experiences satisfactory.

Many community groups do not give top priority to building strong volunteer programs and coordinating volunteers. Many do not have policies to guide their programming nor a designated person to coordinate and manage volunteers, do not provide written descriptions of volunteer duties, and do not provide orientation, training or feedback sessions for volunteers. Organizations are often not good at promoting their role in the community or their volunteer opportunities, do not know how to reach out to new people, and do not have the resources to provide the necessary supports to volunteers or reimburse them for actual costs of volunteering.

Creating public awareness around volunteering, and encouraging new people to volunteer, has to go hand in hand with capacity-building within community organizations, perhaps taking a regional approach (clusters of organizations across clusters of communities). Organizations need to develop strategies to enable them to recruit, accommodate, manage and retain volunteers.

Historical Perspective

There is a long history of volunteerism, or “contributing” and “giving back” to community, in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), across many sub-sectors of the voluntary, nonprofit sector. Traditionally, volunteers, especially women, performed many vital social services that later were assumed by governments or other paid professionals. There have been several major shifts from the early 20th century to the present:

- charitable, paternalistic approach →
- advocacy, fight for social justice →
- consumer involvement and consumer-driven organizations →
- networks and coalitions →
- more consultative and collaborative relationship with government

The sector has always been and still is overburdened and under-funded.

Many of the organizations that existed 100 years ago are still active (see Appendix A). Today there is greater gender equality, more paid staff and trained professionals. In the early days, men filled most of any paid positions, while women, often investing many hours per week, made up a large part of the volunteer force. Today, 43% of men aged 15 years and over in NL volunteer, and 50% of women, with men contributing more volunteer hours on average. Women fill many

more of the paid positions (estimated 76% across Canada). Frequently, these positions are insecure, poorly remunerated for the level of education, experience and commitment required, and often without employee benefits such as pension and health plans.

Community Service Council and Social Planning

In 1976, the Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC) was established by a group of citizens, with federal funding and provincial government support, as a social planning, research and development council. Its purposes included, inter alia:

- To collect and distribute information concerning social services and issues in the community
- To promote and facilitate cooperation and liaison within the voluntary sector, and between the sector and federal, provincial and municipal governments by stimulating interaction
- To facilitate citizen participation in the decision-making process with respect to social policy
- To provide a forum for individuals and groups to discuss their needs, interests, aims and objectives and to assist them in stimulating and implementing social change (CSC charitable incorporating objectives, 1976)

This was the beginning of the effort on the part of CSC to promote and gain recognition of the voluntary sector as a sector.

The Community Services Council NL, in its first decade, concentrated on the fragmentation of organizations as well as a number of urgent social issues such as housing, building accessibility, mental health services and training for early childhood educators, to name a few. In 1977, CSC compiled the first comprehensive directory of services, first for the St. John's region and later for the province. CSC also established a Volunteer Centre, which focused attention squarely on volunteers. The Centre offered assistance to groups to develop volunteer programs and made referrals to help match prospective volunteers with organizational needs.

Empowerment and Responsibility

In the 1970s, the federal government invested money in non-governmental agencies across the country to carry out service work. Many nonprofits at their inception were supported by the federal or provincial government to identify and address community needs. During this time a more open-minded approach and a greater acceptance of disabilities emerged, with a concomitant move from institutionalization to community living, and recognition of a need for improved community-based services. Consumers and consumer advocates were making their voices heard, helping to shape and take some control over programs and service delivery. Memorial University's Extension Services, through field workers and innovative use of technology, worked with coalitions of organizations and residents, taking a community development approach to problem solving and community revitalization. The Extension Film Unit pioneered an internationally acclaimed technique of community involvement known as the Fogo Process.

People were becoming engaged in their communities in many ways that were different from eras past, particularly in leadership roles. For example:

- In the 1970s many communities in NL became incorporated as municipal governments, creating new governance structures that relied mainly on volunteers in elected positions. Today, some municipalities are having difficulties finding enough people to run for council.
- In the 1970s, 56 regional development associations were formed, with provincial financing, in support of grassroots rural development; these also required citizen involvement in more formalized structures.
- Government-created bodies such as health, hospital and school boards, and numerous government advisory committees at federal, provincial and municipal levels draw upon community-minded volunteers. We hear that this sometimes has a negative impact on local groups, as key individuals are attracted away.
- Harbour Authorities (established by DFO), Fire Departments (some now include women), and Search and Rescue operations almost all depend on the work of volunteers.
- In 1994, 20 Regional Economic Development zone boards were set up (jointly by the federal and provincial governments to focus on economic development); here again, community volunteers play a lead role in shaping development in their regions.

