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Optimizing the Involvement of the Members of Voluntary Organization Boards: Keys to Motivation

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OPTIMIZING THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION BOARDS: KEYS TO MOTIVATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> In every community and every state across the country, we need a program of voluntary action by the people -- many problems can be tackled right at home, human and social problems like education, mental illness, traffic safety, urban decay, crime, delinquency, and family deterioration, through the organization of voluntary effort. Nothing can melt such human and social problems faster than the willingness of one individual to involve himself voluntarily in helping another individual overcome his problems.[1]

This quotation from George Romney illustrates the challenge to the voluntary sector to solve the problems of mankind. The growing tax revolt makes this challenge especially strong. Citizens are tired of big government and big governmental expenses. Duties which traditionally were handled by the family, the church, and the community were gradually taken over by government. In attempts to streamline government, many of these services will have to be returned to the voluntary organizations. It becomes patently clear that in order to meet this challenge, voluntary organizations will have to rely on highly motivated, dedicated leadership. The immediate question to be considered in answering this challenge is how to make the leadership -- the boards of directors -- of voluntary organizations as strong and responsible as possible; how to motivate their involvement to obtain the optimal benefit for the community.

It is the thesis of this project that it is important for voluntary organization board members to be fully informed and involved in their organization in order to discharge their duties effectively. There are two major reasons for asserting this thesis: a) participation by citizens on the board is beneficial to the individual, the organization, and society; and b) the board must be active, knowledgeable and attend meetings because of its legal responsibilities. The first proposition of this thesis will be developed quite extensively. It is essential to remain cognizant of the second proposition, although it will not be developed as fully here.

This project will deal first with a survey of the literature regarding duties of the board, the benefits of citizen participation, and theories of motivation and involvement. The second half of the project will be a summary of the data collected by interviewing leaders in the St. Louis community regarding their motivations for participation and involvement on voluntary organization boards. The research portion of the paper is intended to uncover some of those factors motivating an individual to choose a particular organization and become involved.

Before entering into other aspects of the project, it seems appropriate to define the concept of voluntary action and voluntary organizations. Payne and Reddy have one definition:

> Voluntary formal organizations are those which a person may or may not join depending upon his choices and decisions, even though in given situa-

> tions there may be considerable pressures toward joining... one becomes and remains a member by virtue of some action on his part, not simply by birth or other factors over which the person has no control. It is understood that a member has some control over the amount or intensity of his participation in such organizations, with the consequence that his degree of involvement aside from simple membership is also voluntary and depends on his action.[2]

This definition seems well suited to the needs of this paper as it underlines the freedom members have in choosing their degree of involvement.

Manser and Cass echo a similar sentiment when they say that the essential element in voluntary action is "responsible freedom: freedom to act in accordance with one's own will or choice, not from constraint, and independent of the government."[3] Freedom of choice and thought seems to be the greatest lesson to be learned from voluntary action. Obviously, the concept of what voluntarism means is quite complex and defies a definite description. Free choice and participation are not lessons taught in most schools or practiced in many workplaces. Yet this is the philosophy that this country was founded on and on which it still stands. Skillful participation, especially, is one of those things that is difficult to achieve if it is not regularly practiced. Voluntarism adds a special dimension to an individual's choice. Generally individuals receive no income for their efforts. The pressure of fulfilling basic safety and comfort needs is not present in this decision. The choice involves observation of a societal need and working to remedy that.

Voluntary organizations offer citizens free choices and chances to participate. They offer individuals chances to make

decisions and to test their abilities, whether they be political or technical. They give citizens choices whether or not to join and to choose their depth of participation and commitment. This practice at using freedoms is one of the most important learnings voluntary action can teach. Voting, the traditional exercise of citizenship rights, once every four years does not give citizens that opportunity to practice their freedom.

Another part of the Manser and Cass definition of voluntarism involves "(t)hose activities of individuals and agencies arising out of a spontaneous, private effort to promote or advance some aspect of the common good, as this good is perceived by the persons participating in it."[4] This is significant to the discussion because it is important to understand why people volunteer. As this definition and others say -- people want to do good. They want a role in promoting the common good. Voluntarism has played a special role in the United States by being in the forefront of determining and observing needs in the community and then figuring out ways to solve those problems.

It has often been the vision of the voluntary sector, both of its individuals and organizations, that has given lawmakers the direction to shape society. Lawmakers and other leaders in this country are nothing more than citizens with a special commitment and skills. Where have the lawmakers learned these skills? Many have had practice in voluntary organizations at using their freedom to participate and choose. They have practiced the skills necessary for initiating and implementing change.

Perhaps not all volunteers will be lawmakers, but not all change is made by the lawmakers. In a democracy, each citizen has the responsibility to make her voice heard and work for change. Without practicing skills and exercising rights, the voice of the citizen can become weak and ineffective. Society needs a forum for learning and practicing the skills of participation in society. Voluntary organizations offer that forum.

Voluntary organizations are not unique to the American scene. They are, however, essential to its health. The political system has grown large and very complex. Voluntary organizations offer the individual a way to enter that system, work with others, and effect change and the future of the community. This applies to the hospital volunteer seeking to have some effect on the health needs of the community or the president of the school board -- both are seeking some way to choose the course of the future and to participate in community life.

NOTES

[1]Ronald Lippitt and Eva Schindler-Rainman, The Volunteer Community, 2nd ed. (Fairfax, VA: NTL Learning Resources Corp., 1975), p. 15.

[2]Raymond Payne, Barbara Pittard Payne, and Richard D. Reddy, "Social Background and Role Determinants of Individual Participation in Organized Voluntary Action", Voluntary Action Research (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p. 207.

[3]Gordon Manser and Rosemary Higgins Cass, Voluntarism at the Crossroads (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1977), p. 14.

[4]Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR -- ITS PLACE, FUNCTION, AND BENEFITS

The thesis of this paper states that citizen participation on the board of a voluntary organization is beneficial to the individual, the organization, and society. A review of the literature indicates that there is no better way of motivating citizens to participate than by allowing them to do so. This chapter will examine our thesis about citizen participation and the values it has for the individual citizen, the organization, and society.

Benefits to the individual

As the thesis states, citizen participation on voluntary boards is important; this is because it teaches individuals that they can be politically effective. Our society today is so large and complex that it is difficult for individuals to comprehend it, much less find a place in which to participate. Even at the local level, cities are large and require sophisticated political skills of those who participate. Voluntary organizations play a vital role for the individual by giving her a group small enough so that she can find a place to enter the system. Participation by citizens is the keystone in a democracy. Association and participation with others have many demonstrable benefits for the individual.

There is no question that government in modern society is large and complex. Budgets and gross national products in the trillions are not appropriate arenas for the politically naive. But where does the individual go to learn how to participate in government? J. S. Mill has argued that a democratic form of government is of no use if the individual does not know how to participate. He believes that learning to use the rights of citizenship can only take place by participating at the local level.[1]

At the local level an individual has many more opportunities for learning about democracy. Decisions at this level most immediately and directly affect her life and that of her family. It is also at this level that she stands a much greater chance of being elected to some local body and actually entering in the decision-making process. It is, then, through this sort of participation that the individual acquires the skills to participate in larger spheres.[2] A good example of learning political skills comes from one of the respondents to the interview segment. This young person became a member of the Jaycees and worked his way through their political system to be elected president of the local chapter. He then transferred this learning to a race for the city council where he became a councilman and was later named mayor pro tem. He attributes his ability to maneuver in the political system to the skills he learned in the voluntary organization.

Industry and voluntary organizations can provide individuals just such a chance to participate on a "local" level.

Generally these organizations or subsections of them are small enough that the individual may find some role to play and have some voice in decisions affecting her future within the organization. They also give the individual a chance to practice her skills and obtain some degree of political acumen.

When individuals participate in organizations they must soon learn cooperation with other members or the organization falls apart. The need to deal with consumer problems has forced cooperation among many divergent groups. An example of such cooperation was found in a project by the Missouri Public Interest Research Group (MOPIRG) that studied the prices of prescription drugs. Many older volunteers were used in the study. The result was that students working with MOPIRG became acutely aware of a major problem of older persons and the poor -- the high cost of health care; and the older volunteers sensed a caring attitude and a sense of purpose in the young volunteers whom they had previously considered rather shameful because of their long hair and beards. These two groups found that they needed each other and that mutual goals -- alerting all citizens to the magnitude of the prescription price problem -- could only be solved through their cooperation.

Rousseau observed that the individual finds that she[2a] has to take into account wider matters than her own immediate private interests if she is to gain cooperation from others.[3]

Rousseau said:

> ... since men can by no means engender new powers, but can only unite and control those of which they are already possessed, there is no way in which they can maintain themselves save by coming together and pooling their strength in a way that will enable them to withstand any resistance exerted upon them from without.[3a]

This has very wide and subtle effects. De Tocqueville felt that only cooperation of this sort could enlarge the heart and develop the human mind.[4] Rousseau also thought that by learning cooperation men would come to view public interests as their own and feel little conflict with their demand because of the benefits of cooperation. In the Social Contract Rousseau said: "By dint of being exercised, his faculties will develop, his ideas take on a wider scope, his sentiments become ennobled, and his whole soul be... elevated...."[4a] When the individual has a voice in collective decisions, she seems to feel less need to rebel against them.