Recognition as a Sector

In 1993, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (GNL) announced its intention to create a Strategic Social Plan (SSP), as a complement to its Strategic Economic Plan released in 1992, just prior to the declaration of the cod moratorium. The first step towards an SSP was to create an internal government committee, chaired by the Premier's Chief of Staff and made up of senior officials from numerous "social" departments and agencies, including the Economic Recovery Commission. A major breakthrough was the integration of the voluntary sector into this process. Penelope Rowe, CEO of CSC, was invited to the table to represent the voluntary sector. This marked a significant shift within government in two ways:

- Government was talking about integrated, cross-departmental approaches to social policy development, and
- Government was for the first time having a relationship with the voluntary sector as a sector, whereas previously it dealt with organizations one-on-one.

In 1996, a consultation paper was released to the public. This was a key document because it contained a chapter on the voluntary sector, alongside chapters on social services, health, education, municipal services, employment, justice and so forth. A Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) was formed, made up of representatives of non-governmental organizations, regional boards and academia, with Penelope Rowe seconded as full-time Chair. SPAC was tasked with convening a public consultation process, writing a report and making

recommendations. Through written submissions and 100 meetings held province-wide, SPAC heard from 1500 people. SPAC recorded the issues and proposed to government a new framework for social development based on investing in people by integrating social and economic development initiatives and strengthening individual, family and community resources. A significant portion of people's commentary and the final report highlighted matters important to the voluntary sector. This was perhaps the first major public process which recognized the sector as an entity, gave voice to its potential role and called for a stronger relationship with government.

After due deliberation and many iterations, *People, Partners and Prosperity, A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador* (SSP), was released in 1998. The SSP promoted the role of the voluntary sector in collaborative governance and service delivery. To our knowledge this was the first time the sector was so positioned as a key element.

In 2004-05, GNL dismantled the SSP implementation structure and set up the Rural Secretariat to build on the strengths of the SSP. Nine Regional Councils have been established, comprised of individuals from various backgrounds who serve as volunteers. They are tasked with developing a 20-year vision for their region and providing advice to government through a Provincial Council. This represents another major community engagement role for citizens.

Size and Scope of the NL Voluntary Sector

The size and scope of the voluntary sector began to emerge with the publication by CSC of directories of social service and voluntary organizations in the province. The proliferation of nonprofits has continued since the 1970s, with Government itself sometimes initiating an organization or network. The Community Youth Network, for example, is expanding to new sites annually, with provincial support. Both federal and provincial governments fund Family Resource Centres, and these are also reaching out to more communities. Crime Prevention Committees can be found across the province, and there are Wellness Coalitions in several regions.

By 2010, CSC had a database listing of 6000+ nonprofits, charities and informal community groups in NL, about 1050 of which were federally registered charitable organizations and 2100 provincially incorporated nonprofits (with some overlap). Statistics on these organizations (sub-sector categories, distribution across regions of the province, etc.) can be found in Attachment #1. A few other noteworthy points:

- Churches and faith groups still play an important community role, and often team up or partner with other nonprofits to provide services.
- There are sports organizations all over the province, and recreation committees in most, if not all, communities, usually connected to the Town or Local Service District.
- Other types of groups that abound are: school councils, organizations that coordinate supported employment initiatives, heritage committees and museums, literacy groups, theatre

troupes, other arts and culture groups, festivals, and groups that provide health services, carry out fundraising, and advocate around myriad illnesses and disabilities.

- Community or social enterprise activity is growing (e.g., Rising Tide Theatre, Moulder of Dreams, Barbour Living Heritage Village, St. Anthony Basin Resources, Inc., Evergreen Environmental Corporation.) Profits are returned for community benefit, either back into the organization or other community projects. More organizations are developing an appetite for this type of innovative approach. CSC is playing an active role in promoting the concept and working with groups to help them with business planning. Since 2004, Community Business Development Corporations have been able and more willing to consider and provide financing to community enterprises.

Strengthening the Voluntary Sector

Between 1998 and 2005, four CSC publications highlighted voluntary sector issues and put forward recommendations for strengthening the sector and its role in regional development:

- In 1998, CSC and ACOA released *Fostering a Climate for Growth and Development: The Report of the Roundtable on the Role of the Third Sector and the Social Economy in Regional Development in Atlantic Canada*.
- In 1999, on the heels of the release of the Strategic Social Plan, CSC published *Values Added: The Voluntary Community-Based Sector in Newfoundland and Labrador – A Delineation Study of and Recommended Action Plans for a Flourishing Voluntary Community-Based Sector in Newfoundland and Labrador*.
- In 2004, *The Nonprofit Sector as a Force for Sustainability and Renewal in Newfoundland and Labrador* was submitted in concert with numerous community groups to the Province's Program review.
- In 2005, the seminal report, *The Leadership Gap: Perception or Reality*, was released.

CSC continues to research, promote, support and strengthen the voluntary sector and make recommendations to government for capacity building and growth. In 2002, CSC launched the groundbreaking www.enVision.ca, now www.communitysector.nl.ca. This site houses substantial information of value to the sector about volunteer management and human resource issues, research publications, current news highlights, employment opportunities, an interactive calendar of events, and a special open source community bulletin board where organizations can post notices, events and their volunteer needs and individuals can browse for volunteer opportunities. Organizations could also create a simple website for their own group, hosted on enVision. CSC has taken the lead on several other projects to build IT capacity within sector organizations and among volunteers and staff of nonprofits across NL and in Nova Scotia, including arranging the distribution of 500+ computers through VolNet.

The appointment of a Minister responsible for the Volunteer, Nonprofit sector in 2007 and the creation of the Voluntary, Nonprofit Secretariat within Executive Council in 2008 are clear signs of government's recognition of the value of the sector, the role it plays, and the contribution it makes to the quality of life in communities. Of particular interest is that numerous GNL strategies and action plans (e.g., Wellness, Healthy Ageing, Violence Prevention, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Recreation and Sport, Culture, Rural Secretariat, INTRD and Poverty Reduction Strategy) include a strong role for nonprofits, and statements on the need for volunteers. This highlights the urgency of strengthening volunteer recruitment and management programs.

Challenges Faced by Organizations

Many organizations are not fully ready to ensure a good experience for volunteers. They may need to more specifically focus on issues such as clearly outlined responsibilities and choices for volunteers, flexible time slots, programs for orientation and training, understanding and supports for volunteers with special needs, resources to reimburse the costs of volunteering, and human resources for effective volunteer management.

The Community Contribution Component of Career Development 2201 (high schools), initiated in mid-2000s, is intended to encourage students to get involved. While almost all students in NL schools manage to fulfil the 30-hour community contribution requirement, many do so reluctantly. Stronger connections between the schools and community groups, and increased readiness on the part of both organizations and students, could help to enhance this program.

In 2008, CSC hosted a daylong event with leaders from about 50 nonprofit groups. The goal was to consider the benefits and challenges of forming a provincial voluntary sector network. The discussion paper prepared for this event, which was based on extensive CSC and national research, the dialogue at the event, and follow-up telephone interviews with other organizations produced the following list of issues that present challenges for the voluntary sector in Newfoundland and Labrador today:

Financial issues

- Financial instability and sustainability of organizations; makes planning for the future virtually impossible
- Competition for funding
- Pressure to fundraise
- Demand for greater accountability
- Financial management and accounting skills
- Legal liability, risk management and high costs of insurance
- Cost of volunteer programs (i.e. coordinating and managing)

Human resource issues (paid staff and volunteers)

- Employee turnover
- Training opportunities for staff, boards and volunteers
- Employee salaries and benefits such as health and pension plans
- Leadership development and succession planning

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- Increasing demand on volunteers and volunteer burnout
 - Volunteers, especially in rural areas, sometimes feel abused by criticism from non-volunteers
 - Competition for volunteers and problems engaging youth
 - Changing demographics and decreased citizen involvement
 - Coordinating and managing volunteers
 - High cost of volunteering (e.g., transportation and the expectation to contribute financially)

General voluntary sector issues

- Lack of recognition and appreciation for the voluntary sector
- Lack of respect for organizations and volunteers in some positions
- Grant application procedures are onerous, and government often reduces funding requests
- Collaboration with the federal and provincial governments, municipalities, foundations, private sector and the public is essential
- Insurance costs remain high even with the tax eliminated
- Government funding to organizations often makes it difficult to speak out, as organizations may fear their funding could be in jeopardy
- Communications, accessing information, sharing resources and best practices

Succession planning or dying a natural death!