This cooperative spirit is spawned out of the interaction with others. By having to cooperate with individuals, probably different from herself, the individual is forced to widen her horizons.[5] Hausknect says, "affiliation with an association acts as a bridge between the immediate situation of the individual and the wider community and society."[6] In other words, when an individual cooperates with others to accomplish some goal she must take into account viewpoints, cultures, and prejudices different from her own in order to survive, thus widening her view of the world and giving her insight into others' thinking. It is by exposing the individual to this diversity of backgrounds, or heterogeneity, that voluntary organizations serve another

important function -- perhaps more so than any other endeavor. Stenzel and Feeny give an example of this benefit when they describe a youth service project conducted by the Girl Scouts. Teams of girls from several countries worked with handicapped children on a project sponsored by The New York University — Bellevue Medical Center. The girls learned the skills necessary in dealing with the handicapped, but they also learned much about people different from themselves -- both culturally and physically. Stenzel and Feeny comment, "the experience... cannot help but prepare for future active and intelligent citizen participation in community, nation, and world."[7] This concept will be explored further under the benefits to society.

Heterogeneity among members of a voluntary organization is often an ideal, however. This is particularly true in organizations where members propose other members -- which often tends to promote homogeneity and like thinking. Even among this sameness of background, economics, and other factors, though, there is a difference of personalities. Learning to work with others toward a common goal is an educational experience.

Individuals participate in voluntary organizations because they want to, generally, not because they are forced to. They act out of their hearts and emotions. Usually, each has a personal stake in the outcome. Individuals learn cooperation in voluntary organizations because they have often invested much of themselves in the organization and need the assistance of others to reach their goals. These learnings can come about in several ways: from having to consider others' choices, a broader range of opportunities and alternatives is thus opened to each individual and consequently a greater chance of finding the most ful-

filling option is provided; from having a greater diversity of experiences there may occur a raising of the threshold of tolerance for ambiguity -- making it easier to live in this complex world; finally, from working on her own, an individual may realize that her choice of options can be quite limited and that she does not have the chance to learn and profit from the experience of others -- thus not developing and widening her horizons. This represents a loss to society of benefits that must depend on the cooperation and interaction of diverse groups.[8]

By cooperating and working together in an organization, the individual has an opportunity to carve out her place in society and to develop her feeling of belonging. In our diverse and complex society, voluntary organizations provide places for individuals to affiliate and become part of society.[9]

Participation in organizations teaches individuals political skills, helps them learn cooperation and gives them an affiliation in society. But perhaps more important than any of these, participation gives individuals a sense of what is called political efficacy -- or a sense of political competence. Pateman describes this as "the feeling that individual political action does have or can have an impact on the political process, i.e. that it is worthwhile to perform one's civic duties."[10] She further states that individuals who have this sense are more likely to continue participating. They also feel more effective in other areas of their lives and in their ability to deal with the world. Rousseau thought this sense of political efficacy arose from the decision-making process that gave an individual a feeling of control over her life and environment.[11]

It is in the realm of increasing that sense of personal efficacy that voluntary organizations can have a significant impact on individuals. Because the individual has a greater opportunity to participate and make decisions affecting her life, she is apt to feel a strong sense of political efficacy and have a greater urge to participate. She also has learned skills that will allow her to be more active in wider political spheres and in society at large.

This sense of efficacy is illustrated in many studies. Naylor relates the psychological benefits of participation to the individual when she says:

> Many of us feel guilty unless we are engaged in an activity which can be justified as worthwhile. A volunteer job eases some of the pressure which builds up when we have a lot of leisure time on our hands, or when our means of livelihood is not clearly contributing to the general welfare.[12]

Participation in voluntary organizations increases the individual's sense of effectiveness and ability to make a difference.

Holzberg, Knapp, and Turner found that students serving as volunteers in a companionship program at a local mental hospital developed a sense of personal competence and efficacy as a result of successful accomplishment.[13] Sills found that volunteers who participated in the March of Dimes stated that they received satisfaction from being able to accomplish short-term goals which they helped to set.[14]

Thus, citizen participation on a local level and in voluntary organizations builds up a sense of cooperation, gives the individual an active role in society, and a sense of personal effectiveness and efficacy. Joint decision-making exposes the individual to a heterogeneity of opinions, thus widening her

horizons and giving her a feeling of some degree of control over her life and environment.

Benefits to the organization

At the organizational level many benefits which accrue to the individual also aid the organization. Organizations which promote participation of their members, particularly at the decision-making level, can expect a greater sense of personal efficacy for the individual and therefore as a result greater efficacy for the organization. The sense of cooperation and social integration also benefits the organization.

Legitimacy is a special benefit to organizations that arises from citizen participation. Conrad and Glenn remind readers that "[B]oard volunteers give us a right to exist as an organization."[15] That citizens agree to work for and support organizations gives voluntary organizations their only right to be in the community. This is a very special trait of democracies. Instead of institutions being thrust on communities, and communities being forced to support them, in a democracy each organization must earn its right to be a part of the community. Citizen participation in organizations gives those organizations the "consent of the governed."[16]

In the United States citizens have traditionally banded together around issues of concern to them. If the schools are not good, or the roads are bad, or a new hospital needs to be built, citizens voluntarily join together to try to cure the ill and further the quality of life. In a democracy, each individual is in some way a trustee of the public good. Of benefit to organizations, this trusteeship ensures community backing and support

of those issues the public adopts as essential and beneficial to its good.

Widespread citizen participation is indeed essential to the health of organizations. By inviting public participation, the greatest diversity of points of view can be used in planning. It is important that leaders and planners have the input of the users of a service or facility so that they might learn the needs of users and what they see as important before instituting wasteful or unnecessary service that the community may not support.

The value of citizen participation to the organization cannot be over-emphasized. If citizens are not involved in and willing to support voluntary organizations, they could not exist. Voluntary organizations depend on concerned citizens to get the job done. Without that community interest and support, these organizations cannot do their job.

Benefits to society

The value of citizen participation in society is widespread. In detailing this effect, David Horton Smith's categories will be used. Smith believes that the voluntary sector has tended to provide the social risk capital of society. The voluntary sector is free of constraints imposed on the other sectors, such as the need to show a profit and maintain control, so that groups or individuals can act out of commitment to an idea or value without waiting for sanction. Conrad and Glenn quote John Gardner: "For however active government may be in volume of activity of dollars, it is still the voluntary organization which has the resolve, the flexibility, the dynamism

to insure our American way of life will continue to grow and that its benefits will be shared by all its citizens."[17]

Chapman and Pennock provide an example of how the voluntary association provided such social risk capital and succeeded. In the case of educational television, the voluntary associations were able to hold before society a possibility it did not know even existed.[18]

In almost every field, it is the voluntary organization that has led the way. By their very nature, voluntary organizations are not held down by the same rules and demands of other organizations. It is often only when an "experiment" succeeds and is accepted that profit-making or governmental institutions take over.[19] De Tocqueville argued for the role of voluntary organizations in this way: "A government can no more be competent to keep alive and to renew the circulation of opinions and feelings among a great people than to manage all the speculations of productive industry."[20] From this it can be concluded that the generation of new opinions and ideas should not be left to government. Because new ideas may not always be profitable, they do not fall into the realm of industry. With its diversity and lack of formal constraints, the voluntary sector is an ideal proving ground for new ideas and methods.

A second value of the voluntary sector is that it provides moral and ideological leadership. Voluntary organizations are often in the forefront calling into question existing institutions and accepted social definitions. O'Connell states this point quite eloquently:

> In a world just thirty years removed from the slaughter of six million Jews, and still rampant

> with diseases and other indignities of the vilest form and breadth, there is room for concern and caring, charity and volunteering. Indeed in this still young democracy there is total dependence on citizen determination to preserve the freedom so recently declared and to extend it to all.[21]

Voluntary organizations serve society by being the voice of conscience, the voice of the people. The voluntary society is constantly approached by those people and groups who see a better tomorrow, a brighter day in change. Because of their smaller scale, voluntary organizations have long served as forums where all members could have a voice in policy. However, some voices have more power than others -- the president as opposed to the new member, the men over the women, white over black. So, the equal sharing of burdens and benefits that Rousseau saw as a value of the participatory process is not always a reality.

Voluntary organizations have challenged society's moral and ideological attitudes. Groups such as NOW and NAACP caused millions of people to reexamine their own values. This is the kind of movement that can only come from the voluntary sector. This value is closely tied to the idea of social risk capital. The antiquated ideas challenged by these groups could not be attacked by any sector that relied on monetary or political support for its livelihood. The voluntary sector can afford to espouse a revolutionary viewpoint and be supported by the consent of those who see it as a public good.

A third value of voluntary associations is that they offer individuals variety in their lives and an opportunity to find satisfaction. Mechanization, computerization, and the

often highly complex and impersonal character of the work world frequently do not allow workers to gain satisfaction from their jobs. Voluntary organizations can play an important role here as Herta Loesser points out: "The list of societal needs which committed human beings can help alleviate is immense... for once, the important trends that concern us are complementary, not divergent."[22] Participation in voluntary organizations can give individuals a chance to be involved and find satisfaction through their action that they cannot find ordinarily in their daily lives.