Some organizations continue to operate in very traditional ways and many may have had the same leaders for decades, do not wish or know how to change, or may not want to give up control. This may be unwelcoming to new recruits. It also points out the need for succession planning and relinquishing of responsibility. In the opinion of CSC, overcoming these challenges will require dedicated human resources for facilitation and capacity-building.

Working with government

Voluntary sector leaders emphasize the importance of Government keeping its promise to improve the grants process and streamline funding. Sector representatives also stress the necessity for communication across the sector and across government departments on horizontal policy development. Recognition of the value of the sector, and Government's commitment to promote the sector, listen to, and work with the sector, are positive indicators that resources may become available to move towards the resolution of some of the challenges facing nonprofit organizations and community groups.

Volunteerism

According to Statistics Canada studies, Newfoundland and Labrador's volunteer participation rate consistently ranks near the bottom compared to other provinces. Still, close to half of the adult population (46.5% of people aged 15+) volunteers for nonprofit organizations, slightly above the overall Canadian rate of 46%. The 15-24 years age group rates highest, as is true across the country, at 66%. Some of this may be attributed to mandatory community contribution in high school, service learning and career development programs. Many youth recognize that volunteering is required to qualify for some post-secondary scholarships and entry into certain programs. It has also been demonstrated that if youth start volunteering early in life and have good experiences, they will likely continue to be involved and take on greater leadership roles.

The lowest participation rates of volunteering in NL are among the 65+ age group (32%) and the 25-34 years age group (40.6%). The 55-64 years age group volunteers at the rate of 43% and the 35-44 years age group at a rate of 52%. Considering the ageing population and the fact that from age 55, people are retiring from employment, there may be some untapped potential in the older age groups. The group aged 25-34 may be just starting their careers and families, requiring a different approach if they are to become involved.

Many research documents are available on themes connected to volunteerism in Canada. Most of the work is community-based, often with academic input. From much of it, practical resources (best practices, manuals, workbooks, checklists) have been developed. The research looks mainly at current volunteers, their motivations, the benefits of volunteering and activities they are involved with. This may be very useful in a recruitment campaign, but it is essential also to look at barriers to volunteering and why people do not volunteer. Solutions may lie in building the capacity of nonprofit organizations to plan and manage more inclusive recruitment campaigns and volunteer programs.

There are many reports on particular population groups. Most motivations, benefits and barriers are common to all, but some issues apply more to certain groups. The points below have been compiled from a variety of sources, including local CSC research and research from across the country conducted during the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (2002-2007). A complete bibliography can be found at the end of this paper. A list of points relevant to youth, new Canadian and other specific groups is attached in Appendix B.

Impediments to Volunteering

There are numerous reasons that may contribute to a person's not volunteering, including some actual barriers to volunteering. These include:

- Time, especially for long-term commitment
- Gave money instead of time
- Have not been asked
- Health problems
- Lack of interest
- Do not know how to become involved
- Expenses such as transportation and child care, and potential expenses (meals, tickets, etc.)
- Dissatisfied with previous experience
- Responsibilities of work and family
- Lack of confidence in skills
- Feel unwelcome because of age, income, disability, other special needs
- Not enough promotion of organizations and volunteer opportunities
- Hard for new people to get involved (old guard, same people run many organizations)
- Insurance and liability issues
- Volunteers not appreciated
- Lack of training for volunteers
- Peer pressure / not cool (youth)

- Generation gap (youth)

If volunteers have a negative experience, they may walk away from the particular organization, and possibly never want to volunteer again. On the other hand, a good experience may lead to a continuation of volunteering and the assumption of greater leadership roles.

Retaining Volunteers

Once volunteers have been recruited, organizations can do many things to increase the chances that the volunteers will stay with the organization. Factors that influence people to stay include:

- Organizational infrastructure (well-organized, someone responsible for volunteer coordination and management)
- Appreciation and respect
- Meaningful and varied experiences
- Good communication
- Training
- Social support
- Tangibles / costs / perks
- Flexibility
- Performance reviews

Hindering Volunteers

A number of factors have been cited as hindrances to volunteers:

- Lack of resources within organizations (financial, human, training, information)
- Organizational politics
- Problems with conflict management
- Inadequate communication
- Lack of clarity of roles
- Lack of flexibility
- Too many rules

These will lead to bad experiences, which will likely mean the loss of volunteers and possibly damage the organization's reputation in the community.

Motivations for Volunteering

The common motivations for volunteering are:

- Give back / contribute to the community / help others
- Use skills and experiences
- Personally affected by the cause
- Explore strengths
- Network / meet people
- Friends volunteered

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- Improve job opportunities
 - Fulfill religious obligations or beliefs

It is interesting to note that people who attend church regularly (on a weekly basis) have a higher rate of volunteering.

Health benefits

A growing body of research in the USA and Canada indicates that volunteering provides individual health benefits. Volunteering has been linked with:

- Greater longevity
- Higher functional ability
- Lower rates of depression later in life
- Sense of purpose, self worth and accomplishment
- Lower incidence of heart disease

Those who devote a considerable amount of time (100+ hours / year) are most likely to exhibit positive health outcomes.

The Future of Volunteerism

Engaging all citizens

Community-oriented and collaborative strategies aim to improve the quality of life for everyone. Voluntarism is not just “helping the needy”, but helping everyone in the community (including oneself) and helping the community itself to thrive. This philosophy, if implemented inclusively, levels the playing field and helps puts everyone on an equal footing. The Vibrant Communities approach to poverty reduction, for example, which includes nonprofit organizations, government, the private sector and people living on low income, has proven successful in urban areas across the country, including St. John’s, NL.

Those with special needs

One advantage of today’s consumer-driven approach is that potential volunteers with special needs may initially be recruited to work within the organizations that serve their particular needs. Building self esteem in a familiar environment is a stepping stone to exploring interests, developing skills, taking on a greater leadership role and moving with confidence into new situations. Supported volunteerism, like supported employment programs, may be required to encourage engagement in some cases.

Place-based models for collaboration and joint recruitment

While it is true in theory that everyone can volunteer, everyone can make a difference, and everyone can help make their community a better place, buy-in from the voluntary sector and

preparation on the part of organizations is required to enable an inclusive approach. Community-based and area-wide cooperation and coordination may be an efficient and effective way to achieve organizational capacity-building and improved volunteer recruitment, management, and retention. Area-based provision of resources and support (e.g., Cabot Loop and Burin Peninsula Clusters Pilot Projects, led by the CSC with support from GNL) is one emerging model.

Investment in community and quality of life

Voluntary organizations have often been seen as peripheral to mainstream activity, with social undertakings viewed as secondary to economic ones. The voluntary sector is sometimes perceived as a “drain” on other sectors. Happily, these notions are changing, and there is a growing awareness of the sector’s contribution to GDP, employment creation, health and well-being. Support for the sector and volunteerism is now better understood as a strategic “investment”.

Creating connections

Repeatedly, we still hear from organizations that they work in isolation of each other. Even in small communities there is an astounding lack of knowledge about and amongst the groups and their services. There will be value added in moving from just a collection of individual organizations to the reality of a sector as whole, with regional networks and dedicated resources.

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Appendix A

Organizations active in the first half of the 1900s included:

- Churches and church auxiliaries, Loyal Orange Lodge, Benevolent Irish Society
- Many international organizations, e.g., YMCA, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Red Cross
- Grenfell Mission / International Grenfell Association (late 19th century)
- 1914: Women's Patriotic Association established for the war effort (Lady Davidson); later became the Child Welfare Committee, then the Child Welfare Association (1920s)
- 1920s: NONIA established (Lady Harris, Lady Allardyce) to market knitted and woven goods from the outports in the capital, to pay for nurses in rural areas and pay knitters
- Rotary St. John's (1921, male only); first community service club in NL; helped establish many other community groups; women welcomed late 20th century
- NF Adult Education Association (1929), which promoted living off the land
- Jubilee Guilds (1935) – later Women's Institutes – province-wide, non-sectarian; started by Lady Anderson; Anna Templeton was a field worker and then Organizing Secretary
- Library boards (from 1935)
- Lions (1917 internationally) and Lionettes; Kinsmen (1939 St. John's) and Kinettes
- Legion (1926 nationally) and Ladies' Auxiliary
- NF Tuberculosis Association (formed 1944) collaborated with government for prevention and treatment of TB (See Godfrey, S.); this type of collaboration was not common at the time
- 1955: Vera Perlin and parents formed the Newfoundland Association for the Help of Retarded Children; 1959 opened Vera Perlin School
- 1956: Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living set up

Appendix B

Motivations, benefits, barriers and retention strategies

Information on why people volunteer and the benefits they see in volunteering, as well as particular barriers or supports that pertain to certain population groups, can be very useful in the planning of a volunteer recruitment campaign, especially in a campaign to target specific groups. Information on motivations, benefits, barriers and retention strategies gleaned from the literature on core volunteers, youth, new Canadians, low-income volunteers and employee volunteerism is summarized here in point form.