Lippitt and Schindler-Rainman illustrate this concept of satisfaction in their two premises about the relationship between democracy and voluntarism:

> 1) A democratic social system -- nation, state, community, organization, or group -- must depend to a high degree on the volunteered time and energy of its members for its maintenance, stability, growth, and development. 2) A democratic social system provides the conditions for a personally satisfying, self-actualizing growth opportunity for each individual.[23]

This demonstrates the sense of belonging and personal and political efficacy which participation in an organization brings to an individual. A democratic society needs the talents of individuals, and voluntary organizations offer excellent opportunities for individuals to develop those talents.

In another vein, voluntary associations, primarily because they are freer than government and business to experiment, can offer individuals more options for organized fun, play, and novelty in their lives. Examples of such

associations would be YWCA, YMCA, and theater groups. All of these provide an option to the "otherwise rather boring or at least physically fatiguing world of work and responsibility" that Smith describes.[24] Work and play both serve important functions to society and some of the lessons in leadership learned from team play can be duplicated in no other place.

A fourth value to society of voluntary associations is the role they serve in satisfying needs for affiliation. This need was mentioned before in the discussion of the values of voluntary association for the individual. It also has importance for society. In this transient society individuals are often separated from their families and living far away from their familiar surroundings. Many in this mobile society do not even have any roots. Olson observes that as the functions the family used to perform have declined, secondary groups such as labor unions -- and it should be added here, voluntary associations -- have begun having the same sort of effect the family once had.[25] These organizations give the individual a place to belong, to get approval, to interact with other individuals, and so on. For the individual this is a basic need, and according to Maslow and others, one that must be satisfied if the individual is to progress any further.

Membership in voluntary organizations, as stated before, does not usually contain all the same kinds of individuals. For the individual this is important because it widens hori-

zons and makes the individual more tolerant. For society this is valuable because members of one organization frequently hold memberships in other organizations and these overlapping memberships tend to form networks that bind the members to each other. This has a moderating effect on relationships. A group is much more likely to be concerned about its effect on another organization if it knows the members of that organization or if members who also belong to other organizations are sitting at the same table making the decision. Bode illustrates this point in saying, "voluntary associations seem to represent a kind of filling and connecting tissue between major social structures and between individuals and those structures."[26]

The affiliation process serves as a cement for society. J. S. Mill also detailed this consequence when he wrote about the educative effect of participation:

> ... through political discussion the individual becomes consciously a member of a great community and that whenever he has something to do for the public he is made to feel that not only the common weal is his weal, but that it partly depends on his exertions.[27]

Extending this argument a bit further, on the national level the consequence of cross-cutting multiple memberships and networks results in bringing divergent parts of the country together to make decisions, with the same or potential unifying effects. At the international level joint participation in voluntary efforts, for instance the Red Cross, initiates interaction that may have some long-term effects on the possibilities of world peace. When individuals have had to cooperate and

share in decision making, relationships form and the impersonal "they" becomes a real person with real characteristics and experiences; as Mill says, they are "members of a great community... the common weal is his weal." The affiliation engendered by voluntary association has a vast impact on society.

A fifth value of voluntary associations on society is the role they play in "preserving values, ways of life, ideas, beliefs, artifacts, and other products of the mind, heart, and hand of man so that culture is not lost to future generations."[28] Voluntary associations play an important role in keeping these traditions alive. This also has an educational aspect of passing on and preserving the values of the past. Even if there is no formal educational process, interaction with other members allows these traditions to be passed on.

A sixth value of voluntary associations that Smith describes is the role they play in permitting expression of the "sacred, the mysterious, and the wierd... in our otherwise hyper-rational society."[29] Churches and religious institutions account for the largest number of voluntary associations. For many (i.e. American slaves) voluntary organizations were one of the few avenues of expression available. Interpretations of religious teachings and new prophets have raised powerless groups of people to power, reinterpreted class distinctions, and inspired armies that have wiped out nations of men (i.e. the Crusades). Religious institutions

could only exist in the voluntary sector because where thoughts of political expedience and profit are in the forefront of thinking, new philosophies concerning the nature of man and his relation to the universe have no place.

A seventh value of voluntary organizations in society is to provide options to people. Smith says, "[N]o matter how free, open, egalitarian, and highly developed the society, there are always limitations of some sort placed on the development of each person by his particular social environment."[30] It is as simple as the fact that because the individual makes one choice, others are closed to him. This condition exists in this country because of the wide variety of activities and options there are. If an individual chooses a vocation or educational route, other choices close or become unlikely. Voluntary associations allow individuals to experiment with a secret career desire or to play a role in organizations they would not ordinarily get to play. For those entering or changing career fields, this is particularly valuable. It is good for society-at-large, also, to have a proving ground, a non-threatening, low risk stage for individuals to experience and decide other opportunities.

An eighth value to society of the voluntary association is the ability to provide the society with negative feedback. This does not come from all voluntary associations, but from what Smith calls "the small cutting edge."

This characteristic is somewhat tied into the first two: voluntary associations provide moral and ideological leadership for the society and they do so at low social risk. In providing that moral leadership, there are certainly some things in society that will be criticized. However, when discussing the low social risk aspect, it is necessary to distinguish paid staff and volunteer staff in an organization. Volunteers, citizens, can and should criticize policy -- especially if it directly affects them and they have not had a voice in the decision or if conditions upon which the decision was made have changed. Paid staff fall under a totally different category, however, because in advocating or denouncing policy their monetary connection with the organization may compromise them. Volunteers who speak because they care, not because of any compensation, are much more credible and effective. Even volunteers are stifled sometimes in their advocacy by fear of repercussions from funding sources, such as United Way. Volunteers in an organization which is dependent on the United Way are not going to speak out, for instance, when the talk is about the anti-trust activities of federated campaigns.

The last value of voluntary associations that will be mentioned here involves the pool of potential energy that voluntary organizations represent in a community that can be mobilized quickly for achieving good for a society. Voluntary organizations represent potential in a community in other ways as well, such as the socialization of leaders. As individuals join voluntary organizations and move up through the

levels of responsibility, they learn and practice leadership skills. They have also learned many political skills, such as cooperation and collaboration, and have practiced assessing community need and acting upon it. This represents another vast potential to the community, then, in preparing future leaders.

Society has seen, especially during wartime, how the voluntary organizations have been able to mobilize quickly to accomplish tasks. Voluntary organizations also serve as conduits for communication and action. Because they are already organized, it is quicker and more effective to direct communication through these organizations. This stands whether the goal is mobilizing aid in a natural disaster or seeking a group of volunteers to help with a lesser project. The built-in organization and structure of voluntary organizations provides the community with a pool of potential energy.

Participation by citizens in a democracy is an important learning experience. It teaches individuals cooperation, it widens their horizons, and it gives them a feeling of being able to control their destinies. Society shares these benefits. For the organization, citizen participation equals the right of the organization to exist in the community. Understanding the value of citizen participation is probably the most important key in understanding how to optimize board involvement.

NOTES

[1]Carole Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), p. 30.

[2]Ibid., p. 31.

[2a]Rousseau, obviously, would never use the pronoun "she"; its use here is to conform with pronoun style elsewhere in the paper.

[3]Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[3a]John Locke, David Hume, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Social Contract: Essays by Locke, Hume, and Rousseau. (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 84.

[4]Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1899).

[4a]Locke, Hume, & Rousseau, p. 86.

[5]Pateman, p. 30.

[6]Murray Hausknect, The Joiners (New York: Bedminster Press, 1962), p. 119.

[7]Anne Stenzel and Helen Feeny, Volunteer Training and Development (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), p. 18.

[8]Hausknect, p. 119.

[9]David Horton Smith, Voluntary Action Research (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p. 252.

[10]Pateman, p. 46.

[11]Ibid., p. 26.

[12]Harriet Naylor, Volunteers Today (Dryden, NY: Dryden Associates, 1974), p. 70.

[13]David Horton Smith and Richard D. Reddy, "The Impact of Voluntary Action on the Volunteer/Participant", Voluntary Action Research (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973), p. 186.

[14]Charles L. Mulford and Gerald E. Klonglan, "Attitude Determinants of Individual Participation in Organized Voluntary Action", Voluntary Action Research (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p. 256.

[15]William R. Conrad and William R. Glenn, The Effective Voluntary Board of Directors (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1976), p. 32.

[16]Naylor, p. 55.

[17]Conrad and Glenn, p. 3.

[18]Roland J. Pennock and John W. Chapman, Voluntary Associations, Nomos XI (New York: Atherton Press, 1969), p. 29.

[19]David Horton Smith, "The Importance of Formal Voluntary Organizations", Sociology and Social Research 50:485.

[20]De Tocqueville, p. 596.

[21]Brian O'Connell, Effective Leadership in Voluntary Organizations (New York: Association Press, 1976), p. xiii.

[22]Herta Loesser, Women, Work, and Volunteering (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974), p. 16.