Core Volunteers

The reality is that 25% of volunteers do about 75% of the work. Viewed another way, we can say that 7% of the adult population (15 years and older) accounts for 75% of volunteer effort in Canada! Strong motivations for core volunteers, aside from the usual ones of giving back to their community, helping others and making connections with others, are the following:

- Professional connection to the organization
- Personal connection to the organization
- Passion for the cause

Youth

Motivations for Youth

- Personal satisfaction
- Give back to community / make a difference / help others
- Relevance / causes they believe in
- Personal development
- Enhance employment opportunities
- Develop skills / get experience
- Build resumes
- Explore strengths / share skills, ideas, enthusiasm, energy
- Friends volunteer
- Fun – meet people, socialize, participate in events
- Something to do / a change

Retaining Youth

- Authentic and hands-on
- Achievable goals / see results of actions / tangible benefits
- Flexibility
- Orientation / training
- Learning and leadership opportunities
- Supervision

-
- Respect, appreciation, acknowledgement
 - Appropriate responsibility

New Canadians

Motivations / benefits for new Canadians

- Help someone
- Serve a cause
- Apply their values
- Help other immigrants
- Create new social connections / professional networks
- Use personal skills and experiences
- Achieve something to be proud of
- Was asked
- Personal development
- Increase chances of finding a job
- Fit better into host society
- Practice English / French
- Acquire new skills
- Build confidence
- Learn more about Canadian life / culture
- Develop leadership abilities

Barriers for new Canadians

- Lack of time / inflexible volunteer time schedules
- Lack of information on how to become involved
- Language difficulties
- Poorly structured organization
- Need for long-term commitment
- Expenses associated with volunteering
- Lack of training for volunteers
- Subtle discrimination against immigrants

Benefits for organizations in recruiting immigrant women. (Immigrant women are more likely than Canadian-born women to be under or unemployed.)

- Greater cultural awareness
- Access to broad range of knowledge, skills and education
- Access to new perspectives
- Access to underutilized resource

Low-income volunteers

Motivations / Benefits for low-income volunteers

-
- Personal affirmation and satisfaction
 - Feel valued and appreciated
 - Make important contributions
 - Work with others
 - Use skills and experience
 - Social interaction
 - Use spare time
 - Learn and develop new skills
 - Personal development
 - Sense of accomplishment
 - Give back to the organization or community
 - Child care (this is also a concern for many other groups).

Barriers for low-income volunteers

- Often have special needs, sometimes related to health or disability; need supportive environment
- Transportation
- Other costs of volunteering (perks like food, bus passes or honoraria might have positive influence)
- Stress
- Need flexible schedule (especially if health concerns)

Employee volunteerism / corporate volunteer programs

Motivations / Benefits – employee volunteerism

- External
 - Improves corporate image
 - Improves relations with surrounding community
 - Helps maintain healthy community
 - Improves understanding of customers
- Internal
 - Improves employee morale
 - Improves employees' skills
 - Improves employees' job performance
 - Increases teamwork among employees
 - Helps attract new employees
 - Improves employee retention

Challenges of employee volunteerism

- Difficulty covering regular workload
- Cost
- Lack of support from employees

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- Lack of support from management
 - Difficulty managing relationships with voluntary organizations
 - Difficulty measuring benefits

Reasons for not supporting employee volunteerism

- Never considered it
- Not our responsibility
- Can't afford it
- Not interested

How to support employee volunteerism

- Time off with pay
- Time off without pay
- Adjust work schedules to accommodate
- Access to company facilities or equipment
- Recognize employee volunteers
- Consult with community organizations
- Make information available about volunteer opportunities
- Provide choices / what interests employees
- Involve employees in planning and managing
- Provide resources and a coordinator
- Allow family members to get involved
- Provide education on importance of volunteering
- Maintain records of employees interested in volunteering
- Let it be truly voluntary
- Make it fun
- Get feedback

Much more detail on these and other population groups, as well as practical resources such as how-to manuals, can be found in the literature, particularly in the body of publications produced through the support of the Knowledge Development Centre (Imagine Canada) during the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, from Volunteer Canada at www.volunteer.ca and at www.communitysector.nl.ca, CSC's online resource centre.