[23]Eva Schindler-Rainman and Ronald Lippitt, The Volunteer Community, 2nd ed. (Fairfax, VA: NTL Learning Resources Corp., 1975), p. 3.

[24]David Horton Smith, "The Impact of the Voluntary Sector on Society", Voluntary Action Research (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973), p. 389.

[25]Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 18.

[26]Jerry G. Bode, "The Voluntary Association Concept in Twentieth Century American Sociology", Voluntary Action Research (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p. 66.

[27]Pateman, p. 33.

[28]Smith, "Impact... ", p. 391.

[29]Ibid., p. 392.

[30]Ibid., p. 394.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In pursuing keys to motivating board members, it is necessary to understand the function of the board. This chapter will deal with the role of the board of directors in a voluntary organization. The board of directors can have many different titles and serve a variety of functions in an organization from that of policy-making to that of giving advice with no power to decide. These boards, of course, vary in the amount of authority and responsibility given them.

Trecker says that "the citizen board is one of society's most important instruments. It is used to determine social policy and is charged with the responsibility for providing all kinds of community services."[1] The most important thing the board brings to the organization is the sanction to exist within that community. Voluntary organizations often start out as groups of concerned citizens recognizing needs in their communities. Later, when the operation becomes too large or there are too many details, staff are hired to devote full-time efforts to the cause.

It is the volunteers, the community leadership, who represent the organization to the community and who have the legal charter to operate the organization by right of their

role of trustee for the community. They have a responsibility to interpret the needs for service in the community. Three-fourths of the states require corporations to be managed by a board of directors, usually made up of three or more people. Voluntary organizations are considered to be such corporations. In this capacity the board must take legal responsibility for all actions of the organization. As trustees, they are responsible for all monies and their use, regard for laws, contracts, and all other activities undertaken in the name of the organization. The board must be sensitive and be able to translate community needs and desires into organization programs. They are also responsible for translating organization programs back to the community.

The major role of the board is policy determination. "The board must determine policies regarding purpose, programs, personnel, finance, public relations, and the like."[2] Conrad and Glenn sharpen this definition in saying that the role of the board is giving permission for "what to do", leaving the "how-to" and the doing of it to the staff.[3] However, those "what to do" and "how to do it" functions can overlap. The "how-to" of something is often just as much of a policy decision as what is being done. The role of the board cannot just stop at policy-making. Board members should be involved in implementation also. It seems that part of the value of the voluntary enterprise is lost if besides being involved in policy decisions, the board volunteers are not also involved in the implementation -- the success or failure -- of projects.

There is something very hollow about saying later, "We didn't know how they were going to do it." The board is legally responsible for the actions of the organization and therefore must be involved in both "what" and "how".

The board can also build pride and ownership in a project by being involved. If the board is expected to merely pass on proposals and not participate, projects belong to someone else and the board has no commitment to help them succeed. Communication on the point of what the board expects will be done and how the staff plan to carry it out is of utmost importance. Helpful in this is a well-written, well-documented study and rationale for the needs of a program, plus a detailed plan. For staff, it is necessary to carefully review job responsibilities and delegate tasks properly so that each member of the team -- volunteer and staff -- are aware of what needs to be done and who is going to do it.

Conrad and Glenn set four very specific duties for the board. The first is policy determination which was discussed above. The second is resource development. This entails more than support through contribution of dollars. It also includes participation, that is, people becoming involved and committed. Another part of resource development is developing and enhancing the public image of the organization. A third duty of the board is to secure sanction in the community -- both the local community and the larger community in which the organization operates. A fourth duty is "the retention, support, supervision, and performance appraisal of the staff chief executive."[4] The

board has the final responsibility for the achievement of the organization's goals and objectives. To accomplish this task it hires an executive director (or leader of some other title) to implement board policy, to fulfill its role, and to provide support to other staff.

Staff, on the other hand, have the responsibility to carry out the policy set by the board. They have "the responsibility to assist their board volunteers to become successful in the pursuit of the lawful purpose, goals, and objectives of their organization."[5] Staff members are prepared by education or special training to provide the services of the organization.

Work in the voluntary organization is accomplished through the board and staff working together as a team. Trecker quotes the YWCA in discussing the concept of partnership and shared responsibility:

> Leadership in the YWCA is both volunteer and employee. Volunteers bring to the Association not only their individual skills, abilities, and often accumulated YWCA experience, but a broad knowledge of the community as well -- its resources and organizations, its patterns of life, its feelings, its tensions, its values, its sources of pride. The contributions of employed leaders include individual skills and experience, knowledge of specialized resources for program and administration, an objective way of looking at the community and the YWCA with understanding and insight, and concentrated time for work.[6]

The board of directors is only successful to the degree that they are supported by staff. Staff play an important role in deciding how involved the board will actually be in determining the future of the organization. They possess the information of day-to-day workings and the amount of that infor-

mation they release will define the board's involvement. The last chapter dealt with the value of having citizens involved in organizations. There will be a later discussion concerning the motivations people have for joining voluntary organizations, and some of the variables defining the intensity of their involvement.

NOTES

[1]Harleigh Trecker, Citizen Boards at Work (New York: Association Press, 1970), p. 17.

[2]Ibid., p. 58.

[3]William R. Conrad and William R. Glenn, The Effective Voluntary Board of Directors (Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1976), p. 70.

[4]Ibid., pp. 27-32.

[5]Ibid., p. 73.

[6]Trecker, p. 56.

CHAPTER IV

INVOLVEMENT IN VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

> The curse of some few men is that they have a vision of a different and better world possible through human action. In this sense they are humanitarians for they believe that man is the source of his own salvation and that by amending the laws of their time, by altering the processes in which they are involved, by changing the forces which impose the painful particulars of their own and others' lives, they can attain the good society.[1]

This quotation by Charles Warriner is a good illustration of the motivation of many persons to join and become involved in voluntary organizations. A previous chapter examined the values and benefits of voluntary organizations. Many of those values are realized only after individuals join and become members. Why do people join at all? What is motivation? This is an important question because it helps to understand how to sustain a growth in membership, and because such information is necessary to understand what members expect from an organization. This chapter will first present a brief review of some of the theories of what motivates individuals to join voluntary organizations, pointing up the characteristics that encourage involvement.

One of the most striking realizations about motivation is that it is a very inexact subject. There are really no right answers; in fact, there are as many right answers as there are individuals to motivate. As already shown, the voluntary association has a very special place in human society. Its place is incredibly complex and the benefits to the individual, the orga-

nization, and society overlap to such an extent that it is often impossible to separate them. The motivations to join are equally complex.

Association in voluntary organizations seems to give meaning to the lives of those who participate. It is not something a person must do in order to keep alive physically, politically, or economically. Voluntary association seems, however, to make life worth living for those who participate. It deepens the quality of their lives. Abraham Maslow examined many people and their motivations. From his study he concluded that human lives are filled with a series of activities designed to meet certain needs. He classified those needs as physical, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization or realization. He also concluded that individuals have a high need for self-esteem. "All people in our society... have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and the esteem of others."[1a] Smith, Reddy, and Baldwin extend this argument by saying: "Individual voluntary action... is what we do not because we have to, but because we want to in view of the higher level psychic benefits it may give us."[2] The theories of the value of voluntary action state that it can give individuals a much more satisfactory life experience because of the greater control they have to accept or deny assignments and seek out those assignments which they feel will give them greater satisfaction.

To further identify these needs Harriet Naylor draws from the work of Dr. Aaron Levenstein, who has studied the motivation to work. His conclusions seem especially pertinent to voluntary organizations. He describes man as psychologically maturing by means of four stages of relationships.

The first level is knowing the self: "I must live with and be comfortable with my self-image... if my work makes me feel a better citizen, more able as a person, more respected or esteemed, then I will invest myself in it with my whole heart."[3]

The second level involves relationships on a one-to-one basis with another person. "I seek another person who cares about me as a person, whose affection and esteem are very important to me."[4] Naylor comments that "this is probably the strongest single force moving a person toward involvement in a particular organization and into a place within it."[5]

The third level of relationships concerns organizations. It touches upon the concept of the ability to achieve and to take on responsibilities as a group member that are not possible as an individual acting alone.

The fourth level is a wider identification and a feeling of contributing to mankind. As with Maslow's self-actualization level, an individual at this point feels: "With maturity, I come to realize my obligation to all men, and I seek to feel a part of and contribute to the brotherhood which is my ideal."[6]

Levenstein's conclusions regarding motivations to work are significant in discussing motivations for voluntary efforts. People seem to have a need to be with others and be respected by them, and a need to achieve and contribute to society -- to have some effect. Voluntary organizations can meet these needs.

Sills further elaborates on this theme when he describes the difficulties many individuals have in finding an adequate

way in which to express their own personalities, their full potential. He notes Henry David Thoreau's view, "the mass of men lead their lives in quiet desperation."[7] True more than a century ago, modern life with all its complexities increases an individual's desire to achieve and need to be recognized. Voluntary organizations can offer individuals opportunities to achieve and contribute in ways outside their everyday work.

Because of the nature of volunteer commitments, volunteers can usually arrange their volunteer tasks in and around their ordinary job. However, employers are beginning to realize that in many cases volunteer commitments increase the productivity and quality of work, and are beginning to release workers from their jobs to volunteer. Reasons for this often include the satisfactions mentioned earlier of achievement, efficacy, and increased self-esteem as well as a notion of contributing to the welfare of another individual and learning new skills.

Individuals have the needs just described. How do they connect with organizations? Here, one of the prime factors -- the need to be sought after -- plays a major role. Studies have found that "... most often people join and become involved in voluntary associations because they are personally asked and encouraged to do so rather than through impersonal means, even though the mass media may provide a responsive attitudinal background to be triggered by a personal request."[8] Individuals may be influenced by friends or through other organizations to which they belong.

Another motivating factor comes from recognition of the value of voluntary organizations. This recognition causes people to seek out causes and join them. Palisi observes that "women often participate in philanthropic and civic groups because they feel certain causes are important for society and the community and that it is their duty to further causes."[9]

Motivation is an immense subject. There are more factors in motivation than are mentioned here. The need to contribute and to achieve, the need to be sought after and the need to be recognized are common through most of the literature. It is necessary to be aware of and understand some of the motivations people have for volunteering. It is necessary to give people an opportunity to act on these desires and help them become involved in the organization in a capacity where they can satisfy that need. Otherwise, they will go on looking.

The next part of this chapter will deal with some of the factors present in the nature of organizations that can affect the level of involvement of board volunteers. In examining this subject, the kinds of organizations that allow citizens to participate and become involved will be discussed, as well as those factors that become barriers to involvement.

Factors affecting involvement

A Mulford and Klonglan article cites Smith's finding of a strong relationship between eight specific attitudes and continued, active participation: "1) rewards for participation, 2) social support, 3) commitment, 4) attractiveness, 5) obligation, 6) personal fit with the (organization), 7) efficacy of the (organization), 8) outside significant-other support for the (organiza-

tion)."[10] Smith feels that these make up at least a partial list of factors that keep individuals involved in organizations. It is interesting to compare them with Towley's listing which follows. Perhaps the most interesting is to compare them with what involved volunteers in the research that follows had to say about things that influence their involvement.

Towley has his own list of motivators:

> The warmly human motive behind board service, the wish to be needed, to count, to feel now and then not expendable; the human desire to be the determinant in a balanced or hang-fire situation to tip the scales; the wish to be part of an identified, purposeful group activity, and one that both gives and takes; the wish to be creative, to build, and to see completion; the wish to be a controlled and disciplined influence toward the well being of numbers of people; the need of all of us to affirm life and its meaning in the midst of much that is life-negating in our community life; the need to enlarge our own life to touch the lives of others and be touched by them.[11]

These motivations for service are much the same as the rewards and values that citizen participation imparts to the individual, the organization, and society. Summarizing these lists, one key to continued active involvement seems to be to offer a warm, accepting atmosphere and well-run organization where board volunteers are given enough information to participate in the important decisions affecting the lives of people and the organization.

Surveys of the literature almost all yield this one axiom: to foster involvement on the part of the board, involve them. Lippitt and Schindler-Rainman say, "a major motivating factor for volunteers is the opportunity to participate in problem solving and significant decision making."[12] Seymour

is more enthusiastic about it when he says,

> ... the one thing that triggers (involvement) into action better than anything else is actual participation in a program. At a minimum, this involves consistent attendance at meaningful meetings and stated services. At best, it involves acceptance of real responsibility for committee work. And that is what leads most surely to advocacy and support... put pride together with involvement in program, and you have something literally beyond price."[13]

Participation in the organization, then, is a major motivating factor. Participation builds commitment which further influences and motivates greater involvement.

Conrad and Glenn have observed a series of stages which they feel define the involvement level of board volunteers. Their measure for involvement is the level of contributions -- time, skills, and most importantly to them, financial contributions. If board members, those volunteers who are responsible for the operations of the organization, are not willing to support it, then the organization is in major difficulty.

The first level of involvement for the board volunteer occurs when the individual becomes aware that the organization exists. The second level is affiliation, where the individual becomes a member of the board. Conrad and Glenn observe that an increase in contributions follows this. The third level is observation, where the board volunteers become quite willing to make contributions because they are able to observe that money is being well spent and effective services are being provided. Level four is participation. At this stage, through the decision-making process, the board member is able to have an effect on the

direction of the organization. This is possibly when the individual becomes a member of the executive committee. The fifth level is reached when the board volunteer has direct contacts with the constituency served. At this level giving is emotional. Conrad and Glenn comment, "If we combine the excitement of a well-managed organization with the emotionalism of a well-served constituency, we have an unbeatable combination for contributions."[14]

Along this same line Conrad and Glenn feel that staff has a major responsibility to see that board members grow and mature in their involvement with the organization in order to facilitate their movement through the five levels. Encouraging board members to participate and to assume responsible roles is vital to the organization.

It is the thesis of this paper that citizen involvement in voluntary organizations is important. In organizations that have a staff it is necessary for the staff to keep the citizen participation aspect alive. The board and staff need each other. They need to trust each other and be certain of their roles. From time to time these roles may change as different talents and different commitments emerge. The roles should be complementary so the board can be aware of the needs of staff -- what problems they face day-to-day -- and the staff can benefit from the voice of the community and experience which the board represents.

As experience with citizen participation (particularly on the federal level) points out, titles and assignments without

responsibility are as frustrating and damaging as no involvement. Sherry Arnstein reminds us, "there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having power needed to affect the outcome of the process."[15] Conrad and Glenn summarize the frustration with these cynical comments:

> As members of an organization, we ask board members for their help and then we whitewash problems for them, do their work for them (as if they were non compos mentis), feed them a steady diet of baffling and/or dull statistics (as if we believe they wouldn't understand the really important issues), and avoid all controversy in meetings (lest we learn something both from and about them, or have our pet ideas challenged). So, in addition to keeping them from life, we do all we can to make it a life of starvation, stagnation, and suffocation.[16]

Citizen participation and active involvement in the organization are essential for keeping democracies alive. Organizations that simply hand out titles and jobs with the guise of participation merely placate the citizenry into thinking they are involved and lead them to be content with that. The value of citizen participation is the individual involvement in the organization -- not the title or the name on the letterhead. It is the extra pair of hands, the contribution, the extending of public relations, and most of all, the experience and thinking of one more person joining together to benefit all.

It is necessary to mention here that while association with a voluntary organization can be quite beneficial, it can also cause increased tensions and conflicts within an organization. Members who, for instance, might try to use the organization to further their own goals and divert the group could cause deep rifts. Also, organizations that have decided to take

a controversial stand have seen deep tensions build and have lost members. The Episcopal Church took a strong stand on civil rights in the early seventies and saw membership fall.

The next section will look into the barriers to participation in voluntary organizations that bring about frustration to board volunteers.

Barriers to citizen participation

One very important barrier to citizen participation in an organization comes when an individual's participation conflicts with other values an individual holds. This could occur, for instance, when the individual does not agree with some of the stands the organization takes.

Professionalization is another barrier to active involvement of volunteers. As social work and many other professions have organized and grown, their members have constructed more defined boundaries around their areas of expertise. As voluntary organizations have grown they have increased their number of professional staff members. This has heralded the rise of the power of professionals in voluntary organizations. Walker describes the phenomenon thus:

> The role behavior of the volunteer must occur within a framework of acceptance of those major structural features which are crucial for the power, status, and rewards of those who control the organization in which the volunteers perform their task.[17]

Charles Yost further comments,

> The practitioners of every profession have a congenital tendency to believe that they are wiser than laymen; that he lacks training and insight on which sound judgments must be based and that he should therefore not be confused by awkward facts that might upset him.[18]

This view reflects that there is little room for citizen participation and much room for professional proceduralism, in-

cluding dogged reliance on rules and routines and regulations. The benefits of citizen participation are lost as professionals, anxious to control treatments and procedures out of allegiance to their training, fail to involve community members as volunteers. The loss is a loss to all of society.

Other barriers to participation include the centralization of operations of an organization. While it might be easier to administer all operations from a central facility, the concentration of power in one location decreases decision making opportunities in others. When operations are centralized, often positions are eliminated and thus volunteer opportunities. Centralization may also mean removing the facility from a neighborhood, thus limiting accessibility.

A very obvious barrier to participation are restrictions of membership. If, because of whatever criterion, a person is not allowed to join or rise in status in an organization, then her chances of becoming actively involved in the organization are minimal. Other barriers include the hours of operation of the organization. If services are performed strictly during set, usually daytime hours, many people cannot participate (or benefit) from the service. This could affect the board volunteer's ability to be involved in those services as well.

Participation in an organization seems to be the key to motivating board members to be involved in voluntary organizations, according to this survey of the literature. A fundamental question remains -- how to motivate the board member to participate? One notion, referred to by several authors, is that this is not really a problem at all. If potential board members are properly screened and advised at the time they are recruited that they will be asked

to participate and told exactly what their responsibilities will be, and are then given a chance to follow through, most volunteers will do their jobs. Volunteer time is spare time usually. It is a scarce commodity and there is a great demand from many organizations for it. Those organizations that demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness and instill pride of association in their members will find they have little problem recruiting and keeping an active, involved board.

In the next chapter the design for the research section of the paper will be discussed. This is a prelude to examining the findings of the research study.

NOTES

[1]Charles K. Warriner, "The Altruistic Impulse and the Good Society", Voluntary Action Research: 1972, David Horton Smith, Richard D. Reddy, Burt R. Baldwin, eds. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p. 343.

[1a]Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper and Row Publishers), p. 45.

[2]David Horton Smith, Richard D. Reddy, and Burt Baldwin, "Types of Voluntary Action: A Definitional Essay", Voluntary Action Research: 1972 (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p. 163.

[3]Harriet Naylor, Volunteers Today (Dryden, NY: Dryden Associates, 1974), p. 69.

[4]Ibid. [5]Ibid. [6]Ibid., p. 70.

[7]David Sills, The Volunteers (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1957), p. 234.

[8]Raymond Payne, Barbara Pittard Payne, and Richard D. Reddy, "Social Background and Role Determinants of Individual Participation in Organized Voluntary Action", Voluntary Action Research: 1972, Smith, Reddy, & Baldwin, eds. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p. 228.

[9]Bartolomeo Palisi, "A Critical Analysis of the Voluntary Association Concept", Voluntary Action Research: 1972, op. cit.

[10]Charles Lee Mulford and Gerald E. Klonglan, "Attitude Determinants of Individual Participation in Organizational Voluntary Action," in Voluntary Action Research: 1972, David Horton Smith, et. al., eds. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p. 268.

[11]Harleigh Trecker, Citizen Boards at Work (New York: Association Press, 1970), p. 23.

[12]Eva Schindler-Rainman and Gordon Lippitt, The Volunteer Community, 2nd ed. (Fairfax, VA: NTL Learning Resources Corp., 1975), p. 61.

[13]Harold Seymour, Designs for Fundraising (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 7.

[14]William R. Conrad and William R. Glenn, The Effective Voluntary Board of Directors (Chicago, IL: Swallow Press, 1976), p. 35.

[15]Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the Institute of American Planners, pp. 216-224.

[16]Conrad & Glenn, p. 129.

[17]J. Malcolm Walker, "Organizational Change, Citizen Participation, and Voluntary Action," Journal of Voluntary Action, Winter-Spring, 1975, pp. 4-22.

[18]Conrad & Glenn, p. 37.

CHAPTER V

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter describes the research design and research findings of this paper. The literature review described in previous chapters indicated that participation in the decision making process was of utmost importance in motivating involvement and commitment on voluntary organization boards. A further factor that has been identified is the desire to participate in decision-making. In order to test this hypothesis, a series of questions was designed to examine motivations, role expectations, and general attitudes of chief executive officers and board members. The aim of the questions was to probe these subjects and obtain empirical findings from the St. Louis area about why volunteers choose to become active on voluntary organization boards, and to compare these findings with the motivations described in the literature. Additionally, it seemed important to question both the volunteer and paid worker in order to compare their views on the subject and to note any differences that might be other clues to maximizing board involvement.

The categories for this study are chosen from the major subjects analyzed elsewhere in this paper: involvement, motivation, fulfillment of role expectations, and general values of voluntarism. The hypothesis to be tested in this study

is: 'Board members who have a deep commitment to the voluntary sector and who feel they are involved in decision making are likely to be more motivated to serve as active board members. The interview guides, one for the Chief Executive Officer and the Board president, are attached to this chapter.

The research design for this project involves an interview format with a focused interview that was administered to every subject. The interviews were conducted either in person or by phone.

Several factors were considered in selecting the interview format over other forms. Chief among these factors is the feature of the interview that allows the researcher to "gain a portrait of human personality."[1] The interview allows a researcher to gain insight into a whole person, to observe not only their verbal, but also nonverbal behavior that may explain some of their motivations and actions and identify new information.

The interview offers the researcher many advantages over more objective tools such as fixed answer tests. For instance, it allows the researcher to restate or explain questions that may be unclear. Statements that seem to be contradictory can be followed up and reasons for the contradiction may be learned. In the interview situation, the researcher might also be able to differentiate immediately between fact and fiction by evaluating the verbal and nonverbal responses. Describing the most obvious advantage of the interview, Young says, "(O)nly in the study of human beings is it possible for a scientist to talk to his subjects and investigate directly their feeling and thinking processes."[2]

The type of interview used was the focused interview. This has many advantages over other interview styles. It is considered a middle ground -- not as predictable and controlled as the structured interview nor as loose and unplanned as the free-flowing clinical interview. The focused interview seemed particularly appropriate to this study because of the flexibility it offered. Young cites some special characteristics of the focused interview that make it particularly relevant to this study. A focused interview is administered to persons who are known to have been involved in a particular concrete situation. In this case, all subjects will be either board presidents, ex-board presidents, or executive directors, and share that common experience which allows for comparison.

A focused interview proceeds on the basis of an interview guide that outlines the major areas of inquiry and states hypotheses that expedite the gathering of pertinent data. Finally, a focused interview centers on subjective experiences; that is, attitudes and other emotional responses relating to the matter under study.[2]

The use of the interview guide is the methodology for this study. Besides guiding and focusing the interview on certain topics, the interview guide/focused interview allows researchers to gain comparable data from different interviews. Besides gathering comparable data, the interviewer is also able to gather a range of data that can be used in testing the hypothesis. An interview guide also allows the researcher to accumulate certain specific details as a basis for quantitative studies of life histories.

From the foregoing discussion it is easily seen why the focused interview method best serves the purposes of this study. As mentioned earlier, people have many motivations for connecting with a voluntary organization. There are no right and wrong answers. Motivations are composed of emotions and attitudes, both difficult to tap with closed-ended questions. The focused interview, because it centers on obtaining these kinds of responses, is particularly suited for this research study. It gives respondents the opportunity to express their feelings and explore questions in depth. It also, however, gives a direction to the interview and a definite subject for discussion. It allows for observation and follow-up questioning of respondents; it draws on the common experience of subjects and allows for comparison by means of semi-standardized questions; and it is focused on subjective experiences -- attitudes and emotions.

Despite the advantages, focused interviews do have some limitations. The disadvantages may stem either from unconscious or conscious volition of both the researcher and subject. Researchers may often add unfounded conclusions or judgments on their data. Structured interviews impose a definite structure on the interview and impose a selection of topics. This may control the extent and content of responses and inhibit full revelations. Respondents may modify their stories or may lie to avoid embarrassing or painful experiences. In such cases they may even forget parts of the story. Respondents also may suffer from faulty perception, lack of insight, or may have an inability

to articulate.

The next chapter will discuss the research findings. Before presenting that material, it is necessary to examine the questions used and why they were chosen. The aim, of course, of this project was to determine from the respondents what motivated them to become active board members and to draw on the CEOs' expertise concerning board members' motivations. These questions were used to tap that information.

The first section, life history, was included to learn about the respondents and to have a basis to compare their experiences. The second section was included to determine if a strong commitment to the voluntary sector was necessarily important to high commitment as the literature indicated. The third section, role expectation, was included to discover if these volunteers were aware of their responsibilities, if this had been adequately communicated, and whether or not this was an important factor. It also was important to obtain their evaluations of their role performance as a measure of their role satisfaction. These factors can then be compared and tested with other organizations. The questions were purposely mixed between those requiring specific information about a certain organization and those asking for general information to see if the answers given had universal application or were specific to that organization.

The section on involvement has much the same purpose: to find out what the respondents thought influenced involvement and what criteria could be used to measure involvement, probing

the question, "What is involvement?" Answers to the questions yield specifics concerning involvement. The final background section was designed to question those factors leading to satisfaction and frustration. An awareness of these items might provide clues to maximizing participation of volunteers.

NOTES

[1]Pauline V. Young, Scientific Social Surveys and Research (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 216.

[2]Ibid., pp. 222-223.

[3]Ibid., p. 219.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

LIFE HISTORY

1. How long have you been with this organization?

2. How long have you been involved in the voluntary/nonprofit sector?

3. Are you now or were you ever a volunteer? If so, how long and in what capacities?

4. What is the mission of your organization?

GENERAL VOLUNTARISM

5. What do you see as the value of the voluntary sector?

6. Can the government or a profit-making enterprise perform the function of your organization better?

ROLE EXPECTATION

7. Do you feel the duties of the board president are clearly defined? Is he/she aware of specific responsibilities? Are they carried out?

8. What role should the board play?

9. How closely do you work with your board president? How is this achieved?

10. How effective do you feel your board president is?

MOTIVATION

11. Why do people volunteer for your board?

12. Why do people serve on boards?

13. What are the reasons/criteria for selection of board members?

INVOLVEMENT

14. Do you consider your board members to be involved? How much time do they contribute? How much variation in involvement is there among members? What other criteria would you use to measure involvement?

15. How often are board meetings held? How would you describe attendance? Who runs the meeting?

16. How much do you involve your board members in decision-making?

17. What influences board involvement?

BACKGROUND

What is the most satisfying and the most frustrating or troublesome part of your activity in your organization?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

BOARD

LIFE HISTORY

1. How long have you been associated with this organization?

2. How long have you been a volunteer? Where? In what capacities?

3. What other organization do you belong to?

4. What is the mission of your organization?

GENERAL VOLUNTARISM

5. What do you see as the value of the voluntary sector?

6. Could government or a profit-making enterprise perform your function any better?

ROLE EXPECTATION

7. Do you feel that your role as board president is clearly defined? Do you know your specific responsibilities? Are you allowed to carry them out?

8. How effective do you feel in your position? What has happened to make you feel that way?

9. What role should the board of directors play?

10. How closely do you work with your executive director? How is this achieved?

MOTIVATION

11. What caused you to decide to give this organization your time?

12. Why do you think that people volunteer to serve on boards?

13. What is the process for selecting board members? What criteria?

INVOLVEMENT

14. How much time do you contribute each month? Do you consider yourself involved? What other criteria should be used?

15. How often are board meetings held? Describe attendance. What happens at these meetings? Who runs the meetings?

16. On what kind of issues do you make decisions?

17. What influences whether board members get involved?

BACKGROUND

What is the most satisfying or most troublesome aspect of your volunteer activity?

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter will be a summary of the research interview findings. Because of the confidential nature of many of the questions, there will not be identification of any of the persons interviewed or the organizations they represented. Some direct quotations will be used, but these will be camouflaged when necessary.

The interviews were conducted about 50% by phone and 50% in person. The only variable this seemed to affect was the length of the interview. The interview time averaged about twenty minutes. All subjects seemed eager to participate and were most generous in sharing their experience. All were briefed prior to the interview as to its purpose and the confidentiality of their answers. There were ten respondents -- five CEOs and four board presidents and one board member. They came from several fields: health, grass-roots organization, advocacy group, and a character building organization.

The interview probed five major areas: the respondent's life history, general opinions/impressions of the voluntary sector, role expectation as a board member, motivation, involvement. These areas were used to gain a general picture of the respondent, to evaluate her opinion of the value of the voluntary sector, to probe role expectation and definition to determine whether this had an important effect, to gain actual

data of why highly involved people chose to get involved as opposed to reasons others see for their involvement, and to probe what caused these people to actually accept a high level of commitment. The Chief Executive Officer of the organization was asked basically the same questions as the board member, to draw upon their expertise and to determine if there was a fit between what the organization saw as important and what the volunteer saw as important, particularly regarding motivations of people to serve and get involved.

The hypothesis of the study derived from the literature was that board members who (1) feel they are involved, (2) have a deep commitment to the voluntary sector, and (3) participate in decision making, are motivated to serve as members of the board and take on large assignments. As will be discussed later, this was proven by research findings.

Among the chief executive officers (CEOs) their tenure with their organizations ranged from six months to ten years. The board members ranged from service of one year on a new board to an entire lifetime. CEOs' experience in the voluntary sector ranged from one and a half years to their lifetime; most of these people had also served as volunteers at some point in their lives in such categories as civic groups, religious activities and professional organizations. Most board members had a lifetime history of volunteer service. They had been involved with a number of organizations, ordinarily with more than one organization at a time. These groups are most often of a varied nature. At least one other membership might be in an organization similar to the one they were interviewed about, but other

memberships often reflect a wide variety of interests.

CEOs and board members seem to have a great respect for the voluntary sector. They see the voluntary sector as allowing individuals to get involved in their communities and personally contribute to the improvement of services and community lifestyle. This involvement of volunteers provides for much more willing acceptance of services and greater support in the community. One respondent indicated that the voluntary sector allows for more freedom and flexibility in the operation of services than the government or private enterprise sectors, as well as allowing more time to be spent on people. Another respondent indicated that to his organization their non-profit status was the most important item in their livelihood as the grants they receive are only given to non-profit organizations. He also stated something echoed by another subject: their mission was so financially risky that a profit probably could not be made, and only support in the voluntary sector could supply this same service. One other value mentioned by several respondents was the leadership training they received. For the most part all believed their missions could only be carried out in the voluntary sector. As mentioned above, most felt that a profit-making enterprise would never put capital into these enterprises and most felt that government would not have or could not convince people that they had the commitment necessary to carry out such services. Many felt also that it would simply be inappropriate for government to provide these services.

This concept of the voluntary sector providing social risk capital to society supports Smith's theory referred to

earlier. Voluntary organizations are free from regulations of government and the necessity to always show a profit that private enterprise must face. By accepting support from other sources, voluntary organizations are able to provide services that would not be feasible or would be too impractical for other sectors of the economy to provide.

The next section discussed deals with role expectation. This factor seems to play a very important part in the satisfaction of the volunteer and how effective she sees herself. It also examines how effective the CEO considers her performance. Lack of role definition and of knowledge of role expectation are definitely a deterrent to satisfaction, commitment, and enthusiasm.

Half of the CEOs felt that their board presidents were well aware of their responsibilities and that their assignments were clearly defined. These people also thought their board presidents were very effective and had enthusiastic comments about their performance. On the other hand, the other half felt that while in some cases the responsibilities were well defined, the board president was simply too involved in other activities to be very committed to seeing that her responsibility was carried out. Several CEOs of this second group did not feel that the duties of board president were well defined and pinned their frustration of accomplishing goals to this. It is interesting to note that these were the people who expressed a high level of frustration and a low level of enthusiasm. This is a notion that was not treated very thoroughly in the literature, but that seems to have major importance.

CEOs saw the role of the board to be that of communicating to the general public about the mission, services, and accomplishments of the organization. They also saw planning and taking fiscal responsibility for the organization as important. Fiscal responsibility, fundraising, was very high on their list of board duties. The board presidents saw establishing policy and monitoring and evaluating as their responsibilities. When this discrepancy in role expectation was greatest, as it was in one agency, both the CEO and the board president were dissatisfied with their performance and demonstrated high levels of frustration.

Interviews with board volunteers on the subject of role expectation/definition provided a slightly different point of view. Most of these people see their roles as being clearly defined, even in those organizations where the CEO did not see it that way. At least one of these people also felt that she was carrying out her responsibilities, but later stated that she was not as happy with the progress of the organization as she would like to be. Two respondents did not feel their jobs were clearly defined and did not feel effective. Factors that the volunteers listed that helped them feel effective included good staff members, freedom to take responsibility, being able to set goals and achieve concrete results. Among those who saw their roles clearly defined and felt effective, there was a high degree of pride, enthusiasm, and commitment to the organization displayed.

The board members all saw that the role of the board was to make policy. They expressed various other roles as well, such as evaluating and monitoring activities to insure that the organization was run consistent with policy. They felt that the volunteer board should make sure that it understands the talents the staff does not possess and work to find these talents or volunteer them. The board should also act as a restraining influence for the organization. The board should set the pace for the organization, such as in achieving goals and making necessary changes. The board also has a responsibility to bring to the organization the needs that it sees in the community and service improvements it sees.

All CEOs and board presidents felt that they had very good working relationships. As one CEO expressed, "We're like partners." This was achieved by frequent phone conversations, attendance at meetings, and frequent face-to-face meetings. It is notable that among the two organizations where the effectiveness level was low, the kind of input the CEO expected and the amount of time and energy the board president produced were low. Comments that go along with this were, "I allow (her) to have input"; a board president commented, "I don't really have all that much input. I guess it's not my role."

Summarizing this section it seems that a clearly defined role for the board president is essential for the feeling of effectiveness that engenders high commitment and high enthusiasm. Also important are the aspects that the board president under-

stand this role and be willing to carry it out. This means that the board president have a close working relationship with the CEO that emphasizes and encourages input from the board members.

As already postulated in another section, there are almost as many motivations for board service as there are people volunteering. The answers in both the CEO and the board group were different. There were some similar themes though. One of the most often expressed points among the board members when asked why they decided to give their time to the organization was that someone asked them. Several of the board members also said that one of their principal reasons for joining a board was that they were committed to the mission of the organization. Other comments included the fact that the organization was well-run. CEOs said that they believed people volunteered for their board for two principle reasons: status and a desire to help further the mission of the organization.

Some of the questions in this section seemed rather redundant to some of the respondents. The aim of including questions that probed both the specific organizations and organizations in general was to determine if there were universal motivations for joining a board or if each organization was unique. Many CEOs saw these questions as redundant, indicating that motivations were universal. The questions to the board members were stated more clearly and tended to yield more specific answers. The board members were asked for personal information and about their personal experience in joining an organization, while the CEO was expected to judge why volunteers

joined their organizations. The comparisons of the perceptions here are striking.

All but one CEO observed the same motivations for why people serve on a board: both status and interest in the organization. However, board presidents saw some different reasons for the general motivations of people to serve on boards. A chance to accomplish something was on several lists; also, the need to set a plan and see it achieved; the chance to serve with others and be part of a group; a chance for prestige; the chance to develop talents and skills; the chance to be part of something that helped the community. These were reasons board presidents gave for wanting to serve on a board.

The next section dealt with involvement. There is a difference in motivation and involvement -- one means simply joining the organization while the other means giving that organization quality time. There was an arbitrary measure of hours put into the question of "Do you consider yourself involved?". Just how arbitrary this question was became evident when one board president responded that (she) spent only five hours per month on her board work. This was the same respondent who said (she) was motivated to join the board because the organization was exceptionally well-run and service could be given without a large time commitment.

Most CEOs did not consider their boards as involved as they would like, and most board presidents considered themselves quite involved. One board president stated that (she) felt that if anyone gave any amount of time -- even if once a year -- then they were involved. This points up a rather sizeable difference in expectations.

This was followed by asking each subject to list her criteria for judging involvement. The almost universal criteria for judging involvement included attendance at meetings, quality input, overall knowledge of organization, bringing in other energy (money or manpower), and a willingness to speak out on issues. One CEO had a measure for evaluating successful involvement: "You need to look at the reason the person became involved and why you wanted them. Somewhere between these two points goals should have been realized."

Attendance at meetings was one measure in the literature for measuring involvement. Except for one new board, just established in the last year, all the board presidents stated that they had quorum for each meeting and most usually more. Without exception the board president ran the meeting and felt that the board was involved in decision-making. The CEOs all described attendance as adequate. Except for two cases where they felt that the board was not adequately knowledgeable, they all made efforts to involve their boards or executive committees in decisions.

When asked what influences board members to become involved, the most frequent answer from both groups was that it depended on who asked the individual. Other answers dealt with the individual's desire to have a part in change-oriented activity, high commitment to organization, concern for the cause, and the chance to obtain power and prestige. It appears from these answers that a good orientation program that stressed

the nature of the mission and allowed the individual board member to observe closely the services of the organization would be quite important to build up a high level of concern for and awareness of the organization. It also seems that allowing the board to have an important part in setting goals and objectives, and to have a part in accomplishing those goals and share in power and prestige is important.

The most satisfying element of the activity in the voluntary organization for both board and staff members is seeing goals accomplished and people growing and being helped. Lack of resources, financial and manpower, is a frustration for both groups. Board presidents see not having their ideas accepted, for whatever reason, troublesome.

The thesis for this study stated that board members who feel they are involved and have a deep commitment to the voluntary sector, and who participate in decision making, are more motivated to serve as board members and take on large assignments. For the most part it appears to have been proven. Several important factors emerged. The most revealing was that board members, indeed all volunteers, need to have clearly defined roles and to understand them in the organization in order to optimize their involvement. If this does not happen, the volunteers try to find a place to fit in and end up feeling frustrated and ineffective. This subject was only modestly, if at all, mentioned in the literature.

A deep commitment to the voluntary sector is a given factor in the case of members of voluntary boards. There seems

to be an appreciation of the values that volunteer service can impart. These are the rewards of board service -- a task that at times seems singularly unrewarding and impossible to some volunteers.

Participation in decision making is necessary for encouraging board member involvement. But it is not nearly as important as the literature points out. It could be that, especially among these respondents, all are in decision making positions in their daily lives. The sense of accomplishment was the most important to them. Because board presidents become highly involved in the voluntary organizations, they seem to have a special need for success. Speculating a bit, it could also be possible that success might come slowly or be difficult to measure or be far removed from them. The size and nature of the voluntary organization might make this success more personal.

Factors that came out in all the interviews stressed policy making and objective setting as important functions of the board. Another essential factor, then, is that board members be involved in progress towards the goals of the organization. Mentioned in the literature and noted in several interviews is the fact that many people do not have a chance to participate and to have input into institutions in their daily lives. The voluntary organization allows them to have some impact on change for the future.

This interview process gave a comparison between the literature and the experience of those actively participating

in the voluntary sector. The conclusion will attempt to summarize these findings and list some of the keys to motivating board members.

TABLE OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

(for questions that can be tabulated)

Question	CEO	Board President
Number of respondents	5	5
Length of time with organization	6 months to 10 years	3 years to lifetime
Length of involvement in non-profit sector	2½ years to lifetime	lifetime involvement
CEO--ever volunteer--in what Board--kinds of organizations	4--yes volunteer; 1--no: schools, professional organization, church, civic groups	professional organization, church, urban, civic, cultural, health, government
value of voluntary sector	sees value in providing manpower and training	sees value to the individual and to serving needs of society
government or profit-making enterprise do a better job?	5--no mission too risky or inappropriate	5--no only voluntary sector has the concern, freedom, and flexibility to do this job
duties of board president clearly defined? aware of responsibilities? carried out?	3--no; 2--yes: duties defined; 4 aware; 1 unaware; 2--no; 3--yes: carry out	3--yes definitely; 2--no: duties; 5--aware; 5--allowed to carry out responsibilities
role of board	3--communication; 3--planning; 3--fiscal responsibility	4--establish policy; 3--monitor and evaluate

Question	CEO	Board President
CEO--is president effective? Board President--do you feel effective?	2--yes, definitely; 2--yes, qualified; 1--no	2--yes, definitely; 1--yes; 2--not really sure
work closely with board president (CEO)?	4--yes; 1--no; answers range from very close to "allow them to have input"	5--yes; feelings range from very close relationship to "do what is needed"
CEO--why people volunteer for your board? Board president--why did you volunteer?	2--status; 3--power; 5--commitment to mission	2--friend asked; 1--well-run organization 1--familiar; 1--joiner; 1--commitment to mission
why people volunteer for board service?	2--status; 3--power; 5--commitment to mission	3--asked to serve; 2--status; 2--commitment to mission
board committed? time served, criteria for involvement?	2--yes; 3--no; volunteer 1-8 hrs/mo. criteria: 3--attend meetings; 3--interest and input (See text for other comments.)	5--yes, involved; 3-15 hours/month; criteria: 5--advocacy; 2--contribution; 5--attend meetings
how often board meetings held? who runs? attendance?	4--monthly; 1--4X/yr.; 5--president runs; 85% attendance to "up and down"	5--once a month; 5--president runs; 3--good attendacne; 2--not so good
board--issues decided upon CEO--do you involve board?	2--not really; 1--not really, only executive committee 2--yes	delegation personnel evaluation standards
what influences board involvement?	1--power, prestige; 2--concern; 2--personality; 1--question not understood	2--who asks them to get involved 3--see important problems; 1--question not understood

Question	CEO	Board President
satisfying aspect of activity	4--goals attained; 4--staff members progress and grow; realization of good	5--seeing accomplishment; 1--well-run organization
frustrating part of activity	3--inadequate resources; 1--lax attitudes in staff and board; 1--not being completely autonomous	not getting people involved; time; nothing; good ideas not accepted; inter-agency conflict

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

KEYS TO MOTIVATING BOARD MEMBERS

It is essential to the health of voluntary organizations to have an active board of directors. The board is required by law for voluntary organizations, and carries legal responsibility for its acts. It is also important for those board members to be fully informed in order to discharge their duties effectively. An important question has always been, just how do you motivate concerned people to join the board and take an active role in it? This project surveyed the literature and interviewed persons actively engaged in the voluntary sector to try to find an answer to that question.

A necessary understanding regarding the whole question of who gets involved is realizing what entity is being discussed. That entity is time -- volunteered time. As mentioned earlier, this is usually spare time. There are many causes and interests vying for a share of this time. Organizations that can demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness and instill a pride of association in their members have made great strides in solving this puzzle of involving volunteers.

The literature and survey pointed out that individuals are waiting to be asked to join a board. Very few, if any, actually volunteer for the job. They must then be brought into

the organization. They must be educated to the mission of the organization and its internal workings. They must be sold on the importance of the cause and why their own involvement is extremely important. Individuals need to achieve and the desire to have an impact on society is very high. The need to contribute and be involved in a worthwhile cause are also important.

Individuals come to an organization from varying points in their development. It is necessary to ascertain what is important to them and what they hope to achieve. As has been noted by many experts, people do things for their own reasons. Therefore, it is essential to show them how they can satisfy their needs by working on the mission of the organization. It was earlier noted that volunteers are usually motivated by those high level needs on Maslow's hierarchy, which are the most compelling and least easily satisfied needs.

It is clearly important to establish exactly what tasks are to be done and who is to do them; and then utilize each board member's talents and try to help her achieve her own goals. In the case of the board, it is necessary to look at the legal responsibilities also and who has final authority. A clearly defined role for the board and the CEO and an understanding of their duties, plus the freedom to carry them out are essential to high commitment and involvement.

Modern society is highly complex and the chance for most individuals to contribute and achieve is very slight. Voluntary organizations give individuals that opportunity. Because most voluntary organizations are smaller than govern-

ment systems and more accessible than private enterprise, individuals can find a place to get involved. Depending on the climate of the organization and the degree to which it encourages involvement, the volunteer may experience many satisfactions and know pride of achievement. She may also experience a sense of personal efficacy that accompanies this achievement. Accompanying board service may also be a feeling of power and prestige. Except for very few civil, military, and private enterprise positions, this is a situation that is difficult to match in other sectors of the economy.

Participation by citizens on the board is necessary to satisfy legal requirements of incorporation, but further it is also essential for the health of the organization. There are many demands on the time of board members, and the organization that recognizes this and deals with fitting the needs of the individual to the organization, and can demonstrate effective services delivered in an efficient manner, will be rewarded by high involvement and commitment.

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